

New Zealanders on the Net
Discourses of National Identities in Cyberspace

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List of Acronyms

AEN	<i>Aotearoa Ethnic Network</i>
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CMC	Computer-mediated Communication
DHA	Discourse-historical Approach
HRC	Human Rights Commission
OEA	Office of Ethnic Affairs
StatsNZ	Statistics New Zealand

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), no material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Abstract

The New Zealand Government's assertion, in the early years of the 21st century, of the emergence of a new and inclusive national identity reflected a political strategy to unify the nation amidst fears about its increasing diversity. Its rebranding of New Zealand as part of its goal to build a socially cohesive society involved the management of diversity by containing the bicultural relationship between indigenous Maori and dominant Pakeha, along with the country's growing multiculturalism, within the notion of a reworked, shared national identity. Constructing a distinctive and stable nation was also seen as a positive factor in positioning New Zealanders as global citizens as well as national citizens.

This study sought to understand how people in New Zealand constructed their national identity within this political milieu by comparing their 'talk' in cyberspace with the official discourse I had identified in political texts. Acknowledging the Internet as a new media technology that had often been heralded as providing a new form of public sphere, I focused mainly on two archived online discussions to identify discourses about national identity during the Labour-led Government's last term of office (2005 to 2008). The first discussion was located on the *Yellow Peril* blog site and was in response to a posting titled "the identity game" that questioned the acceptance of 'New Zealander' as a new ethnicity in the 2006 census data. The second discussion appeared on the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network* e-list where members debated the headline of a news article that referred to a man of Kurdish ethnicity as a "New Zealand passport holder" rather than as a 'New Zealander'.

My use in this study of the discourse-historical approach of critical discourse analysis, which emphasises the role of power and ideology in the construction of identities, was notable for its unique application in a New Zealand context, particularly in the examination of online texts. The analysis – conducted on three levels of content, discursive strategies and linguistic features – highlighted several intersecting discourses about national identity that either legitimised or resisted the official discourse. These discourses were explained in terms of Anderson's social constructivist theory of nations as 'imagined communities' and took into account the social, historical, political and cultural contexts in which the texts were embedded. In particular, I highlighted various

topoi (argumentation strategies) which were used to persuade readers to accept certain points of view and which included taboo topics such as subtle racism and white dominance.

My findings showed that the official discourse about a new national identity was not necessarily shared or accepted by all New Zealanders and was challenged on a number of different levels. Rather, a national identity was emerging that involved a multiplicity of national imaginings, signalling a number of ambiguities and contradictions about what it meant to be a 'New Zealander'. This was due partly to differing world views, but also to the confusion surrounding diverse perspectives about the use of categorisation labels that merged ethnicity with nationality.

While the promotion of this new national identity was a response to the challenges of globalisation such as those faced by many nations, I regard it to be the latest in a number of transformations that have occurred in New Zealand's history. I contend that further challenges are likely as diversity continues to increase in the future. In highlighting the Internet as a virtual public sphere for democratic discussion, I argue that this piece of research demonstrated how the study of discourses about national identities can result in a greater critical consciousness of the concerns and points of view of others, and of the unequal power relationships that exist.

Chapter One: Identifying the problem: a ‘new’ identity for New Zealanders?

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought,
produces that which makes thousands,
perhaps millions, think.

Lord Byron, *Don Juan* (1819)

1.1 Setting the context

In the late 1990s and in the first years of the new millennium, I observed a deliberate political agenda to influence the way New Zealanders identified themselves collectively as a nation. An official discourse about an emergent ‘new’ national identity was evident in a wide range of political speeches, reports and government news releases. The then New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark’s talk of “an evolving New Zealand way of doing things” that would lead to “a stronger New Zealand identity” was reinforced by references to the country’s creativity and sustainability, and to its positioning on the world stage (2007). But equally, this discourse about national identity emphasised that New Zealand’s increasing ethnic diversity was an integral part of its character – a perspective demonstrated frequently in the rhetoric of Clark, who argued that:

an ability to reconcile our past and adjust to the diversity of our present times is critical to building New Zealand’s nationhood.

(Clark, 2006a, February 14)

This thesis contests the notion of a single, new and unique national identity in New Zealand, arguing that diversity has always existed along with a range of discourse reflecting inclusivity and exclusivity. However in this instance I focus specifically on the last term of the Labour-led Government (2005-2008) in an investigation of local identities in their relations to a global branding exercise which had become a popular way for nations to have a greater international presence. New Zealand was just one of a number of countries intent on constructing a specific national brand that would have economic as well as social benefits.

Globalisation and the rise of new media technologies that greatly improved communication access to the masses meant that a country's unique image and reputation were crucial for it to be economically and politically competitive (van Ham, 2001). Numerous countries adopted nation branding as part of national policy to "attract the attention, respect and trust of investors, consumers, donors, immigrants, media and Governments of other nations" (ZAD Group, 2008, p. 37). This included countries such as Scotland in 1994, Germany in 1999, Britain, Spain and Egypt in the late 1990s, and South Korea in 2002 (Anholt, 2008). The management of a nation's brand conveyed through a "robust, tangible, communicable and [...] useful" national identity (Anholt, 2005, October 10, p.35) was key to achieving global recognition. For those countries that were increasingly diverse as a result of immigration, the need to project an image of stability and tolerance was important both locally and globally.

Creating an 'authentic' national identity for branding purposes is often concerned with the inclusion of cultural elements such as language, literature, food, sport and architecture, but also features such as "an historic territory, or homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common, mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members; and a common economy with territorial mobility for all members" (Dinnie, 2008, p. 112). However, while following an ethnocentric pathway reliant on the maintenance of the dominant cultural group's values and behaviours as an integral part of its unique national identity might seem a useful way to position a country in the global economy (Dinnie, 2008), it also risks creating feelings of exclusion and difference within a diverse nation such as New Zealand.

In understanding discourse as the "social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" that involves "people interacting together in real social situations" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 18), this study identifies a number of competing discourses about New Zealand national identity which were evident during the period of my investigation. Using a 'discourse-historical' methodological approach (Wodak, 2001), I scrutinise Internet discussions to show the discursive ways New Zealanders constructed their identity at a time when official discourse emphasised diversity as one of the key criteria of a shared nationhood based on mainstream values of the dominant majority. This study is conducted in an era of new media technologies where communities – formerly only 'imagined' (Anderson, 1983) via the written word, broadcast media and everyday talk – could now be located by way of the Internet through a vast array of online texts. The title of this thesis *New*

Zealanders on the Net, therefore relates not only to the New Zealanders who use the Internet as a communication tool, but also alludes to the fact that computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides another dimension for the construction of New Zealand identity.

The extract from Helen Clark's speech cited above demonstrates two aspects she chose to highlight in dealing with the changing demographics affecting New Zealand's national identity. For much of the 20th century, New Zealanders' sense of collective belonging as expressed by historians, novelists and in school syllabi, for example, was based on the dominant white majority's¹ 'colony-to-nation' narrative. This derived from New Zealand's British settler roots in the mid-1800s, political progression to Dominion status in the South Pacific/Asia region in 1907 and the gradual breaking of trade ties with 'Mother England' in the 1970s (Belich, 2001; Byrnes, 2009b).

Legitimising this narrative of progress was the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 between the indigenous Maori and the British and regarded by many New Zealanders today, Pakeha² and Maori alike, as the founding document of the nation. The Treaty recognized the rights of Maori as British subjects in exchange for the Crown's authority over their land, but became the focus for the expression of Maori grievances early on because of colonial practices (Orange, 2011; Pearson, 1990). Clark's reference to the 'past' in her statement above drew on a widely held recognition, given increased political impetus since the 1970s, of the need for Pakeha to address the colonial injustices suffered by Maori, such as the confiscation of their land. Reconciliation as an attempt to establish a bicultural partnership between Maori and Pakeha was a process that had been ongoing since the late 1970s, but was also deployed rhetorically by politicians from the late 1990s as a contributing factor underlying the emergence of a new national identity.

¹This thesis follows Pearson's (2009) definition of 'majority' status as referring to powerful, resourced persons who dominate other groups, while 'minority' indicates a lack of power in terms of "numbers, resources and political influence" (p. 33). In the case of New Zealand, the dominant white majority originated with the British colonists but later included other European groups.

²Throughout this thesis, the Maori term 'Pakeha' is used to denote New Zealanders of predominantly European descent. This label is the subject of ongoing debate in New Zealand as some people reject classification from a Maori perspective because of the negative connotations of colonialism often implied. This is discussed further in the analytical chapters. I have used both the terms 'European' and 'Pakeha' in this thesis, depending on the context of what is being written, but predominantly I have followed the stance of Sibley and Liu (2004) who used the term 'Pakeha' where it most appropriately "implies a relationship with Maori" (p. 99) or where individuals show a preference to use it in their own words.

The second part of Clark's call to build New Zealand's nationhood requests that the electorate "adjust to diversity". This call was based on the size and range of minority groups resulting from immigration policy changes in 1987 that opened the door to immigrants regardless of ethnicity or nationality, as long as they met "specified educational, business, professional, age, or asset requirements" (New Zealand Parliament, 2008, p.1). Immigration in New Zealand over the last 50 years had risen beyond multiculturalism to a level of 'superdiversity' - a word coined by Vertovec (2006) to indicate the increased range of linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural resources resulting from demographic change. The increased number of immigrants living in New Zealand from a range of ethnic backgrounds put the country ahead of Canada and "only just behind Australia" in terms of this superdiversity (Gendall, Spoonley and Trlin, 2007, pp. 9–10).

New Zealand's track record in the treatment of immigrants from the Pacific and from China in particular, however, had been less than impressive. Anti-Chinese legislation combined with racist rhetoric about the '*Yellow Peril*'³ originated in the late 1800s—although the legislation was later rescinded, public discourse about 'Asian invasions' resurfaced intermittently over the years often deliberately manipulated by some politicians as a deliberate tactic to gain votes during election years.⁴ Equally, the dawn raids by the police to evict Pacific Island overstayers⁵ in the 1970s cast a shadow on the reputation of a country that, for much of the 20th century, had liked to portray itself as having the best race relations in the world.

According to a government news release (Ewing, 2005, April 22), projections relating to ethnic diversity in New Zealand between 2001 and 2021 forecast an increase in Maori of 29 percent (from an estimated 590,000 in 2001 to 760,000 in 2021), and an increase of 59 percent for the Pacific population (from 260,000 to 420,000). For both these populations, growth was dependent mainly on natural increase (the difference between projected births and projected deaths) rather than on net migration. The projected 145 percent growth of the Asian population from 270,000 to 670,000, on the other hand, was based mainly on migration. The European population (the dominant

³*Yellow Peril* was a derogatory term for Asian people and is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

⁴Winston Peters, leader of the New Zealand First political party and Foreign Minister from 2005 to 2008, was notorious for raising anxieties about Asian immigration (Spoonley, 2011a).

⁵'Overstayers' was a commonly used term in the 1970s for Pacific Island people who overstayed their permits to live in New Zealand.

majority in New Zealand) was expected to have the smallest increase of just 5 percent from 3.07 million to 3.23 million.

A broad consensus appeared to exist amongst most political parties (except for New Zealand First) in the early 2000s that the diversification of the New Zealand population, brought about mainly through immigration, had “positive outcomes for the country’s economy and society” (Bedford, 2003, para. 22). Redefining New Zealand’s national identity to reflect a more multicultural society was a priority revealed by the prevalence of this theme in the discourse of politicians (Clark, 2006b, February 27; Dunne, 2008; Key, 2007) and in the policy statements of government agencies (Human Rights Commission, 2007; Ministry of Social Development, 2006a, April 6; Office for Ethnic Affairs, n.d.) as well as non-governmental organisations (AsiaNZ Foundation, n.d.). This will be expanded on in Chapter Five.

Examination of some key linguistic features used in this discourse gives a closer view on how these issues were handled. One concept of which I became particularly aware during the time of Helen Clark’s Labour-led Government in the early 2000s, was the embedding of certain words, such as ‘new’, ‘strong’, ‘unique’ and ‘distinctive’, in an array of political speeches and documents that served to direct New Zealanders to redefine themselves as a nation. Alluding to national identity through such positively discriminating terms, I believe, was an attempt to encourage national pride among New Zealanders at a time when migration – amongst a myriad of other factors attributable to globalisation – was a dominating factor in Western society.

But with the horror of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States still fresh in their minds, together with the recent memory of highly publicised ethnic conflicts occurring in countries with multicultural policies, many New Zealanders felt insecure about the nation’s future. I argue that increasing diversity was regarded by the majority who were not recent immigrants more as a threat to the nation’s stability than as a welcome transformation.

1.2 New Zealand in a globalised world

The call for a ‘new’ national identity in New Zealand at this time was set against a wider-ranging crisis of national identity affecting many Western countries that had embraced policies of multiculturalism. The United Kingdom, the United States, France,

Germany, Canada, Denmark and Australia, for example, had already become increasingly ethnically, culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse since the second World War (Sacks, 2007, p. 88) because of immigration policies seeking to invigorate local economies or, more recently, as a result of a commitment to the United Nations to resettle a specific annual quota of refugees. Sacks (2007) states that while assimilation or integration was formerly the choice of immigrants, a shift occurred in the 1970s in countries such as the United States, Britain and “parts of Europe” whereby it was “wider society, not the newcomers, [who] were expected to adjust” to multiculturalism (p. 33). As countries became more diverse in an increasing globalised world, their governments sought to transform national identities to ones that embraced, or at least tolerated, diversity. Demonstrating support for an inclusive society was one way a government might stabilise and reassure a nation fearful of demographic change resulting from immigration.

Conflict between ethnic groups within a nation could result either from difficulties experienced by migrant groups in adjusting to the ways of a new country or from members of dominant majority groups feeling threatened. Ethnic and cultural tensions, for example, had at times culminated in adverse reactions ranging from personal verbal abuse and racist commentary in the media to extreme reactions such as the street riots seen in suburban Paris in 2005, in Sydney in 2005, in Amsterdam in 2007, and the terrorising of Romanian immigrants in Ireland in 2009. Factors that possibly contributed to such behaviour include tensions resulting from economic, social and political changes, policies of affirmative action seen as threatening by non-migrant majorities and theories of multiculturalism which “unintentionally contribute to a backlash” (Bader, 2007, p. 199).

This point has been developed in books such as Melanie Phillips’ *Londonistan* (2006) which criticises theories and policies of multiculturalism as corrosive of British identity. Phillips suggested that Tony Blair’s Government in Britain, in its desire for a society that embraced all ethnicities and cultures, had pandered to different groups by encouraging their expressions of diversity (or difference) through their cultural practices and beliefs. This, she argues, had challenged older conceptions of Britain’s national identity by legitimising divergent voices and thereby creating an increasingly divided society that provided the context in which tragic consequences such as the London underground bombings on 7 July 2005 could occur.

Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010) however reject views such as those described above believing them to be part of a “backlash discourse” about multiculturalism that falsely constructs it as a “single, fixed ideology or dogma” (p. 6). Multiculturalism, they say, is multidimensional and needs to be considered in the context of superdiversity that includes the interaction of many variables such as gender, country or origin, and whether people are immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers. Yet the fear that multiculturalism promoted ethnic separatism and was the cause of social breakdown led a number of European countries to place greater emphasis on national identity as a form of control (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). Certainly doubts over peaceful coexistence in populations with diverse cultures had led the governments of countries such as Denmark and Germany to review their immigration policies (Singham, 2006).

Although New Zealand did not experience en-masse racial demonstrations, rioting or terrorism as witnessed in other countries, local incidents of racism occurred in the same period particularly in 2004 which saw the desecration of Jewish graves in Wellington, the attack on a group of young Somali men and hate mail sent to members of the Muslim community. In spite of official assurances that these incidents emanated from only a small number of people (Clark 2006b, February 27), there was a growing concern that this was not a reason for complacency. New Zealand’s Race Relations Commissioner Joris de Bres (2005), for example, noted that issues of identity reflected “an anxiety about how groups other than those we belong to ourselves are affecting our own place in New Zealand and in the world” (p. 291), while the director for the Office of Ethnic Affairs Mervin Singham (2006) cautioned against taking New Zealand’s “peaceful environment” (p. 33) for granted.

In 2006, the New Zealand Government opted to work proactively to avoid any extremism surfacing within its borders by drafting national statements on race relations and religious diversity (Young, 2006) and by encouraging a ‘new’ national identity that embraced the richness of difference. Such a response alluded to concepts of:

- (i) cultural pluralism, whereby the aim was for different cultures to live harmoniously within a nation (Kallen, 1970) through active engagement with each other (Eck, 2011); and

- (ii) cosmopolitanism, advocating a mutual respect between different cultures that moved beyond shared citizenship as its only common denominator (Appiah, 2006).

Helen Clark frequently referred to “social cohesion” in her political speeches (2006a, February 14; 2006b, February 27; 2007, February 22) as a government goal for building an inclusive society. This term – regarded as one of the “hurrah words” of the new political language of integration (Powell, 2000, p. 57) – had been used in preceding decades by governments in European countries (particularly by New Labour in Britain), and in Canada and Australia. Although some academics suggest that this political rhetoric indicated a move away from assimilationism (Jakubowicz, 2007; Poynting and Mason, 2008), others consider that the language of multiculturalism that had dominated in public policy discourses in the 1980s in fact shifted back to the assimilationist and monoculturalist ideology of the 1960s (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne & Solomos, 2007). But whichever way the discourse about a socially cohesive society was framed, the seemingly contradictory proposal for minority groups to conform to a shared national identity that respected and embraced the core values of the dominant majority - yet maintained they could retain their own “cultural mores” (Jakubowicz, 2007, p. 279) - was instrumental in the political management of diversity.

The extent to which Clark’s government in its last term of office was successful in influencing and reflecting mindsets in New Zealand about the move towards a new national identity is unclear. Yet it was the Government’s assumption that New Zealanders would embrace the emergence of a new and unique national identity to be shared by all that was intriguing and warranted further investigation. The following three research questions were therefore fundamental to my study:

- (i) What was the character of the official discourse that supported a new and unique national identity in New Zealand?
- (ii) In comparison to the official discourse what discourses about national identities existed amongst the populace?
- (iii) What was the interaction among these various discourses?

The methodology I propose as an effective way to address these questions depends on a critical analysis of the discourses of national identity as they are “shaped by relations of power and ideologies” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 12).

1.3 Seeking a solution – methodological considerations

Membership of any group whether related to education, gender, politics, profession or socio-economic status, caste system, sports club or nation, helps to build a sense of identification and belonging which in turn influences behaviour or the way an individual thinks (Purdie & Wilss, 2007). Theories of social identity suggest that individuals feel a need to belong to a group or category that denotes a sense of community (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). But social theorists also recognise the existence of hierarchical power plays between groups, that inter-group behaviour is “driven by people’s ability to be critical of, and to see alternatives to, the status quo” and that social context is an important element in examining social identity (Hornsey, 2008, p. 207).

The official interpretation of New Zealand national identity examined in this study relates to “our culture and values” that “sustain our unique sense of New Zealandness” (New Zealand Government, 2007, May 17, para. 2–11). This type of definition, often associated with “politicians, intellectuals and media people”, is a strategy used to make the ‘nation’ seem real (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999, p. 153). However, it is also important to note that people can identify with a nation in different ways to the extent that there is not necessarily an “internal sameness...[or] distinctiveness”, though they may share an “identification with the symbols and collective memory of a nation” (Mole, 2007, p. 10). The renegotiation of New Zealand national identity called for by government policy-makers and strategic thinkers at the beginning of the new millennium was more complex than the official discourse conveyed; for instance, it was likely to attract counter-discourses that raised issues such as the competition between bicultural and multicultural worlds.

Determining *what* constitutes New Zealand national identity is difficult particularly when definitions of ‘national’ and ‘nationalism’ are constantly being contested, revised, changed and renegotiated (Day & Thompson, 2004) and “no one... seems quite sure how to define it” (Ward & Lin, 2005, p. 168). Therefore, rather than this research focusing on what characterises New Zealand, it seemed preferable to examine “*how* it

comes to be imagined and/or constructed in a particular way” [authors’ emphasis] (Day & Thompson, 2004, p. 95). The concept that individuals must imagine their communities because of the difficulty of knowing everyone personally emanates from the writings of Benedict Anderson (1983) who provides the theoretical starting point of my research. Therefore, I decided that discursively examining *how* New Zealand identity was constructed would be a more beneficial pursuit for my study, particularly in light of the theory that discursive practice as a social practice was central in “the formation and in the expression of national identity” (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 1999, pp. 29–30). To keep this research within manageable parameters, I chose, as stated earlier, to confine it to the period of the New Zealand Labour-led Government’s last term of office (November 2005–November 2008), when official discourse about a ‘new’ national identity was prominent and pervading the public arena.

Analysing texts (written, spoken, visual or aural) through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offered a methodological pathway for investigating the discursive sources of power, dominance, views on discrimination, equality and subjectivities with regard to national identity contained within the everyday parlance of New Zealanders (van Dijk, 1998). In fact the notion of ‘critical’ within CDA was central to my research in that I undertook a critical investigation of discourse to show the interconnection between the construction of New Zealand society and how this was informed through political and social discourses. While I sought to make transparent any social inequalities that were “expressed, constituted or legitimized by language use” (Wodak, 2001, p. 4) by power elites, this was not through a study of discourse alone. My research also involved critical social analysis to draw attention to the conditions of domination in a wider context (Billig, 2003) that impacted on the construction of New Zealanders during a nation branding exercise. My intention was to make others more critically aware of domination and its effects whether they were party to this process or not, with the hope that this would ultimately lead to a change in thinking about and responding to diversity in New Zealand.

The ‘discourse-historical’ approach (DHA) of CDA, developed through the identity research of Ruth Wodak and colleagues, provided the inspiration for analysing the discursive construction of national identity in this thesis and is elaborated on in Chapter Five. However, I note here Wodak’s (2011) specific definition of discourse in relation to DHA in that it is:

- (i) topic-related;
- (ii) a cluster of context dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action;
- (iii) socially constituted as well as socially constitutive;
- (iv) integrates various differing positions and voices.

These components of discourse were an important part of the design and methodological framework of my research. But equally the DHA's advocacy for a multidisciplinary and multi-methodological approach involving the examination of a range of textual genres is deserving of mention here in that it enabled me not only to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the official discourse about New Zealand's new identity through the analysis of texts within publicity genres such as speeches, news releases and documents, but also to explore two genres from within Internet technology as the resource for my analysis of New Zealanders' constructions of national identity.

Texts located within Internet genres, such as blogs and e-lists,⁶ also provide opportunities to investigate how CMC contributes to public debate through the convergence of visual, textual and aural data, as well as through the Internet's multi-modal functionalities, such as hyperlinks,⁷ whereby one text can be linked to another. As a result, the two detailed case studies investigating discourses of New Zealanders communicating via the Internet– the *Yellow Peril* blog and the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network* e-list – highlight a number of perspectives about national identity that have received minimal exposure in the offline media world. This contributes a new strand of research to the scholarly literature in this area that explores the Internet as a space and a place for the intersection of various discourses about New Zealand national identity.

The DHA also stresses historical context as an important part of the analysis framework. I now digress to demonstrate the significance of texts from within another historical context, both text and context illuminating my perspective on my own personal identity.

⁶ See glossary for definitions.

⁷ See glossary.

1.4 A personal journey

During the process of writing this thesis, I discovered two significant texts in the basement of my mother's home which greatly impacted on my own sense of identity as a New Zealander. These texts serve not only as examples of signifiers of my self-identification, but also to illustrate how texts can reveal much deeper meanings when examined in detail within their historical frames. They also show a personal motivation in carrying out this study as well as my positioning within this research as an "intimately engaged participant" (Collier, 1988, p. 144). Each text respectively represents the paternal or the maternal side of my family and their settlement in New Zealand.

The first text (Figure 1.1) is a copy of a telegram dated 17 December, 1908 and sent from New Zealand by my paternal great-uncle Wilfrid Mills⁸ to Albert his one remaining brother in the United Kingdom. The telegram was the fastest means of written communication at the time and perhaps the forerunner of today's text message for its brevity and immediacy. In emigrating from Britain to New Zealand with his parents and four other adult siblings (one of whom was my great grandfather), Wilfrid Mills' message to Albert relegated to stay home to tie up the family's financial affairs was brief.

It simply stated "Arrived". One word was probably all that the family could afford at the time. Yet it heralded a new beginning for them in what they might have regarded as a transplanted Britain on the other side of the world – although the family's arrival was a year after New Zealand's official status changed from a British colony to that of a dominion within the British Empire.⁹ The family, Baptists from Surrey in the United Kingdom, were in search of a better life as farmers in this new land.

⁸ Mills is my maiden name.

⁹ This change in status made no difference to New Zealand's dependency on Great Britain but helped to give it an identity that showed it had moved on from its colonial stage and that it was separate from Australia (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2007).

Telegraphic Address: "REUTER, LONDON." Telephone Nos. 16 & 23, Bank.

Reuter's Telegram Company Ltd.

SPECIAL SERVICE
BETWEEN

Europe, India, China, The Straits, Japan, Australia, New Zealand,
South Africa, and South America.

Head Office: 24, OLD JEWRY, LONDON, E.C.

PROVINCIAL AGENCIES:

MANCHESTER—32 & 34, Spring Gardens. GLASGOW—Waterloo Chambers, 19, Waterloo Street.
BIRMINGHAM—55 & 57, Newhall Street. LIVERPOOL—60, Castle Street.

Instructions to pay Money sent by Cable and Post to all parts of the World.

REPETITION OF MUTILATED WORDS MAY BE OBTAINED FREE OF CHARGE IF APPLIED FOR WITHIN
72 HOURS OF RECEIPT OF TELEGRAM FROM INDIA, AUSTRALASIA, AND SOUTH AFRICA.
THIS RULE ONLY APPLIES TO THE STRAITS, CHINA, AND JAPAN IF THE ERROR HAS OCCURRED ON THE LINES.

DATED from Wellington 17/12 RECEIVED IN LONDON 17/12/08
Addressed to W. Mills Esq 53 New Broad Street
ADDRESS INDICATOR _____

Arrived
W. Mills

(SENDER)

NOTICE.—This Cable, if not intelligible to the Receiver, should be immediately referred to the Company's Office, 24, Old Jewry. No claim for expenses incurred in making independent enquiry of Senders will be recognised.

CONDITIONS.—Neither the Company nor its Agents are to be held in any manner responsible for the correct transmission or due delivery of the message, nor for any damage, loss or expense which may be incurred either by the person on whose behalf the message or the telegraphic or postal instruction has been sent, or by the designated payee from whatever cause arising, and in particular from any of the following acts by the Company or its Agents: delay in transmission, delivery, or payment; mistake in coding, decoding, interpreting, forwarding, or delivering the message; or making payment: payment to a person other than the designated payee: but in the event of no payment or of part payment only being made, the amount unpaid will be refunded, and where the instructions do not involve the payment of money the cost of the message, if undelivered, will be refunded, IF THROUGH THE COMPANY'S FAULT.

2001 200 M H.B. 3/08

Fig 1.1: Telegram from Wilfrid Mills

This telegram indicates to me the relief from having reached the end of many weeks at sea, travelling to a new land where Wilfrid anticipated that a fruitful and successful way of life awaited his family. The desire to send news of their safe arrival by the fastest means available – rather than by standard post – indicates that the Mills family’s connection with Britain remained strong and any transformation to identification as New Zealanders had not yet begun. Little did they know that, in the not too distant future, some of the brothers would be fighting as New Zealand soldiers in the First World War in support of Britain.

As well as the Reuter’s telegram suggesting the eagerness of the Mills family to report their safe arrival to a family member back home, its official format and printed text display the power of the British Empire. The formal printed banner identifies the London-based Reuter’s company and its capability to communicate and to send instructions to pay money to “all parts of the World”, listing many countries spread across the five continents of Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia and America to which it offers a “Special Service”. The printed text indicates both the resources and competency of Reuter’s, perhaps in relation to any commercial competition, as well as implicitly suggesting the reach of the British Empire. Ironically, as will be seen in the discussion of the second text which indicates my Jewish heritage from the maternal side of my family, the telegram indicates that Reuter’s Head Office is based in Old Jewry, London. This area, first established when William the Conqueror encouraged Jews from Rouen to settle in England, later became a ghetto for Jews during Medieval times and historical accounts relate the extreme persecution and anti-Semitism they endured (British History Online, 1878).

The second document (Figure 1.2) is an official notification dated 26 November 1940 from the New Zealand Minister of Customs¹⁰ to my maternal grandfather Dr Emanuel Hift. This letter to my grandfather – a Jewish refugee from Vienna – declined his application for permanent residency for himself and his family in New Zealand even though they had taken desperate measures to escape from the Nazi regime in Austria.

¹⁰There was no Minister of Immigration in those days and the Minister of Customs dealt with these matters.

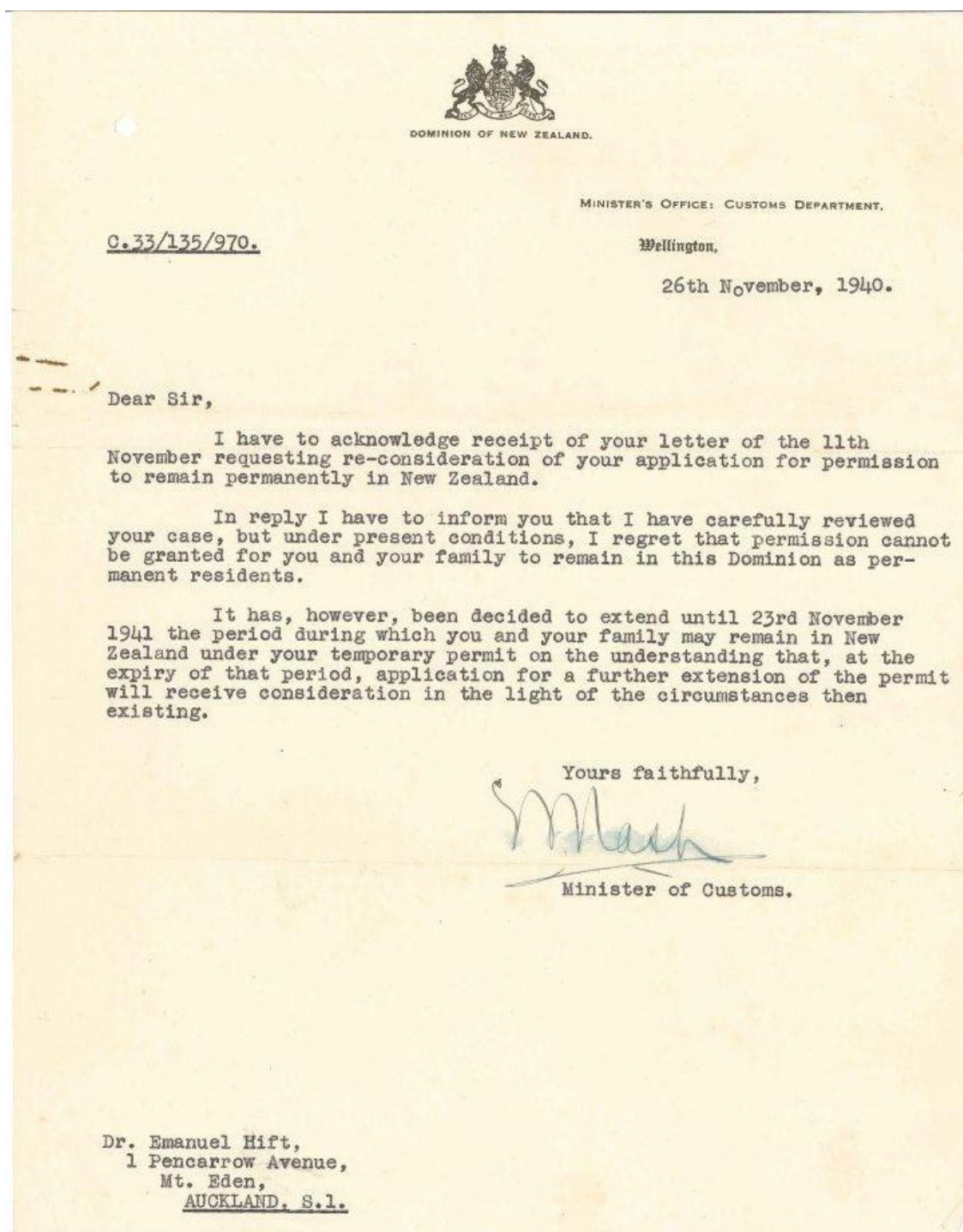


Fig 1.2: Letter from the Minister of Customs to Dr Emanuel Hift.

My grandparents Emanuel and Sali Hift and their two children, three-year-old Olga (my mother) and six-month-old son Edgar, arrived as Jewish refugees in New Zealand from Austria in 1938. It was discrimination against the Jews that led my mother's family to flee Vienna (which had become part of Germany in the Anschluss in 1938) just prior to the outbreak of World War II in 1939. My mother's family was part of a growing religious minority group in Austria, which Nazi ideology portrayed as a threat to purist nationalist aspirations of Germany and Austria and the Aryan race.

My mother and her family lived at a time and in a place where laws were passed that differentiated them from others and when every Jew was ordered to wear a yellow star to identify their ethnic distinctiveness and was treated in a number of exclusivist (not to mention barbaric) ways. This was no celebration of diversity; this was a marking of difference that led to suffering and genocide. The Hift family had been desperate to escape from the tyranny of Nazi-occupied Austria under threat of Hitler's final solution to exterminate the Jewish people by sending them to death camps.¹¹ The members of my family considered themselves lucky to escape ongoing persecution and start a new and different life in New Zealand. They fled their home and a privileged and cultured lifestyle in Vienna where Emanuel was a judge, holding doctorates in both law and music. Yet giving this up was a small price to pay for their lives.

The New Zealand Government was reluctant to accept Jewish refugees, treating them in the same way as they did other non-British immigrants in this period. Brooking and Rabel (1995) state that Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust did not attract much enthusiasm from New Zealand and, in fact, "[t]hese unfortunate people had to obtain a permit like other 'aliens' and then pay 200 pounds for the privilege of escaping to a country reluctant to accept them" (p. 33). Documents kept by my mother indicate that the Hift family had to deposit funds with the New Zealand Government to cover their return to Austria, if that were necessary, and that repeat applications for permanent residency were also required.¹² Figure 1.2 is one of a number of letters I have found from the Minister of Customs that were regularly received by Emanuel Hift between 1938 and 1941, each declining one of his repeated applications for permanent residency.

The authoritative discourse of this typewritten letter is established by its official insignia and the lion and unicorn crest inserted boldly at the top of the page complete with the words "Dominion of New Zealand" underneath. In the body of the text, the New Zealand Minister of Customs writes vaguely of "present conditions" as he expresses his "regret" that he cannot grant the Hift family permanent residency in spite of having "carefully reviewed" their case. The words "regret" and "carefully" are emotive, suggesting his sympathy for the Hift family's situation, yet they are hollow in that he provides no specific details of his reasoning. What "present conditions" could be so

¹¹The Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz was the final destination for my great-grandmother, Frieda Kohn.

¹²Only a small number of Jewish refugees fleeing from Nazism came to New Zealand because of the 1931 Immigration Restriction Amendment Act which "prevented aliens (as non-British immigrants were still known) from Europe entering New Zealand"(Beaglehole, 2009).

compelling that they prevented a family, living in fear of being returned to the Nazis and certain death, from gaining residency in New Zealand?

Although the Minister's letter is evasive, his use of the verb "review" indicates that he has spent time making his decision. He offers some hope by extending the family's temporary permit for one more year, though once again it will be "in the light of the circumstances then existing" which will determine the family's fate following yet another application. The uncertainty of the Hift family's future is disturbing. Considering the persecution they fled, such a letter must have caused a great deal of stress to my grandparents concerned for their safety and that of their two very young children.

Fortunately, permanent residency was eventually granted to the Hift family but only after a gruelling wait until the end of the war. New Zealand – their new home – was culturally foreign to them and geographically isolated from Europe. Furthermore, they needed to start a new life from scratch: most of their possessions, money and property remained in Vienna and permanently out of their reach. Accepting obstacles such as language difference and limited finances, my grandparents worked hard to ensure that their children grew up with a secure future in New Zealand as New Zealanders. They were intent on becoming good New Zealand citizens as a way of giving back to the country that, in spite of their treatment by the Ministry of Customs, had provided them a safe haven.¹³

Grateful for the security of New Zealand and away from the tyranny of Nazi Germany, the Hift family integrated into the city of Auckland. In those days, assimilation was the expectation of their host country. My grandparents' minority status was still identifiable, particularly through their strong Viennese accents. Most people treated them with kindness, though there were occasions when they were openly discriminated against. My mother remembers a boy spitting at her in primary school calling her a German spy and my grandfather, an experienced conductor, was passed over in his application for a job as a Professor of Music at The University of Auckland because academic lobbyists thought that the job should go first to a New Zealander. Although the latter example might be considered a by-product of national impulse rather than

¹³This sentiment of 'good citizenship' was expressed by my grandmother in a video recording made by the Auckland Jewish Oral History group before she died in 1994.

racism, it still demonstrates that exclusionary practices affected immigrants and refugees in New Zealand, especially if they were neither white nor British.

These texts in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 represent two very different discourses: one of inclusion and one of exclusion. For me as a member of a later generation, they impact on my individual identity as a New Zealander. My family history represents the dichotomy of immigrant experience: of being wanted and unwanted, welcomed and rejected, of being confident as a new immigrant and of being despondent as a refugee without any security for residency in the future. These texts illustrate the value of historical discourse analysis for what it reveals of individual and group identification with New Zealand even many years after they were created. The second text from the Minister of Customs, in particular, demonstrates the relationship between discourse and power – an issue that becomes a significant feature in this study.

The proximity of the experience of my family on my mother's side – both in Austria and in coming to New Zealand – haunts me. It was precisely their minority status that links me to this research. Although I look and sound as if I belong to the dominant white majority in New Zealand, I have a hybrid identity through my connections to Austria and Judaism. Growing up as a Jewish New Zealander, I have been sensitive to some subtle racism expressed in the occasional, barbed remarks of others. This study has become as much a personal journey for me as it is an academic investigation of New Zealand identity as I come to understand more about the ways people construct identity. My familiarity with difference will of course influence my frames and assumptions and create certain blind spots in terms of the cultural capital that I hold in conducting this research. However, it is recognised that critical research is unavoidably shaped by the investigator's "own interests and knowledge" (Wodak, 1999, p. 186). I have sought to make my position transparent and in addition have taken measures to distance myself from the topic by ensuring a wide understanding of the situation. This is elaborated on further in Chapter Five on method and research design.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into two sections. The next five chapters (Two to Six) comprise the first section which focuses on the relevant literature of the thesis, the historical background to dominant narratives about New Zealand national identity and the

theoretical and methodological concepts that I apply. The second section (Chapters Seven to Ten) presents the findings from the analysis and the conclusion.

Chapter Two looks at the recent empirical literature relating to New Zealand in an increasingly diverse environment to assess the direction of academic attention. Through this, I set out the goals of my study and highlight the contribution it will make within the local context of New Zealand identity research, as well as in the international arena with regard to understanding the ebb and flow of national identities in an era of accelerated globalisation and advancing communication technologies.

Chapters Three and Four contextualise the research and build a framework for understanding the concept of national identity emanating from a social constructivist perspective, but incorporating aspects of post-structuralism. Chapter Three firstly presents an overview of various theories in what is termed the classical phase of the debate about the origins of nations, settling on Anderson's (1983) concept of "imagined communities" as the most useful theoretical foundation for this study of discourses about New Zealand identity. While I further elaborate on the value of discourse analysis, I also position my research into a post-classical phase in thinking about national identity construction by advancing Anderson's belief in the role of communication technologies in disseminating discourses about national identity. While Anderson focused on print capitalism as the prime mover in the origin of nations, my study advances this to include the Internet, not only as a purveyor of discourse but also as an ethnographic field in which identity can be studied.

My choice of case studies within Internet genres through which to explore the construction of New Zealand identity is based on the significance I place on new media technologies in today's society. The conveyance of recorded information, as demonstrated by the telegram in Figure 1.1 and by the official letter in Figure 1.2 in this chapter, is integral to the traditional methods of communication of the 20th century. CMC sites commonly found in the 21st century provide rich ethnographic data for the discursive analysis of national identity. Chapter Three reviews Internet origins and use and includes an examination of studies that connect the Internet with national identity. This serves to reinforce my reasoning for choosing CMC as the source of authentic data for the two case studies in this thesis, as well as highlighting its potential as a new form of public sphere for democratic discussion (Habermas, 1989).

Chapter Four provides contextual information for this study in presenting the historical transitions that influenced the dominant majority narrative about New Zealand identity, progressing from a settler society with links to Mother England to its emergence as an independent nation. I highlight both the bicultural and multicultural models that have emerged in recent years and challenged the dominant narrative. These transitions, I argue, culminated in the Government's political strategy to persuade New Zealanders to adopt a 'new' national identity based on diversity as a way forward to achieving social cohesion.

Chapter Five introduces the methodological positioning of the study, adding depth to the reasoning behind the selection of the DHA as the most appropriate way to study discourses about New Zealand national identity. I discuss the analytical tool box by which I examine official and unofficial discourses with a specific focus on *topoi* (argumentation strategies) as the key discursive strategy under investigation.

Chapters Six to Nine are the analysis chapters that locate and examine the various discourses about national identity. Chapter Six focuses on official texts such as political documents, speeches, reports, websites and posters which, I argue, reinforced the Government's concept of a 'new' national identity based on diversity. Chapters Seven and Eight report the findings of the case studies' discursive examination of the Internet discussions about New Zealand identity. Chapter Seven introduces the case studies and leads into the description and analysis of the blog *Yellow Peril* operated by a New Zealand Chinese writer Tze Ming Mok. Chapter Eight analyses the discussion of the commenters¹⁴ who have posted messages on Mok's blog site in response to one of her postings criticising the official acceptance of 'New Zealander' as an ethnic category in the 2006 census. Chapter Nine is devoted to the second case study of the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network (AEN)* which focuses on a discussion between its members via its e-list, debating the various labels that can be used to describe and identify New Zealanders of different ethnicities. Chapter Ten concludes the thesis with a reflection on the study and its findings.

¹⁴Commenters is the term preferred by the moderator of this website Russell Brown to describe the people who post messages in response to blog postings (see Chapter Five).

1.6 Conclusion

This introduction to my research about a ‘new’ national identity for New Zealanders on the cusp of the new millennium has highlighted the problem I recognised about the emerging official discourse directing New Zealanders to adopt an identity that sought first to reconcile the relationship between Maori and Pakeha and, secondly, to embrace increasing ethnic diversity within the nation. This was interpreted as part of a global branding exercise where the notion of building a socially cohesive society – particularly where diversity was an issue – had been adopted by a number of countries during a period of increased globalisation. This chapter has introduced a number of reasons why acceptance of New Zealand’s bifurcated discourse was likely to be compromised. Historically, issues around immigration have long been contentious while bicultural policies, in place since the 1980s, have also always had their detractors. Furthermore, highly publicised incidents of ethnic conflict in countries with multicultural policies had potential to incite fears of similar events occurring in New Zealand.

This thesis presents a close examination of texts using the DHA of CDA, as exemplified earlier in my exegesis of two texts pertaining to my own family history. My purpose is to discover how New Zealanders constructed their national identity when official discourse encouraged a greater acceptance of diversity within the framework of a shared national culture. CMC sites provide the rich ethnographic data for the discursive analysis of identity which also becomes an object of research in understanding the impact of Internet features on discourses about national identity.

This study, titled *New Zealanders on the Net*, is intended to stimulate discussion about national identity in a small, yet not so insignificant, nation in the Pacific Ocean which at times has been, and continues to be, burdened with issues of questionable race relations. My belief is that such issues cannot be ignored and require investigation as a way of understanding how people of diverse backgrounds can live together in one place – particularly when the official discourse suggests one interpretation of the ideal construction of a new national identity. As suggested in Byron’s quotation at the beginning of this chapter, if the words on these pages you are about to read can make perhaps not thousands but at least many, think – then my objective for writing this thesis will have been well and truly met.

Chapter Two: A question of identity – surveying the literature, setting the goals

we need to lift the discourse a couple of pegs. The paradigm we choose for dealing with ethnic diversity is vital because it helps us perceive and define issues. It also moulds our responses.

Mervyn Singham, Director, Office for Ethnic Affairs, (2006, p. 35)

2.1 Introduction

This is the first of three chapters in which I situate my study in the wider body of literature about national identity. The theoretical literature relating to nations, discourse and the Internet is covered in Chapter Three while an examination of the historical development of New Zealand's national identity has been reserved for Chapter Four. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to clarify the goals of my study and indicate its original contribution to an understanding of the discourses about New Zealand identity which were taking place during the 2005–2008 period under consideration.

This review focuses mainly on the New Zealand-specific empirical literature from the 1980s onwards because it accommodates an era of heightened sensitivity to biculturalism and multiculturalism – both influential factors in the construction of national identity. I argue that, although a notable increase in research about diversity has emerged in recent years, more qualitative investigation into how New Zealand's host population has responded to a changing national identity is required. In addition, I comment on the fact that New Zealand researchers are only just beginning to recognise the value of the Internet as a space in which to examine constructions of the nation's identity.

2.2 A complex national identity

Much has been written about New Zealand's national identity and this is testimony to the nation's preoccupation with what it once was, what it is now, and what it might become. Brown's book, *Great New Zealand argument* (2005), which reproduced texts dating from 1938 to 2004 as a way of running contemporary debate about national

identity alongside historical texts, is indicative of the constant flow of discussion in this area over many years. However, this presents only a sample of what has been written.

Books by historians contributing to the debate about New Zealand national identity in the last 24 years include Keith Sinclair's *A destiny apart – New Zealand's search for national identity* (1986), James Belich's *Paradise reforged– a history of the New Zealanders* (2001), Michael King's *Being Pakeha: An encounter with New Zealand and the Maori renaissance* (1986), *Pakeha: The quest for identity in New Zealand* (1991), *Being Pakeha now: Reflections and recollections of a white native* (2004) and *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (2003), and Byrne's edited book *The new Oxford history of New Zealand* (2009a). Social scientists, too, have become involved, challenging any notion of New Zealand as an ethnically homogeneous nation in the new millennium (Liu, McCreanor, McIntosh, & Teaiwa, 2005).

Although a survey comparing national pride amongst 24 different countries ranked New Zealand in the top seven for feelings of patriotism and nationalism, and fourth in specific domains of pride such as democracy and scientific, technological, sporting and arts achievements (T. Smith & Kim, 2006), attempts to define the identity of the nation have been variable, often relying on symbols and myths from the past. Numerous surveys from marketing companies or those commissioned by Government, for example, have asked New Zealanders to select aspects of their national identity from a list of pre-determined cultural features. Examples include the flightless Kiwi bird or the All Black rugby team (Porter Novelli, 1999), the "true Kiwi values" of honesty, tolerance and friendliness (Larson, 2008, p. 42), or "landscape and environment, cultural activities, or sport" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2009, p. 14). However, such surveys are superficial in that they assume the existence of a finite number of commonly agreed criteria that specify New Zealand identity and are likely to have little relevancy to all New Zealanders today.

In contrast to this approach, New Zealand's Human Rights Commissioner Joris de Bres (2005) lays out the complexity of studying national identity by stating:

[o]ne cannot focus on national or cultural identity to the exclusion of economic and social inequalities; there is a need to develop a greater understanding and protection of indigenous rights as an essential component of a wider diversity; the integration of migrants and refugees is important alongside the preservation of their own cultures; and cultural diversity is thus only part of the overall picture. (p. 291)

Biculturalism and multiculturalism, noted by de Bres, are issues that have emerged independently of each other. Yet they are both important elements in any contemporary investigation of New Zealand national identity and surface strongly as themes in the findings of this study. This chapter therefore pursues two research paradigms that reflect the social and political circumstances of biculturalism and multiculturalism: (i) race relations/racism, and (ii) diversity.

2.3 Race relations/racism

Day and Thompson's (2004) comment that "we should not be surprised about how 'race' and racist thinking informs debates about national identity and citizenship" (p. 148) is pertinent when reflecting on national identity in New Zealand. The first research paradigm of race relations/racism in New Zealand concerns the bicultural relationship between Maori and Pakeha since the 1960s. As will be explained in Chapter Four, this was a time when a renaissance of Maori culture and identity began to emerge. In addition, the highlighting of the colonial injustices of land confiscation and abuse of rights prompted the Government to work towards compensation for Maori. Biculturalism, as my research will show, became a race relations/racism issue affecting the dominant majority narrative about national identity that had developed gradually in the first half of the 20th century (Chapter Four).

Both the terms 'race relations' and 'racism' are used to describe this first paradigm because they are closely linked in the body of research that has dealt with inclusion and exclusion of others within a nation, based on race, ethnicity and culture. The two terms, I believe, mirror the transformation of New Zealand from firstly perceiving itself as having the best race relations in the world (King, 2003; Spoonley, Macpherson, & Pearson, 2004; Spoonley, MacPherson, Pearson, & Sedgwick, 1984; Spoonley, Pearson, & Macpherson, 1996), to a later realisation that it was not impervious to modern racism. Also referred to as 'new' racism (Day & Thompson, 2004) or 'symbolic' racism, modern racism denotes a new form of racial attitude based on a person's moral code or sense of how society should be organised (Sears & Kinder, 1971). Modern racism presented itself in more subtle ways than did overt racism through discourses of cultural

superiority¹(Tuffin, 2008), through institutions (Pilkington, 2008) and in the media (van Dijk, 1991).²

Hiwi Tauroa's seminal work, a book titled *Race against time* (1982), played a significant role in drawing attention to the existence of racism in New Zealand. As the nation's first Race Relations Conciliator (1980–1986), Tauroa was commissioned by the Human Rights Commission to investigate racism following inter-racial clashes between Maori and non-Maori in the late 1970s that challenged the myth of New Zealand as a “multicultural Utopia” (1982, p. 12). This report drew on written submissions and oral hearings from the public of New Zealand, particularly in response to the violent clash in 1979 between engineering students at The University of Auckland emulating a Maori haka (war dance) and the He Taua community group. Members of the community group were offended by the cultural insensitivity of the students' mocking representation of the haka. This was the main incident that “sparked off public awareness of cross-cultural misunderstanding” (Tauroa, 1982, p. 9).

Although *Race against time* was not specifically about New Zealand national identity, it included quotations from the submissions and hearings which highlighted contradictory viewpoints about race relations and provided insight into the differing ways Maori and Pakeha viewed themselves and others. Divergent opinions were highlighted in the report: while Pakeha believed in the need for all New Zealanders to be one people, Maori criticised Pakeha for refusing to accept cultural values other than their own. Anti-Maori themes in particular were evident including the existence of ‘bad Maori’ as activists and troublemakers (in contrast with peaceful ‘good Maori’), the hypersensitivity of Maori about their culture and the unfair privileges afforded to Maori in accessing rights and resources in New Zealand. Such themes, part of a repeated standard story which maintained Pakeha oppression of Maori, have been the subject of a number of papers by Nairn and McCreanor (1990, 1991, 1997).

The media's influence in reinforcing a dominant majority perspective about national identity that assumed Pakeha superiority has also received much attention from

¹ Spoonley et al. (1984) prefer to use the term ‘racism’ rather than ‘race’ given that the biological interpretation of the latter's meaning in the classification of groups of people makes it unacceptable. These authors believe that racism rather than race relations should be the object of study.

² In addition to these areas, more recent studies regarding racism, multiculturalism, post-colonial studies and orientalism have ventured into a relatively new area of ‘whiteness studies’ that looks at the construction of white privilege in society (Hage, 1998; Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Shiels, 2010).

researchers who found that, in certain protest situations, the print media marginalised Maori as a minority group rather than representing them as a Treaty partner (Barclay & Liu, 2003; Praat, 1998). Similar results were also found in Abel's (1997) comparison of television news coverage in 1994 and 1995 of the national celebrations commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Rankine et al.'s (2007) research of news coverage of Waitangi Day published ten years later, indicated that little had changed. Their content and meaning analysis of 740 newspaper articles and 118 television news stories about Maori issues found that many were written from a Pakeha perspective, often portraying Maori as problematic or associated with conflict. This, the authors found, contrasted with news programmes on Maori Television³ which highlighted unity in diversity, focused on tinorangatiranga⁴ and challenged the Government to honour its Treaty obligations.

Such studies exemplify how stereotypes and assumptions are constructed, reinforced and disseminated through the media (Spoonley & Hirsh, 1990; Spoonley & Trlin, 2004), often serving the interests of dominant cultures (Karim, 2007). This not only affects perceptions of minority groups (van Dijk, 1991; Wodak et al., 1999) but also understandings about how the nation's collective identity is constructed. News discourse, however, has not been the only source for identifying racist attitudes that seemingly fragment presupposed notions about national identity membership. The discursive analysis of talk and text has also become an increasingly popular methodology in the investigation of identity and/or racism in New Zealand.

Wetherell and Potter's (1992) research identifying racist talk by middle-class Pakeha made a noteworthy contribution to the research environment of critical studies (Chryssochoou, 2004; McKinlay & McVittie, 2008; Tuffin, 2008). Titled *Mapping the language of racism: Discourse and the legitimization of exploitation*, this research used discourse analysis to highlight the relationship between racism and the social construction of categories. Discursively analysing texts and transcripts of Pakeha focus group interviews, Wetherell and Potter examined the rhetorical strategies that placed them in a position of dominance over Maori. In particular, the authors found that participants constructed Maori in negative terms yet, at the same time, denied that they harboured any racist tendencies towards them.

³ A Government-funded Maori television station which started broadcasting in 2004.

⁴ See glossary.

Taylor (1997) also interviewed New Zealanders for her research on constructing national identities and the nation, but chose participants travelling or living abroad on the basis that their distancing from home meant a greater awareness of their nationality. The findings of her discursive analysis reinforced the concept that New Zealand did not have a single identity, but was made up of three different approaches which people used to position their own constructions of national identity: “New Zealand as a white-dominated former colony; as a Maori or bicultural society; and as a multicultural open economy” (Taylor, 1997, p. 225). Taylor also argued that nations and the national were ideological constructs used to normalise dominant majority discourses of identity and to marginalise, delegitimise and silence other group identities and voices.

Other sources of texts used for analysis affecting constructions of the nation include the public submissions in response to a controversial Government bill in 2004 regarding the ownership of New Zealand’s foreshore and seabed (Kirkwood, Liu, & Weatherall, 2005), and the first reading of the bill itself (R. Kendall, Tuffin, & Frewin, 2005). The first study highlighted both racist and anti-racist discourse, while the second study questioned the Government’s construction of an homogenised national identity that supported seabed and foreshore access for all ‘ordinary New Zealanders’, but which in effect negated any sense of Maori and their rights as indigenous people.

In contrast to themes of racism, some research has indicated shifts in attitude of Pakeha and how they view their identity. Johnson (2005), for example, examined the literature of Pakeha anti-racist organisations in the 1970s, revealing the construction of a new Pakeha identity that supported biculturalism. Bell’s (2009) more recent investigation of semi-structured interviews with 16 young-adult Pakeha/European New Zealanders, born in the late 1970s and early 1980s, found that a dilemma existed between their national identity claim of being New Zealanders based on the experience of being born and raised in the country, and their acknowledgement of Maori as being indigenous. Some of the participants recognised the lack of a clear cultural distinctiveness of their ancestral European and settler origins, and this made them feel secondary to Maori as the First People of New Zealand. This research indicated a generational change in attitude towards Maori and the development of a Pakeha uncertainty about their own identity in New Zealand. Bell attributed this response to the young participants growing up in an environment where a bicultural identity for New Zealanders was not contested.

As can be seen, much of the research falling under the paradigm of race relations/racism in New Zealand highlights the historical relationship between Maori and Pakeha, between the colonised and the coloniser, and has implications for the construction of New Zealand national identity. While the findings of my research suggest a broad spectrum in the discursive construction of national identity, regardless of whether a person is Maori or non-Maori, the effects of biculturalism on national identity construction is still strong particularly when issues arise involving government. But while the discourse about national identity examined in my study indicated a greater awareness about modern racism and the marginalisation of Maori, this applied to other minority groups as well. The emergence of research about diversity in New Zealand, however, presented a much wider perspective about what it meant to be a New Zealander.

2.4 Diversity

Following changes to immigration policy in the late 1980s, the Government accepted increasing numbers of migrants from non-traditional source countries⁵ such as Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and India. Research into diversity featured more prominently in the 1990s and was concerned mainly with the peaceful settlement of new New Zealanders into the cultural landscape. Although race relations/racism did not wane as a research area, a change in perspective to incorporate diversity indicated a shift in paradigm from one that emphasised the “avoidance of problems” to one that looked at the benefits that ethnic diversity could bring to the country (Singham, 2006, p. 36).

New Zealand, as a country that has experienced waves of immigration throughout history, has been reflected in various publications examining the experiences of migrant groups such as: Asian (Bedford & Ho, 2008), Jewish (Gluckman & Gluckman, 1993), Chinese (Ip, 1995), Indian (Palat, 1996; Tiwari, 1980), Vietnamese (Lieu, 1995), Yugoslav (Trlin & Tolich, 1995) and Pasifika people (MacPherson, 1996). In addition, research into hybrid identities such as Pakeha-Samoan (Keddell, 2006), Maori-Pakeha (A. Bell, 2004; Webber, 2008), bi/multiracial Maori women (Moeke-Maxwell, 2005) and Maori-Chinese (Ip, 2008) has emerged, reflecting the influence of inter-marriage on identity.

⁵Preferred immigrants to New Zealand prior to 1987 were from countries such as Britain and Ireland.

The list of diversity research published annually since 2004 in the Human Rights Commission's report titled *Race relations in New Zealand* is impressive, indicating the importance placed on understanding the needs and concerns of diverse New Zealanders. The New Zealand Government's goal of building "an inclusive and diverse society" (Clark, 2006b, February 27) in the new millennium encouraged a particularly strong research culture in the areas of diversity, immigration and settlement. As New Zealand's diversity has increased, so too has the research involving a variety of organisations, not only universities. A more practical approach to improving the settlement of ethnic minorities has resulted in more multidisciplinary studies, bringing together interested parties ranging from academic institutions⁶ to government departments/agencies⁷ and non-governmental bodies.⁸

Research topics have covered acculturation, diversity and policy, communication, education, employment and the workplace, ethnicity, identity, families, health and well-being, immigrants and immigration, intergroup relations and attitudes, international students, language in the workplace, Maori, Pacific peoples, management, media representation, methodological issues and moral values (Human Rights Commission, 2007). Some research has been specifically used to assist the integration of new immigrants. For example, a pamphlet was produced following a research project titled *When do I become a Kiwi? A qualitative account of new migrants' experiences in New Zealand*, offering migrants advice about lifestyle, language and making friends (Robertson, 2006).

In contrast, however, the review of literature showed limited studies about the host community of New Zealanders⁹ that interrogated issues of inclusion and exclusion of national identity in a diverse society. In fact, a downplaying of the role of majority host populations in investigations of cultural and ethnic identities has already been noted

⁶University groups concerned with diversity research include: Victoria University Centre for Cross-Cultural Studies; Massey University's New Settlers Programme Waikato University; Migration Research Group Waikato; Centre for Asian and Migrant Health Research AUT University; Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation, The University of Auckland.

⁷Government departments/agencies supporting research include the Ministries of Labour, Economic Development, Health and Education, the Department of Immigration, the Human Rights Commission, the Families Commission, and the Office of Ethnic Affairs.

⁸ Examples include the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils, the Asia New Zealand Foundation and the Aotearoa/New Zealand Migration Research Centre.

⁹Gendall, Spoonley and Trlin (2007) use the term 'host' community to indicate the people already living in New Zealand. Although this applies to the New Zealand Europeans/Pakeha as the dominant majority group, it also includes other established groups such as Maori and Pasifika peoples though perhaps in a lesser capacity of influence.

(Bowskill, Lyons, & Coyle, 2007). This imbalance is neither a New Zealand-specific nor a discipline-specific issue, as the majority of research into multiculturalism, according to Putnam (2007), generally focuses on the out-groups and, as a result, makes assumptions about the in-groups. Research into host communities is seen as critical given that “successful settlement” of immigrants is reliant on an adjustment by the host community as well as by the newcomers (Gendall et al., 2007, p. 10). Research that has been conducted in this area has depended on polls and surveys to gather data on New Zealanders’ attitudes to immigrants – though some of the findings are contradictory.

In surveys conducted in 2004 and 2005 of 2,020 New Zealanders, a research team including cross-cultural psychologists from Victoria University in Wellington, found that almost three-quarters of New Zealand European respondents perceived immigrants as “making a valuable contribution to the nation and as posing relatively low levels of threat” (Ward, Masgoret, & Vauclair, 2011, p. 4). In an analysis of the survey data, Ward and Masgoret (2008) later used social psychological modelling to measure a variety of variables including multicultural ideology, that is, a positive attitude to the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds – according to race, religion or culture – as part of society. Comparing their findings with published data from Australia and various European countries including Britain, Germany, Spain, Sweden and France, New Zealand was shown to lead the way with its strong endorsement of multicultural ideologies.

The *New Zealand values study* (Rose, Huakau, Sweetsur, & Casswell, 2005) also showed positive results regarding tolerance of ethnic minorities with only three percent of New Zealanders surveyed not wanting to live next door to someone from another race and six percent not wanting to live next door to immigrants or foreign workers. This placed New Zealand in a favourable position regarding tolerance when compared with other OECD countries (cited in Ministry of Social Development, 2006a, April 6). The positive attitude displayed by respondents in all three surveys cited here is consistent. However, it should be noted that one of the methodological issues with survey interviews, such as those described here, is that participants may respond to questions with socially desirable answers (Bryman, 2004).

The Government’s promotion of New Zealand as an inclusive and tolerant society that embraced many ethnic groups did not always translate to New Zealanders’ views

presented in the findings of other studies. In Gendall and Wood's (2004) survey of more than 2,000 New Zealanders, 50 percent of respondents felt there were too many immigrants from China and other Asian countries and between 40 percent and 45 percent said the same about Indian and Pacific Island immigrants. This was in spite of 60 percent of respondents indicating earlier that they welcomed immigrants because of the new ideas and cultures they brought to the community, and 55 percent agreeing that they were good for the economy. Negative sentiments about Chinese, Indian, Korean, Pacific Islanders and South-east Asian immigrant groups were also found in the *North and South Kiwi values survey* four years later (Larson, 2008). Although, between 40 percent and 48 percent of the respondents in a much smaller research sample of just 550 people felt that fewer immigrants from these groups should be allowed "through our borders"; instead, respondents indicated a preference for migrants from Britain, Australia, and Europe (Larson, 2008, p. 45).

One reason for resistance to specific minority groups can be found in the comparative analysis of two surveys carried out in 2003 and 2006, examining the attitudes of New Zealanders to immigrants and immigration (Gendall et al., 2007). Although respondents acknowledged that a culturally diverse nation could have positive outcomes, about half of respondents in both surveys feared that immigration would "overwhelm New Zealand culture" (Gendall et al., 2007, p. 15). As the researchers point out, it was difficult to establish exactly what was meant by New Zealand culture. But the fact there was little change in attitude to immigrants between surveys reflects a commonly recognised problem (and one that was evident in my study) of the insecurity felt by some that multiculturalism was eroding and fragmenting their national identity (Huntington, 2004; M. Phillips, 2006; Sacks, 2007).

Discourse analysis, as a "useful framework for studying contemporary nationalisms" (Sutherland, 2005, p. 185) and as a pathway to understanding inclusiveness and exclusiveness of national identities, has been underutilised within the diversity research paradigm in New Zealand. Research that does exist has tended to highlight concern about modern racism. Lyons et al., (2010), for example, in analysing interviews with young New Zealanders about immigrants, found evidence of racism in their everyday talk. Fourteen adults aged between 18 and 25 years, all Pakeha except for one South African immigrant who had lived in New Zealand for two years, participated in facilitated group discussions prompted by three newspaper articles about immigration in

New Zealand. The subject of participants' talk was found to constantly slip from immigration to issues of race. This type of talk, the authors suggest, reinforced current patterns of social power and inequalities and justified the status quo of Pakeha as the dominant culture.

The print media, too, has come under scrutiny by researchers, particularly since they are recognised as “a key point of contact and a source of understanding between immigrants and host communities” (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. v). A content analysis and comparison of key images and discourses about immigrants was conducted of the daily newspaper *The New Zealand Herald* and a number of other publications between 1993 and 2003. Findings indicated mostly negative sentiments and stereotypes about Asian immigrants in the early to mid-1990s, which the authors believe was fuelled by the anti-immigrant politics of the minority political party New Zealand First. However, a shift was noted in the media's “publicly articulated racialisation” to a more sympathetic representation occurring in the early 2000s, which rejected political anti-immigration rhetoric. The researchers put this down to the media workers' “growing engagement” with diversity (Spoonley & Butcher, 2009, p. 355). But newspaper and magazine articles have not been the only media genres to influence and shape public discourse about national identity. New media technology too has widened the scope for people to have access to an extensive and far reaching range of texts in recent years.

2.5 New Zealand diversity on the Internet

The Internet has been the focus of international research about a number of ethnic identities (Parker & Song, 2006, 2009) and is considered to be a place where multicultural politics can be observed because of the Internet's “publicness... lack of a fixed geography, its wide dissemination and accessibility to all those using an Internet connection and, not least its interactive character” (Siapera, 2006, p. 21). However, the literature review revealed only a small number of studies connecting identity with New Zealand-related online texts.

Investigations have been conducted into the impact of Maori content and language use online (Keegan, 2000; Kovacic, 2001; Muhamad-Brander, 2010). But Muhamad-Brandner's (2010) research, in particular, raised concerns about Maori-related websites. She found that, rather than enhancing Maori ethnic identity, some of the websites under investigation demonstrated a limited depth of knowledge or detracted from preferred

traditional Maori practices for learning such as oral storytelling. Another Internet-related study analysed comments in social media responding to videos of “infamous New Zealand race furores” – one involving a politician and the other a television presenter. It found that 80 percent of the comments featured “racist abuse, obscenities or a mixture of both” (Human Rights Commission, 2011a, September 16, para. 2–3). However, apart from these few studies, it appears that CMC has been a relatively under-utilised area for research about New Zealand identity, even though these New Zealand demographers (Callister, Didham, & Kivi, 2009) note that:

technological advances in communication are diversifying the way in which ethnicity, culture and human knowledge (...) [are] being maintained and shared. Most significantly cyberspace is increasingly used as a space for individuals and groups to actively express, and hypothetically create, identities including perhaps new ‘ethnic’ identities. (p. 19)

My study, therefore, not only contributes to the study of New Zealand national identity, but is also an investigation that ventures into the relatively unexplored area of cyberspace to seek out relevant discourses. Ideally, this will encourage further investigations, particularly since the Internet has become so much part of the daily life of New Zealanders (P. Smith et al., 2010).

2.6 Surveying the research landscape

This chapter has shown that the New Zealand-specific literature has dealt with two divergent approaches related to New Zealand identity. The two paradigms of race relations/racism and diversity indicate a shift from one that challenged New Zealand’s reputation as having the best race relations in the world, to one that sought to work proactively in building a socially cohesive society within New Zealand.

Studies using survey methodology have provided some sense of the impact of diversity on the nation’s identity. While this has produced a degree of interesting data and highlighted contradictory views of participants, it has not necessarily provided deeper understandings about national identity as an inclusive and exclusive category. Arguably, qualitative research into *how* the national identity of New Zealanders is constructed is under-represented in the literature. Although discursive analysis has featured strongly within the race relations/racism paradigm with regard to Maori-Pakeha relationships, comparable research within the diversity paradigm is noticeably absent. In addition, any research that examined discourse using the discourse-historical approach of CDA

(Wodak et al., 1999), which I employed for my research, did not surface. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, DHA has been a growing field in the study of identity in European countries, with a particular emphasis on discourse and discrimination. It therefore seems appropriate that New Zealand identity, too, should benefit from similar methods of scrutiny.

In considering the diversity research highlighted in this section, it is clear that a comprehensive effort has been made to investigate various ethnic and cultural groups for the purpose of building social cohesion. Emphasis on race relations/racism appears to have been reduced, or at least masked, by the predominance of research on diversity issues. Research about Maori, in fact, appears to have been subsumed into the diversity stream, though advances in addressing bicultural issues in the last two decades of the 20th century may be responsible for this (King, Hill, & Haas, 2004). Overall, the academic literature itself constructs New Zealand identity as a multicultural mosaic that requires nurturing to achieve a socially cohesive society. But the comparative shortfall of research about host communities raises questions as to whether this is due to the predominant focus on diversity, or whether it is a way of avoiding more controversial, and perhaps more unsettling, issues.

In summary, the rationale for my research is based on my view that attention to the discursive construction of New Zealand national identity in an era of increasing diversity needs to be addressed. However, considering a number of recommendations offered by Gilroy (2004) in conjunction with my reviewing of the empirical literature has enabled me to determine my research goals which I outline in my conclusion.

2.7 Conclusion

Gilroy's (2004) defence of learning to live with difference on an "increasingly divided but also convergent planet" includes some pertinent recommendations that assist in defining my research goals (p. 3). Gilroy states:

We need to know what sort of insight and reflection might actually help increasingly differentiated societies and anxious individuals to cope successfully with the challenges involved in dwelling comfortably in proximity to the unfamiliar without becoming fearful and hostile.

We need to consider whether the scale upon which sameness and difference are calculated might be altered productively so that the strangeness of strangers goes out of

focus and other dimensions of a basic sameness can be acknowledged and made significant.

We also need to consider how a deliberate engagement with the twentieth century's histories of suffering might furnish resources for the peaceful accommodation of otherness in relation to fundamental commonality.

... We need to ask how an increased familiarity with the bloodstained workings of racism – and the distinctive achievements of the colonial governments it inspired and legitimated – might be made to yield lessons that could be applied more generally, in the demanding contemporary settings of multicultural social relations. (pp. 3–4)

Gilroy's recommendations connect the two research paradigms of racism/race relations and diversity by acknowledging the existence of problems with difference. But, equally, he promotes the concept that positive outcomes can be achieved. Taking into account these recommendations, along with my intention to contribute to existing literature about national identity, the goals of my research are to:

1. examine discourses about New Zealand identity in official (that is, political and governmental) texts to confirm my observation of calls for a new national identity;
2. identify and illustrate the existence of any reinforcement of official discourse or counter/resistive identity discourses about New Zealanders by accessing their everyday talk in texts located in CMC sites (that is a selected blog site and e-list);
3. discover any linguistic devices or discursive strategies that illustrate patterns of language relating to the promotion of, acceptance of, or resistance to a new New Zealand national identity based on diversity;
4. contextualise these discourses socially, politically, culturally and historically;
5. examine the role of the Internet in shaping the debate on national identity.

Through these goals and the three research questions outlined in Chapter One my study will, contribute to an understanding of the issues that are raised in the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of New Zealand identity in response to diversity. The next chapter

outlines the theoretical foundation of this study, beginning with Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of modern nations as imagined communities.

Chapter Three: Theoretically situating the thesis– Anderson, discourse and the Internet

[t]he members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

Anderson (1983, p. 6)

3.1 Introduction

This thesis explores discourses about New Zealand national identity in two Internet discussions. It examines how New Zealanders constructed their identity during the early years of the 21st century, when the Government repeatedly declared that a ‘new’ national identity was emerging. This chapter presents my theoretical approach and explains how my study transcends the classical debate about nations and nationalism that focused on explaining the origins of nations and the reproduction of dominant discourse relating to nationhood. My research is therefore part of the post-classical phase (that emerged in the late 1980s) and pays attention to fields omitted by earlier theorists, such as multiculturalism, identity, citizenship and racism, to achieve a “richer understanding of the dialectic of national self-identification” (Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 56). However, my study still relies on one of the key theories within the classical debate for its starting point– Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined communities* (1983).

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section situates Anderson within wider debates over the origins of nations and explains his constructivist positioning. Anderson has been singled out as the main theorist who advanced the assumption of the “existence of a human collectivity” (Cubitt, 1998, p. 4) which motivated members of a nation to elaborate and reinforce a sense of community. I outline his theory of nations as imagined communities, which aided an understanding of the historical forces that led to the rise of modern nation states and the discourse that upheld them (Cubitt, 1998).

In the second section of this chapter, *Discursively analysing national identity*, I provide greater detail about my post-classical approach, demonstrating how theory can inextricably move into method. Building on the relationship of language and communications technology with nationalist discourse identified by Anderson, I discuss

my intention to analyse how national identity is constructed in everyday talk of New Zealanders on the Internet. In particular, I elaborate on the role of discourse by considering discourse analysis as a useful methodology for this research and highlight the elements of post-structuralism contained within it – namely that the social world is constructed through language, yet can be interpreted in a myriad of ways.

In the third section, I examine the Internet as a technology that enables the spread of discursive imaginings of national identity in ways Anderson himself never considered. Consequently, I argue for the ongoing relevance of the concept of ‘imagined communities’ in relation to 21st-century communications technology and, in particular, how this supports my selection of Internet discussions as case studies for my empirical research.

3.2 Framing Anderson

Theories about the origins of nation states have been wide ranging given the vast number of countries that exist, the unique history each embodies and the demographic change of populations over time. An account of all theories of nationalism would be extensive and beyond the scope of this study. This section, however, situates Anderson within the classical debate about nations which focused on when and how they originated (Day & Thompson, 2004; Ozkirimli, 2000) and explains why I place so much emphasis on ‘imagined communities’ in this study.

The diversity of opinions about the existence of nations, particularly since the 18th century, suggests that there exists not merely a clash of theories or competing ideologies (Ozkirimli, 2000) but debates “involv[ing] radical disagreements over definitions of key terms, widely divergent histories of the nation and rival accounts of the ‘shape of things to come’” (A. D. Smith, 2001, p. 3). In the context of my research, I use Hobsbawm’s (1990) working definition of what constitutes a nation as “any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a nation, [and] will be treated as such” (p. 8), and consider the idea of identifying with a nation or having feelings of nationalism, as an integral part of the way they distinguish themselves from others not only politically, but also personally (Cubitt, 1998). Reference is made in this chapter to both nationalism and national identity, because the preference of theorists in the classical phase has been to write mainly about nations and nationalism. The post-

classical phase, however, has tended to place greater emphasis on national identity which is indicative of the difference between the two stages.

Broadly speaking, the range of nationalism theorists within the classical stage can be grouped under the following labels – though none of these is mutually exclusive:

- Primordialists (essentialists), such as Edmund Burke (1758), Johann von Herder (1776), Johann Fichte (1798), Joseph de Maistre (1852), Edward Shils (1957) and Clifford Geertz (1963), believed that nations have always existed and are rooted in a shared cultural history within defined borders.
- Perennialists, such as Llobera (1994) and Hastings (1997), followed the notion that nations could date as far back as to the Middle Ages or, in Armstrong's (1982) view, even back to antiquity.¹
- Modernists such as Anderson (1983), Breuilly (1985), Hobsbawm (1990), Kedourie (1993) and Gellner (1998) suggested that nations are a modern construction and do not need to rely on an ethnic past.
- Ethnosymbolists, such as Anthony Smith (1986) and Hutchinson (1994), advanced the view that nations were not constructed but, rather, resulted from a "*reinterpretation of pre-existing cultural motifs and of reconstruction of earlier ethnic ties and sentiments*" (A. D. Smith, 2001, p. 83) [author's emphasis].

Regardless of the arguments supporting or refuting each of these theorists, the conclusion can be drawn that no single, universal theory is possible (Ozirimli, 2000). However, it is the studies of Armstrong, Anderson, Gellner and Smith that provide the core debate of the classical approach to nations and nationalism, whereby nation states were seen as modern social phenomena (Day & Thompson, 2004).

Anderson was the key theorist who brought a fresh dimension to nationalism studies which had been mainly preoccupied with the formation of nation states around the world (T. Phillips, 2002). Concerned with the lack of "plausible theory" about the

¹In spite of Armstrong's stance on nations, he agreed with Anderson and Hobsbawm that national identity was invented. Armstrong is regarded as the "founding father" of ethnosymbolism, though he prefers not to classify himself as such (Ozirimli, 2000, p. 170).

“immense influence” of nationalism on the modern world, he sought to explain the evolution and spread of nationalism in early modern Europe (1991, p. 3). However, it was Anderson’s constructivist approach that had a “worldwide impact... across academic disciplines” (Hague, 2004, p. 18), claiming that national identities were neither fabricated nor invented, but actually constructed in the minds of the nation because of the impossibility of knowing or meeting every one of the “fellow- members” (Anderson, 1983, p. 6).

Anderson attributed responsibility for the rise of modern nations during the Age of Enlightenment to historical forces – resulting through economic, social and political change towards the end of the 18th century. This included a decline in religious dominance, a move to more secular language and a sense of “simultaneous national experience” fostered through the “standardization of national calendars, clocks and language” (Hague, 2004, p. 18). While religion and large cultural systems had dominated the way of life, a fundamental change in the way of apprehending the world emerged making it possible “to ‘think’ the nation” (Anderson, 1991, p. 22). This was particularly true as populations became increasingly literate and, through books and newspapers as the earliest forms of mass communication, they developed a sense of national consciousness. In fact, Anderson refers to print capitalism – the combination of print technology with publishers’ desires for profit – as aiding the dissemination of discourses of nationalism. The introduction of vernacular language in printed material (rather than the languages of Latin and Greek used traditionally by elites) meant that people became more aware of others who shared their nation and language. They imagined their nation as a community that had limited boundaries, with a defined population and territory, and which was ruled by the state. The resulting nationalist discourse played an integral role in the imagining of one’s nation as a cultural artefact – a process which Anderson (1983) believes continues in contemporary societies.

Anderson’s constructivist positioning signalled a “move from the realm of the object to that of subjective consciousness and perception” and led to a greater focus on national identity and identification (Day & Thompson, 2004, p. 87). But while the masses during the Age of Enlightenment became more capable of, and more confident in, imagining their nation, the recognition of the hegemonic potential of nation-building was also apparent. Official discourse about nationalism developed in response to “popular

nationalist movements”, though this meant that dominant constructions of nationhood could also be challenged (Ozкимli, 2000, p. 150).

3.2.1 Moving to a post-classical approach

Anderson’s views sat on the cusp of the post-classical approach to nation states which arose in the late 1980s and early 1990s suggesting people played an “active role in interpreting and making sense of nationalism and national identity” (Day & Thompson, 2004, p. 16) through a “multiplicity of experiences” (Day & Thompson, 2004, p. 196). Anderson’s theory has been criticised by some academics – ranging from feminists (Mayer, 2000) to post-colonial scholars (Chatterjee, 1993; Said, 2001) – for being too simplistic and narrow in not considering different gender or ethnic groups, and focusing too much on European colonialism (Hague, 2004). But it was in fact omissions such as these – intentional or otherwise – that stimulated the post-classical approach. In response to his critics, Anderson (1991) simply stated in his revised edition of *Imagined communities* that: “[it was] a task beyond my present means” (p. xii). Making it clear that he never intended to address every criticism, he felt that *Imagined communities* should be left “largely as a an ‘unrestored’ period piece” where his theorising was “still on the margins of the newer scholarship on nationalism” (Anderson, 1991, p. xii).

Ozкимli (2000) argues that the more sophisticated theories of the post-classical approach reflect global change such as “migration, race, multiculturalism, diasporas and the like” (p. 192). New ways of thinking about national phenomena included focusing on issues such as “the differential participation of women in nationalist projects, the daily reproduction of nationhood, the experience of nationalism in post-colonial societies, the specific contributions of the people on the national margins, that is the ‘hybrids’, to the construction of national identities and the like” (Ozкимli, 2000, p. 10). The post-classical phase of nationalism studies, although critical of the classical approach, used it to explore nationalism differently (Day & Thompson, 2004).

Yet there can be little doubt about the influence of *Imagined communities*. It has been so widely applied across academic fields that some have labelled it a cliché (Brabazon, 2001; Hague, 2004), while others have referred to it as “the dominant metaphor for the social scientific study of nationalism” (Day & Thompson, 2004, p. 87). Academic papers are littered with numerous references to Anderson, ranging from a simple acknowledgement of this original concept of ‘imagined communities’ as a starting point

for research (Gavrilos, 2002) to the actual application of his theory in specific research projects (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002; T. Phillips, 2002; Stables, 2003). Hague (2004), for example, notes several geographers in particular who “are moving beyond Anderson’s thesis to understand both imagined and material communities of nations and nationalisms” (p. 20). He cites Martin (1997), who explored the construction of gender roles in the Irish national imagination, and Hoelscher (1999), who looked at the power of elite groups in a Swiss heritage community in the United States in using imagining for their specific identity. Other academics have also used *Imagined communities* as a starting point from which to investigate national identity constructions, selecting specific objects for examination such as illustrations on various European currencies (Pointon, 1998), images on Finnish postage stamps (Raento & Brunn, 2008) or maps (Daniels, 1998). Billig’s (1995) theory of banal nationalism is based on the imagining and reinforcement of national identity through everyday signs which appear in the background of daily life such as national flags, maps, songs or currency.

With my intention to focus on contemporary discourse about New Zealand national identity in this study, it was logical to follow Anderson’s positioning regarding nations as the starting point for my research. After all, New Zealand’s increasingly diverse population in the early 2000s, in conjunction with issues surrounding the relationship between multiculturalism and biculturalism, and the official forecast of a new identity, suggested a diversity of discourse in the construction of this particular imagined community. These issues occurred in response to global changes in the 20th and 21st centuries, and my research in the post-classical phase therefore “reflect[s] developments in the real world” (Ozкимli, 2000, p. 191). However, two aspects of Anderson’s theory – discourse and print capitalism – fundamental to the design of my study are discussed next.

3.3 Discursively analysing national identity

The emergence of the post-classical phase was not intended to invalidate earlier perspectives from the classical debate about nations, but proposed “new ways in thinking about national phenomena” (Ozкимli, 2000, p. 191). Illustrating a progression from theory into method, the second part of this chapter builds on two concepts from *Imagined communities* to explain, first, my theoretical stance on discourse analysis as my preferred methodological approach and, second, the Internet as one of the newest

forms of communications technology that provides a space and a place for both national identity construction and its analysis.

To answer a question central to Anderson's theory – how does the “imaginary community reach[es] the minds of those who are convinced of it?” – Wodak et al. (1999) offer the explanation that: [the imagined community]... is constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture. National identity is thus the product of discourse (pp. 44–45).

From this, we can assume that the analysis of discourse can provide a way of understanding how national identity is constructed. Sutherland (2005), in fact, argues in favour of discourse theory for studying nationalism as an ideology: “especially the antagonistic dynamic between nation-state and minority nationalisms” (p. 185). She believes that, because nationalism is “structured conceptually and expressed linguistically”, it requires unpacking or deconstruction of its “constitutive elements and internal tensions” within the context of which it has occurred (p. 197). A postmodern approach to discursively analysing nationalism, according to Sutherland (2005), is “less concerned with the pursuit of truth” and more focused on “conceptual manipulation and ambiguity” (pp. 197–198).

Therefore, a detailed examination of discourse about New Zealand national identity was one way of understanding “*how* [a nation] comes to be imagined and/or constructed in a particular way” (Day & Thompson, 2004, p. 95). However, an analytical approach was needed that recognised the multifarious nature of national identity, the range of world views that could affect its construction and the power of certain groups – such as the dominant majority, the media and various institutions – to manage and reproduce preferred nationalist discourses.

While structuralists, such as Althusser, Barthes and Lévi-Strauss developed the idea that identity was created through social institutions and that “particular collective forms of identity” could be imprinted on “unresisting subjects”, it was the post-structuralists who highlighted the fact that social institutions were not wholly responsible for identity construction. Powell (1998) identifies post-structuralist thinkers such as Derrida, Kristeva, Deleuze, Guattari, Barthes and Foucault as postmodern theorists (the latter two moving from structuralism into a post-structuralist vein in their later work), whose

commonality lay in their beliefs that there was no one dominant worldview and that “pluralism rules” (p. 150). Rather it was individuals who were faced with piecing together their own identities from the “multiplicity of contingent sets of meanings, ideas and practices” (Malesevic, 2003, p. 269), though discourses can be reliant on particular “interpretation[s] of events” that can “shape future events” (Ricento, 2003, p. 630). This suggests the inclusion of a key principle of post-structuralism in my analysis – that there will always be “different and competing versions of any given event because each version will depend on who is observing it, why they are observing it, what discipline or profession they belong to...and what kind of political objectives they might have” (Reekie, 1994, p. 458).

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. As Wodak (2007) points out, people can perceive negative discourses as normal without even knowing they are engaging in its production. Exclusion, for example, can be “integrated into all dimensions of our societies...” and “in some cases...occurs behind the backs of those who practice it” (p. 659). That language and semiotics can be used purposely to shape social practices for political, organisational and commercial gain raises concern (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

The ‘discourse-historical’ approach (DHA) of CDA offered an ideal methodological discursive framework for my study, because of its focus on power and ideology in the discursive construction of identity (Kryzanowski & Wodak, 2007; Ribeiro, 2009; Ricento, 2003; Wodak & Weiss, 2007; Wodak & Wright, 2006). The DHA is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five but it is important to acknowledge here the investigation by Ruth Wodak and her colleagues at the Vienna School of Critical Discourse Analysis into the ‘imagined’ character of Austrian national identity. Using the DHA, Wodak and her colleagues conducted a macro and micro analysis of linguistic and discursive strategies as employed by political elites, the media and participants in semi-public focus group discussions and semi-private qualitative interviews. The findings, which indicated the existence of a range of Austrian identities dependent on social, historical and political contexts, offered potential for a discursive study of New Zealand national identity in a similar framework, even though the two countries were vastly different in origin and culture.

Therefore, the involvement of a post-structural positioning in this study allowed me to interrogate different discourses about national identity – from where they might have originated, which individuals, groups or organisations were involved, what their purposes were, and what the outcomes of such imaginings might be. It enabled me to question dominant discourses about national identity (Chapters Four and Six), seeking to understand how and why they were constructed, and to see how they were received and interpreted, accepted or resisted.

However, locating a data source for this discourse also required a theoretical basis. As indicated earlier, a significant factor in the imagining of nations in the 18th century had been the role of print capitalism. In considering my research in the post-classical phase, which now extended into the 21st century, it seemed logical to consider accessing discourse about New Zealand national identity through the newest and increasingly popular form of communications technology – the Internet.

3.4 New imaginations on the Internet

Incorporating the Internet in my research design enabled an understanding of new ways in which discourses about national identity could be spread, but also studied. The Internet's global accessibility has allowed it to become a rich source for data in examining the construction of identity, even though it originated in the 1960s to aid communications for the American defence force and was known as ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency of the Defense Department). When the Internet became publically accessible in the 1980s, it was used mainly by scientists and computer experts (Debatin, 2008), initially connecting a few universities for the purpose of sharing research data. Even with the invention of email, the early 1990s was still a period when the Internet “remained relatively unknown” (Goodwin, 2004, p. 105). However, the development of the World Wide Web² by Tim Berners Lee in the 1990s – coupled with cheaper computers and more user-friendly software – rapidly turned the Internet into a “mass communication medium [that] anybody with Internet access... [could] now participate in ” (Debatin, 2008, p. 64). Like the Americans and the British, New Zealanders were quick to adopt Internet technology when it became available in the 1990s – even though access in New Zealand had been hampered by either lack of connections, dial-up access only or low broadband speed. A 2007 national survey

² See glossary.

indicated 77 percent of New Zealanders over the age of 18 identified as Internet users (A.G. Bell, Crothers, et al., 2008) which positions New Zealand along with Canada and Sweden as one of the three countries with the highest Internet usage (A.G. Bell, Billot, et al., 2008).

Not only has the Internet been recognised as “an outlet for social interaction”, but it has also been acknowledged as “an outlet for self-construction” (Gonzales & Hancock, 2008, pp. 180–181), where individuals adopt multiple selves and form online relationships (S. Jones, 1997; Turkle, 1995) or become members of virtual communities that spill into the offline world (Rheingold, 1993, 2000), or where they can choose to come and go at will (Castells, 1996). In translating Anderson’s metaphor of imagined communities into a modern-day setting, Jones (1997) suggests that the Internet provides an “imagined and imaginary space” in which the physicality of the body is lost but where narratives exist “because it is an area of discursive interaction and because it contends, often very successfully, for our imagination” (p. 15).

It is not surprising that, with the widespread use of the Internet, a growing body of literature has emerged in recent years highlighting how it has been recognised as a functional space to construct, challenge and imagine national identities. The Internet is a vehicle for state and institutional shaping of national identity (Baasanjav, 2011); in fact, the majority of political texts about a new New Zealand national identity cited in this study could be located on the Internet regardless of whether their original genres were speeches, hard-copy documents or media releases. However, the Internet has also been instrumental in challenging existing social and political structures that can affect “the collective identities of groups and their modes of self-organization” (Zurawski, 1996). Websites have been used, for example, in: the management of the Chiapas uprising in Mexico (Mills, 2002; Zurawski, 1996); the breakup of Yugoslavia (Kaldor-Robinson, 2002); the resistance to the official discourse of the Chinese Nation/Government (Chan, 2005); the crumbling of Sierra Leone due to the civil war in the 1990s (Tynes, 2007); and counteracting threats to Haitian identity (Parham, 2004).

For nations that no longer have a geographical or territorial nation state – the Kurds and Armenians for example (Bakker, 1999, October 21-23) – the Internet has opened a new space shared by members of nations no matter how far apart they might be. Such “non-territorially bound” imagined communities are known as “cybernations” (Mills, 2002, p.

73). This further demonstrates how new digital technologies are “apparently leading to ‘imagined networks’ of globalization, transcending the constraints of physical location and dependence upon the territories and boundaries of the earlier period” (S. Green, Harvey, & Knox, 2005, p. 806).

However, the construction of national identity need not be as explicit as demonstrated by the examples above. In reflecting on Billig’s (1995) notion of banal nationalism where national signs and symbols are unobtrusively flagged in popular culture, the Internet too can be understood as providing a space for everyday talk, particularly in online discussions (forums and blogs, for example), where discourses about national identity can be located and analysed. The Internet’s capacity for multiple communication networks has undoubtedly influenced the way people communicate. The audience is no longer just the consumer but can also be the producer. As Poster (1999) says: “It [the Internet] enables every receiver of a message to produce a message, every individual to disseminate messages to a mass” (p. 239). Consequently, a number of academics consider the Internet as a possible modern version of the Habermasian concept of the public sphere.³ It incorporates the potential for the occurrence of deliberative democratic discourse (Dahlberg, 2001, 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Wright & Street, 2007), has an ability to combine “interpersonal, group and mass communication” (Debatin, 2008, p. 66), effects transnational democracy (Bohman, 2004) and has the potential for “audience-driven public discourses” to “strongly influence the public agenda” forcing the media and political systems to address “socio-political problems and under-represented issues” (Debatin, 2008, p. 70).

Although the free technology of the Internet is open to hackers⁴ and radical groups, it has enabled marginal groups to each have a voice on the Internet where they can “express themselves and engage in a dialog with the global audience of cyberspace” (Mitra & Watts, 2002, p. 488). Also, readers exposed to multiple texts on the Internet that say the same thing become aware of “a consistent voice emerging out of the hypertextual combinations” that can challenge dominant discourses (Mitra & Watts, 2002, pp. 488–489). As a result: “The new technology offers the chance to examine how ‘marginal’ people and nations can attempt to correct some of the biases that have

³ Habermas (1989) attributed the public sphere to the meeting of bourgeois society in the salons and coffee houses of Europe whereby open and democratic discussion could take place amongst individuals who come together as equals without interference from the state. In fact the “activities of the state could be confronted and subjected to criticism” (Thompson, 1995, p. 70).

⁴ See glossary.

been inherent in the traditional structures of speaking power” (Mitra & Watts, 2002, p. 489).

The Internet’s unique characteristics enable “the traditional legitimisation of speaking power” to alter in cyberspace⁵ (Mitra & Watts, 2002, p. 487). But besides creating a space for the discourses of many rather than only the discourses of the powerful to exist, the Internet’s characteristics can also affect how identities – national, racial, ethnic or gendered – might be constructed differently compared with those found in the offline world.

The Internet’s informality and opportunity for anonymity have a profound impact on the way people communicate. Users, reluctant to say much in the real world, may be more honest in the virtual world where they disregard “posturing and social niceties” (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991, p. 120) and reveal more about their true selves (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimmons, 2002). Researchers have found the Internet to be empowering or to reduce inhibitions or anxieties (Amichai-Hamburger, McKenna, & Tal, 2008), to “facilitate open exchanges of controversial political ideas” (Price, 2009, p. 37) and to link people with similar interests or ideas thereby creating virtual communities that can lead to offline relationships (S. Jones, 1997; Rheingold, 2000; Turkle, 1995).

Bakardjieva (2003) comments in her paper on virtual togetherness that “the encounter of the person with the Other, in singular and plural, within the human world; the filling of erstwhile regions of anonymity with detailed knowledge of the fellow human is one of the most exciting promises of the Internet” and is compelling for researchers (p. 311). But, aside from the fact that the Internet enables easy access to data, Internet sites as ethnographic fields for research represent a “qualitatively new medium” that is only just beginning to be understood, but where “systematic research on them can begin to bear fruit” (Feenberg & Bakardjieva, 2004, p. 41). In fact, Mautner (2005) heartily supports the use of web-based material, particularly in CDA research, because of the Internet’s significance in daily life, to the extent that she remarks that “using web-based data should now be the rule, not the exception” (p. 812).

However, I also note here concerns that have been raised that access to the Internet is limited and therefore exclusionary (Dahlberg, 2007), or that domination by corporate

⁵See glossary.

and media organisations might overshadow online democratic discussion and marginalise the voices of minority groups (Dahlberg, 2001, 2005a, 2007). Some academics also fear that creating new opportunities for identity construction via the Internet might reinforce racial divides and inequalities already present in the print culture of the offline world. Herring (2001), for example, has had reservations about the Internet, stating that everyday discourses, opinions, prejudices and stereotypes were merely reconstituted online and continued to perpetuate inequalities. Yet, at the same time, evidence exists of the assertive and empowering ways that the Internet has been used to project minority voices or build national identities which have been under threat.

As Everard (2000) points out, it is easy to create “visions of dark forces” when talking about the Internet which “build up the Other to seem more powerful than it is” (p. 160). Descriptions of the Internet ranging from metaphorical battleground (Bakker, 2001, February 20-24) to a “cybernetic safe place” (Mitra, 2006, p. 251), contrast differing perceptions of the Internet as a relatively new medium for communication. The metaphor of imagined communities has not been lost, however, in the ether of new technologies and has often been referenced by Internet researchers in studies of online genres such as news groups (Baym, 1995, 1998) news sites (Segev, 2008), websites (Jeganathan, 1998), networks (S. Green et al., 2005), internet mailing lists (Marshall, 2007), online fan groups (Bury, 2003), online social networks and groups (Byrne, 2008; Feenberg & Bakardjieva, 2004), Internet-distributed videos (Kaldor-Robinson, 2002) and nationalistic or ethnic websites (Bakker, 2001, February 20-24; Chan, 2005; Kaldor-Robinson, 2002; Mitra, 2006; Muhamad-Brander, 2010; Parham, 2004; Renwick, 2001; Siapera, 2006; Tynes, 2007).

Regardless of this, the Internet provides an ethnographic space for research that does not have to involve the researcher as a visible participant (Mann & Stewart, 2000). However, it also offers an opportunity to examine the discourses about national identity that may have been affected by Internet-specific features such as anonymity, informal language and navigation to other texts. But, more importantly for my study, the Internet presents a means to investigate how New Zealanders negotiated their national identity at a time when official discourse heralded change.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the philosophical basis of my study, drawing together three theoretical strands relating to national identity, discourse and the Internet. Using Benedict Anderson – one of the core theorists in the classical debate on the origins of nations – as a starting point, I have demonstrated the positioning of my study in the post-classical stage of national identity research that investigates diversity. This chapter has outlined particular aspects of Anderson’s theory relating to discourse and communications technology, which I have broadened to encapsulate the Internet as a new medium for discourse analysis.

Imagined communities, a key text in many academic institutions around the world, has been intensely debated and has been applied extensively to a wide range of research in many different disciplines from geography, anthropology, history and sociology, to psychology and communications research. Yet some have suggested that the result of this seeming infatuation with Anderson’s concept has resulted in the term ‘imagined communities’ becoming a common cliché which is over-quoted and often misused, and in some cases “invocation, has... been a substitute for analysis” (Spencer & Wollman, 2002, p. 37). With this suggestion of such apparent academic overexposure, it might appear prosaic for me to entertain applying Anderson’s ideas on nationalism and national identity as the theoretical base for my research. A succinct response to this would be that there is still space for Anderson to be used faithfully, but with originality, in spite of misgivings or misuse by others. Overexposure does not lessen the value of an academic’s work, but rather reinforces its contribution to scholarly thinking and challenges the researcher to discover new ways to apply it.

To consider the national identity of New Zealand – a post-colonial society in the 21st century with a diverse population – required revision of aspects of *Imagined communities* to make the theoretical grounding more relevant. In pursuing a post-classical approach that would take into account significant trends such as multiculturalism and globalisation, I expanded on Anderson’s concepts of language and print capitalism as prime movers of discourse about nationalism, to incorporate a modernised sense of language use, discourse and new media technology which now included the Internet and computer-mediated discourse.

This chapter has presented various theories and studies with regard to the relevance of discourse in national identity construction. Pursuing a post-classical approach has meant that I have considered not only dominant discourses, but also minority group discourses – so often overlooked in the classical debate about nationalism. The DHA offered an already-established and successful methodological framework for studying national identity within historical contexts. No evidence could be found of DHA being used previously in a study about New Zealand national identity and this presented me with an opportunity to contribute new material to the international and local body of research in this area.

The final part of this chapter presented various theories about the connection between the Internet and the construction of national identity though, as Bohman (2004) points out, the Internet's potential as a public space is still not fully understood. Although I highlighted how the Internet has been used by various groups to reinforce, renegotiate, challenge or reconstruct national identities, I suggested that the true value for this study lay in the opportunity to access and analyse discourses about national identity often inherent in the everyday talk located in online discussions. Features such as the anonymity of the Internet, the lack of face-to-face contact and the ability to navigate to other sites and pages, I felt, might reveal new discourses about national identity if, in fact, cyberspace can be considered a form of the Habermasian public sphere as some academics propose (Bohman, 2004; Dahlberg, 2001; Debatin, 2008; Wodak & Wright, 2006).

While I have argued that Anderson has provided me with an important theoretical point of origin for my study, I have also been able to assign him an “intellectual function” in the sense that virtual communities contain the “trajectory of national imagining” (Brabazon, 2001, para. 2). The opportunity for this study to explore national identity construction on the Internet in the everyday talk of New Zealanders could well find new imaginings on the Internet or reveal existing imaginings that had previously experienced difficulty in finding a public outlet to challenge dominant discourses. But, before any online discussions can be analysed, an examination of the historical evolution of the dominant discourse about New Zealand identity and its response to social change is required.

Chapter Four: In search of a New Zealand identity

What, then is the need for a further debate about ‘identity’? Who needs it?

Hall (1996, p. 1)

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical foundation of this study by highlighting the role of Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ in the construction of national identities. I also discussed the Internet as a communicative space in which discourses about identities not only are produced and disseminated, but also can be easily accessed by researchers. However, Alcoff and Mendieta’s (2003) recommendation that identities need to be analysed in both their cultural location and in relation to historical epoch requires the consideration of events that have contributed to the development of New Zealand national identity.

This chapter is divided into two sections to explore the theme of an evolving New Zealand national identity that responded to change over the decades, from the arrival of British settlers in the 18th century through to the period in question (2005–2008). The first section examines the narrative that suited the dominant Pakeha majority that New Zealand national identity evolved as it developed from a colony into a nation (Pearson, 1996; Wilson, 2009). I discuss how the gradual destabilisation of this particular national narrative through social, cultural, economic and political challenges, beginning in the 1960s, led to an identity crisis in the later decades of the 20th century. My focus on this particular narrative should not be assumed, however, to reinforce or promote it. Rather, I have foregrounded it precisely for the reason that this ‘story’ about New Zealanders has been pre-eminent and reproduced, particularly by institutions and in the mainstream media. I regard the need to understand how the dominant majority has constructed national identity over the years to be an important precursor in exploring whether a ‘new’ national identity did emerge, as this was the predominant construction of identity that was to be challenged.

The second section of this chapter outlines the intensification of the debate about national identity in New Zealand in the 1990s and early 2000s as the country's ethnic demographic became increasingly diverse. I look at the impact that diversity had on host New Zealanders, on minority groups and on politicians that led to an official discourse about a new national identity. This is set against a background of global concern about multiculturalism following a number of ethnic riots and terrorist attacks in other countries, a rising tension between biculturalism and multiculturalism, and the politicisation of national identity as the Government sought to market New Zealand globally as “a unique and unified community and as a competitive economic entity” (Skilling, 2008, p. 228).

It is important at the beginning of this chapter to clarify my use of the terms ‘multiculturalism’, ‘biculturalism’ and ‘diversity’. New Zealand has never had an official multicultural policy although the Government ‘played’ with the word multiculturalism in the 1970s before it was superseded by biculturalism (Pearson, 2005, p. 37) in the mid-1980s, after having “languished in political limbo” (Fleras, 1998, p. 119). Multiculturalism is used in this study when referring to countries with multicultural immigration policies, while biculturalism specifically reflects the relationship between Maori and Pakeha in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi. However, my use of diversity reflects the terminology of official discourse that indicates the values, beliefs and practices of various cultural, ethnic and religious groups, including Pakeha and Maori.

4.2 A national narrative

This section considers the formation of New Zealand's national identity as the country progressed from a British colony to a nation (Belich, 2001). Although this particular construction of New Zealand national identity incorporates aspects that have been criticised as being an “overarching” and “orthodox narrative” dominated by European “ideas, assumptions and practices with regard to remembering and writing the past” (Byrnes, 2009b, pp. 11–12), it reflects the national story that was taught in schools and published in books over many decades. The dominant majority narrative is defined by Turner¹ (2007) as a ‘short’ version of the nation's history beginning with the arrival of

¹ Stephen Turner argues that two versions of New Zealand history exist – a long version dating back to the arrival of Maori and a short version whereby the nation's history starts from European colonisation (2007).

the British in the 18th century. Consequently, New Zealand's pre-European history involving Maori was ignored and Euro-centric views of Maori tended to "distort perception[s] of social reality" (Walker, 1987, p. 11). Therefore, I incorporate other points of view in this section to offer a wider perspective about the evolution of national identity.

Although the English explorer Captain James Cook was the first European to set foot on New Zealand soil in 1769, it was not until 1840 that the country was officially established as a British colony with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between the indigenous Maori and the Crown. Based on the European concept of nation as a sovereign entity (as reflected in the Peace of Westphalia),² the Treaty sealed a formal partnership,³ assigning some form of authority over New Zealand to the British whereby Maori would be protected as British subjects. As each Maori chief came forward to sign the Treaty, the British Consul Governor Hobson reiterated the words "He iwitahitatu" (We are all one people) (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2010).

However, Maori expectations that the possession of their lands and cultural rights would be retained, and that the authority of tribal chiefs would be preserved, were later disregarded by the British. Confiscation of Maori land and other injustices occurred, often involving the loss of many lives particularly with the land wars (1843–1872). In reality, Maori became "subordinate beings, subjects of a distant Queen" (James, 2007, para. 3), while the British, named 'Pakeha' by Maori, regarded themselves as superior. The Maori word 'Pakeha' initially referred to white settlers in 1814 but was later applied to all Europeans in the mid-19th century, and then only to New Zealand Europeans. Pakeha has become a much-contested label amongst New Zealand Europeans because some believe it to be derogatory (Belich, 2001).

In the first years of European colonial settlement, a distinctive New Zealand identity was virtually non-existent. From their colonist beginnings, British settlers did not regard themselves as 'New Zealanders' leaving that descriptor to denote Maori.⁴ The settlers

² The treaties contained within the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648 amongst European nations, were together an attempt to end religious wars by defining the political boundaries of nations so they could be regarded as sovereign states.

³ Five hundred Maori chiefs signed the Treaty, though some refused to enter into the agreement (J. Phillips, 2009).

⁴ From 1769, Maori were called 'New Zealanders' for a period of about 80 years (Skilling, 2008, p. 54), though prior to the arrival of Europeans they identified themselves according to their waka (boats that

still saw themselves as British, working hard to recreate a superior England (Binney, Bassett, & Olssen, 1990) or a 'Better Britain' (Belich, 2001) in the South Seas.

Historians have differed in their views of the emergence of a New Zealand identity. Historian Keith Sinclair, for example, in his book *A destiny apart – New Zealand's search for national identity* (1986), stressed the proactive stance of European immigrants in building a unique identity in the first half of the 20th century by reflecting this in arts, literature, sports, defence and politics and by their involvement in the first and second world wars.

In contrast to Sinclair, other academics regard national identity as emerging much later. Although New Zealand formally became a legal independent state when it was granted Dominion⁵ status in 1907, feelings of nationhood took some time to surface (James, 2007). It appears that legally 'being' a nation was not the same as harbouring feelings of 'belonging' to a nation. Pearson (2009), in fact, prefers to view New Zealand as a 'state-nation' rather than a 'nation-state' since "the state was a vital agency for incoming colonial elites achieving control over new territories and was a necessary prerequisite for achieving nationhood"⁶ (p. 34). Belich (2001) too, believes that New Zealand still had a strong attachment with Britain which affected how the nation saw itself.

New Zealand in fact moved from a state of colonisation to one of recolonisation beginning in the 1880s, when links with Britain were strengthened due to economic, technological, political, historical and ideological forces (Belich, 2001). For New Zealand to thrive and prosper, it relied on its relationship with Britain in a number of ways. British emigration to New Zealand was encouraged with the promise of new opportunities for pioneers to own land and where, unlike Britain, there was less emphasis on class status amongst the New Zealand Europeans. Also important for New Zealand's economy, Britain was a significant trading partner importing a great deal of its meat and dairy produce. But, although emotional ties with Britain existed, a sense of being distinctive emerged during this time. The most significant shift in national identity construction, whereby a greater sense of belonging to New Zealand was felt by

brought them to New Zealand), their iwi (tribes) and hapu (subtribes) (A. Bell, 1996) rather than as a nation of people.

⁵ That is, the status of a self-governing territory.

⁶ Skilling also presents the argument of New Zealand being a 'state-nation' but from the perspective that the nation was constructed in particular ways to respond to "the country's vulnerable position within the world economy" (2008, p. 54).

its inhabitants, occurred during decolonisation between 1960 and 1999 (Belich, 2001). Being a New Zealander no longer applied solely to those people born in the country; it also included those immigrants who experienced being part of an “outlier society” and of living in a very different landscape (James, 2007, para. 12). However, this transition from being ‘British’ to becoming a ‘New Zealander’ was not immediate. In fact, King (2003) suggests that at one stage a dual identification with Britain and New Zealand existed.

The various historical developments within this decolonising period destabilised the dominant narrative of New Zealand identity and created a sense of crisis – an experience that Parekh (1994) believes has been faced by a number of countries leading to changes in their national identities. Parekh (1994) cites Canada, Germany, India and Algeria as examples of countries where national identities have changed resulting from “different kinds of perplexity and agonizing choices” (p. 501). New Zealand’s identity crisis may not have been on such a grand scale as were these examples but a sense of uncertainty still arose as the nation struggled to deal with a number of challenges that would affect how it was defined.

4.2.1 A national identity crisis

The period of decolonisation marked a time when the security of a New Zealand European-dominated identity was threatened as a result of three significant developments – Britain breaking its economic ties with New Zealand, a resurgence in Maori identity and an increase in the number of new immigrants from countries other than Britain (Belich, 2001). It is these developments on which I elaborate next to explain the impact on the construction of the New Zealand identity.

Untying the apron strings attached to Mother England

Britain’s membership to the newly formed European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 heralded the start of a dramatic downturn in New Zealand exports to the United Kingdom – its major market. As a result, loyalty and emotional ties between the two countries were severely affected. To compensate, New Zealand sought to geographically reorientate itself to the Asia-Pacific region for economic and political purposes – at one stage positioning itself as a Pacific nation and then later as an Asian nation (Mitchell, 2003; Pawson, 1996). Britain’s perceived rejection of New Zealand led to feelings of resentment, further distancing the relationship between the two

countries to the extent that, at one stage, British immigrants were viewed as negatively as were other minority immigrant groups (Mitchell, 2003).

Although British culture still remained at the core of New Zealand European identity, there was now a greater impetus to seek out a true New Zealand identity or, as some see it, a majority group or Pakeha identity (Pearson, 1989; Spoonley, 2005). One way to achieve this was to use symbols and myths as identity markers that created a fictive and romanticised history (A. Bell, 1996; C. Bell, 1996). As far back as the late 1800s, certain symbols had already been used as signifiers of New Zealand. The kiwi bird, for example, appeared in a university coat of arms in 1887 (Cryer, 2002), on the first six-penny pictorial stamp in 1898, and was also used as a representation of New Zealand in newspaper cartoons during the first World War (J. Phillips, 2011). The Maori people were also appropriated as cultural exhibits by the Government to boost tourism in the early 1900s (Diamond, 2010). King (2003) refers to the “echoes of old New Zealand” that still resonated within contemporary New Zealand culture such as the desire to preserve the wild, untamed aspect of the beautiful landscape as a place to hunt, fish and shoot, the ‘do-it-yourself’ attitude to home maintenance, “informal social attitudes” and an “egalitarian instinct” for the equitable distribution of resources in the community (p. 507).

Signifiers of a New Zealand identity became widely used in the late 1980s – most notably in the form of ‘Kiwiana’ – the “quirky things that contribute to a sense of nationhood” (Wilson, 2009). These included objects such as the pavlova meringue dessert and commonly worn summer footwear called jandals, iconic symbols of the kiwi bird and the silver fern, and New Zealand heroes such as mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary or the All Blacks rugby team. These were important ingredients of a Kiwi identity that drew on a nostalgic past as a way of “reject[ing] alienating processes of the present day in favour of the perceived ‘natural’ order of the past” (C. Bell, 2004, p. 185).

As Pearson (1990) notes, the establishment of a “multiplicity of symbols surrounding the rituals of public life, the functioning of institutions, and the public celebration of events, groups, and individuals” helped to “shape cultural traditions” (pp. 70–71). Symbols, icons and nationalistic themes were regularly used by the media, public

relations, advertising and marketing companies⁷, and government in ‘branding’ New Zealand, and as a way of securing possibly shaky self-definitions of New Zealanders as a people (Crothers, 2007). The unconscious ‘flagging’ of national symbols in everyday life through newspapers and television for example, referred to as ‘banal nationalism’ by Billig (1995), is regarded as a characteristic of nation-building societies.

Arguably, this behaviour was based on a New Zealand European perspective that reinforced a ‘Pakeha identity’ (A. Bell, 1996; King, 1986, 1991; Pearson, 2008; Spoonley et al., 1996) as New Zealand moved away from a British identity. But it also resulted as a counterbalance to a rapidly rising Maori identity that some critics see as the continuation of colonization (C. Bell, 2004; Gibbons, 2003).

Maori renaissance

Race relations between Maori and Pakeha had been deemed superior compared with other countries with indigenous populations such as Australia and Canada and, in fact, this concept was reinforced in school texts from the 1920s onwards (King, 2003). Some argue that Maori isolation in rural areas had meant less contact with Europeans, thereby reducing opportunities for negative feelings to develop (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). King (2003) relates that Maori and Pakeha, prior to World War II, had lived “separate but parallel” lives which enabled them their own distinct identities (p. 363).

The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi was envisioned as an agreement for the equal partnership between the two peoples of the nation, even though the constitutional nature of the Treaty was later contested. However, the “forgetting of the history of violence in the construction of the New Zealand nation-state” (which involved much bloodshed in the land wars and the confiscation of tribal lands) helped construct ‘New Zealander’ as a “fictive and unifying ethnicity/nationality” (A. Bell, 1996, pp. 152–154). In fact, Walker (1987) suggests that what Pakeha had written about Maori over the years had been “a variegated mishmash of romanticism, myth-making, fact and fiction with liberal lashings of stereotyping, denigration and distortion of history” (p. 11).

⁷ Examples of inclusion of Kiwiana in the media include the Toyota cars and Air New Zealand advertisements (A.G. Bell, 2001), New Zealand Insurance (www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oevo71dyzM), McDonald’s (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5CX_NCf8Ow&feature=related), as well as Tourism New Zealand’s ‘100% Pure’ campaign which ran for 10 years from 1990 (Tourism New Zealand, September 16, 2010). Aspects of the ‘Kiwi’ identity were also touted in research commissioned by the Retirement Commission in New Zealand as providing an opportunity to promote a positive ‘Kiwi’ identity-salience as a mechanism that would encourage New Zealanders to join retirement savings schemes (Dupuis, 2009).

In reality, Maori were treated as a marginalised people as were other minority groups that immigrated later to New Zealand.⁸ The common feeling had been that the Maori race would die out or be culturally lost through inter-marriage (Belich, 2007, September 26). However, Maori became increasingly visible within the population following World War II, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s when, in search of employment, they moved from rural environments to become city dwellers. Maori population proportion numbers rose from 5 per cent in the 1900s to more than 15 per cent by the end of the 20th century as a result of lower mortality and increased birth rates. Consequently, a greater presence of Maori in urban areas led to an increase in racial prejudice. This was not necessarily blatant racism, but a number of studies over several decades have shown New Zealand Europeans using discriminatory language when talking about Maori (Ausubel, 1960; McCreanor, 2005; Nairn & McCreanor, 1991; Tauroa, 1982; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

In the 1970s and 1980s a process of Maori decolonisation also occurred through “activism, radicalism and political and cultural self-assertion” (Belich, 2001, p. 475). Maori academic Ranginui Walker (1987) recalls the 1970s as the “years of anger” (p. 13) when protests, land occupation and marches by Maori increased as they sought redress from the Crown for the illegal confiscation of Maori land and the failure to honour the obligations under the Treaty. A noticeable Maori renaissance occurred with calls for independent Maori sovereignty threatening the “one law for all” Pakeha discourse (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). Consequently, the Pakeha view of New Zealand as an independent nation with a British heritage contrasted with the Maori view that saw Aotearoa⁹ as a colonising power (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999).

Taking Maori grievances seriously, the Government set up the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 to consider claims for the return of confiscated lands or demands for financial compensation. Although the settlement process continues today, the rise in Maori

⁸ Although Chinese immigrants came to New Zealand as early as the mid-19th century, they were often marginalised and encountered periodic episodes of racial discrimination (Ip, 1995; Spoonley & Fleras, 1999). But other ethnic groups, including Maori and Pasifika, also experienced discrimination as detailed in *Immigration and national identity in New Zealand: One people, two peoples, many peoples?* (Greif, 1995).

⁹ The Maori word Aotearoa is used as an alternative name for New Zealand. Maori did not refer to ‘Aotearoa’ in pre-European times but they commonly used it to refer to the whole of New Zealand by the 21st century as a result of its popularisation in mythological literature (King, 1991). In more recent years, some authors have used the labels together as one noun – New Zealand/Aotearoa– in recognition of the country’s bicultural status. I have used it here to indicate Fleras and Spoonley’s perspective that Pakeha controlled what belonged to Maori.

assertiveness led to “moderate success” in the acknowledgement and acceptance of a bicultural framework “particularly in the public service and in law” (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 238). Some, however, regarded the inclusion of a Maori dimension as reaching only the institutional level (Kelsey, 1991; Poata-Smith, 1996).

The presence of a strengthening Maori identity added impetus for Pakeha to seek their own identity which became a “marker of difference” between the two groups (A. Bell, 1996, p. 147). While this can be seen perhaps as an acknowledgment of a bicultural framework that was intensifying within New Zealand society in the 1970s and 1980s, it also signalled a conflation of Pakeha ethnicity with nationality whereby Pakeha regarded their culture to be dominant (A. Bell, 1996; Pearson, 1989) even though it relied on Maori culture to “represent ‘New Zealand’”¹⁰ (A. Bell, 1996, p. 149). The concept of ‘becoming’ Pakeha could be interpreted in different ways. Pearson (2008) quotes Spoonley’s definition of Pakeha as a “positive hybrid post-colonial identifier” contrasting it with Matthewman and Hoey’s perception of Pakeha as a “strategic ploy to reassert white privilege” (p. 53).^{11,12} Although biculturalism was officially recognised in New Zealand and thus became part of the nation’s identity, it was also the growth in immigration in the late 1980s, from countries other than Britain, that challenged the way that New Zealanders perceived themselves.

Immigration

Economic factors such as New Zealand’s isolation and its relatively small population¹³ when compared with other countries, influenced immigration policies. Initially, as a colonial nation, New Zealand encouraged British immigrants, often offering them financial incentives to leave their homes in the northern hemisphere, to become pioneers and ‘build’ the nation of New Zealand. Waves of immigrants from ethnic minorities also followed at various stages primarily brought in to support the economy of the country, whether the Chinese as cheap labour during the downturn of gold mining in the

¹⁰ VIPs to New Zealand often receive a Maori welcome (powhiri) on arrival and souvenir stores carry representations of Maori carvings and other artworks.

¹¹ A suggestion by King (2004) that Pakeha might consider themselves as indigenous to New Zealand given the longevity of their settlement and their loss of any European identity has been received with mixed reactions (Spoonley, 1986).

¹² Resistance to the label ‘Pakeha’ by New Zealand Europeans today relates to the negative colonial connotations placed on the word. At the same time, however, many prefer the term to denote a unique Pakeha identity – some to the extent that they consider themselves an indigenous group (Mitchell, 2003).

¹³ The New Zealand population grew from just over half a million in 1881 to almost one million in 1907, 2.75 million in 1968, and 4.28 million in 2008 (Maori were not included in the 1881 statistics) (McLintock, 1966; Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2010; Statistics New Zealand, 2008).

1800s, Pacific Islanders to boost the “unskilled labour for New Zealand’s rural sector as well as the ‘dirty’ manufacturing industries” post World War II (Bedford, 2003) or Asians during the 1990s, when closer economic ties within the Asia-Pacific region were sought following the deregulation of the New Zealand economy and because of a desire for the country to become a global competitor (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999).

Although the numbers and types of immigrants ebbed and flowed depending on the state of the economy and which political party was in power, there was also a racial factor in deciding which groups might be acceptable (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999; Mitchell, 2003). A “fear and dislike” of non-British nations and cultures was evident in New Zealand’s history to the extent that people who were different faced a “more difficult life” (King, 2003, p. 367). Some of this prejudice surfaced within officialdom; for example, the poll tax on Chinese immigrants which was charged first in 1881 and then again between 1895 and 1907, and the policy that removed a person’s British citizenship if they married an ‘alien’ (British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914). Other forms of prejudice involved more subtle social discrimination in employment and housing against individuals who were Indian, Dalmatian or Lebanese for example, while a more “covert and subtle” anti-Semitism targeted Jews – though this diminished somewhat in the decades following World War II when New Zealand became more pluralistic and more conscious of stereotyping (King, 2003, p. 369).

An unofficial ‘white New Zealand’ immigration policy had favoured the British through to the late 1980s (Zodgekar, 2005) – though at times entry was unrestricted from some countries such as the United States, Canada and Northern Europe, and those Pacific Islands (Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands) that were protectorates of New Zealand (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). Mitchell (2003) suggests that an assimilationist ideology based on race and nationality dominated immigration policy in 1970, though certain immigration entry criteria were set, or modified, at various times. In 1974, for example, when New Zealand was experiencing economic recession, there were concerns about immigrants taking the jobs of New Zealanders or putting welfare services under pressure. Criteria for entry to New Zealand therefore focused on “skills and qualifications, good health and sterling character, appropriate family size... and the ability to settle satisfactorily within a community” (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 155).

The socialist-oriented Labour Government shifted its preference for British immigrants to those from Australia and the Pacific as part of its review of immigration policy in 1973–1974. This not only helped to place New Zealand as an independent nation within the Asia-Pacific region, but also prepared the way for cultural diversity (Mitchell, 2003). The more conservative National Government which followed maintained a more assimilationist perspective and reinstated the preference for British immigrants as well as White South Africans and Rhodesians, who were felt to be closer to Pakeha culture than people from other nations would be (Mitchell, 2003).

Immigration policy in the 1970s and the public debate about the impact of immigrants had a noticeable effect on national identity, as Mitchell (2003) discovered in examining the discourse contained within newspaper cartoons, articles and letters to the editor from that time. He contends that the considerable rise in the numbers of Pacific Islanders and British immigrants brought forth a realisation that New Zealand culture was “unique, distinct from Britain, and needed to be protected” – yet at the same time it also opened the way for ‘other’ New Zealanders to “reconceptualise the New Zealand nation as a multicultural entity” (pp. 270–271).

During the period of decolonisation, the fourth Labour Government led by Prime Minister David Lange replaced the ‘whites-only’ immigration policy in 1986 with a more global approach that allowed anyone from anywhere to immigrate to New Zealand. Immigration entry criteria became ideologically as well as “economically driven” as a way of making New Zealand more globally competitive and connected (Parr, 2000, pp. 305–306) rather than as a way of adopting a less race-based policy. Population loss was also evident at a time of economic recession as skilled New Zealanders emigrated to other countries in search of better work opportunities and needed to be replaced by immigrants (Palat, 1996). However, prior to the noticeable influx of immigrants from Asia, New Zealanders were relatively complacent about national identity given that cultural conformity appeared to be the norm. It was not until the 1990s that the “reality of a culturally diverse New Zealand” dawned on the nation (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 151).

The changes to national identity outlined in this section resulted from New Zealand Europeans casting aside the remnants of a British-settler identity and facing up to issues surrounding biculturalism and multiculturalism. Dominant majority insecurities about

national identity saw the strengthening of a Pakeha identity that strove to maintain its superior position in New Zealand. But increased anxiety amongst European New Zealanders was to be further exacerbated in the new millennium as national identity became embroiled in the politicisation of biculturalism, multiculturalism and immigration (Murphy, 2007). This is the focus of the second part of this chapter examining the environment surrounding the New Zealand Government's promotion of a new national identity.

4.3 Reframing national identity

In this next section, I focus on the 1990s and the early 2000s when the political and public debate concerning New Zealand's diversity intensified. This contextualises the period in which my study is situated (2005–2008) and helps to explain the origins of the official discourse about a new national identity.

Although New Zealand was a country built on immigration, attitudes towards ethnic minorities varied over the decades. European New Zealanders in the first half of the 20th century had assumed ethnic dominance, taking for granted the assimilation of minority groups including Maori. Following the introduction of non-race-based immigration policy in the late 1980s, the changing face of New Zealand's ethnic demographic became particularly noticeable from the 1990s onwards as minority group numbers increased. Table 4.1 uses data gathered from Statistics New Zealand census reports to provide a comparison of the ethnic make-up of the population over a 15-year period 1991 to 2006.

Table 4.1: Percentages of ethnic distribution of the population, 1991–2006¹⁴

Ethnic Group	1991	1996	2001	2006¹⁵
European	83.2	83.1	80.1	77.6
Maori	13.0	15.1	14.7	14.6
Pacific Peoples	5.0	5.8	6.5	6.9
Asian	3.0	5.0	6.6	9.2
Other	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.9
Total people with ethnicity specified	3,345,741	3,466,515	3,586,641	3,860,163

¹⁴ Table 4.1 is based on data accessed from the *Social Report* (Ministry of Social Development, 2007).

¹⁵ Because people can choose to identify with more than one ethnic group, the figures do not sum to 100 percent.

Some notable trends from this table are that:

- (i) European percentage has dropped by 5.6 per cent;
- (ii) Maori has risen by 1.6 per cent and Pasifika by 1.9 per cent (an increase of over one-third);
- (iii) Asian has tripled from 3.0 per cent to 9.2 per cent;
- (iv) the 'Other' category, while small, is four to five times greater than it was in 1991.

Reflecting on New Zealand's increased diversity brought about by globalisation in the mid-1990s, Brooking and Rabel (1995) had expressed optimism that "greater social tensions and cultural anxieties" (p. 48) were not severe. However, this perception altered within a short period of time. More than 200,000 Pasifika people lived in New Zealand in 1996 – a dramatic increase from the 60,000 in 1976 (Belich, 2001). But it was the "unprecedented flow" of Asian immigrants¹⁶ between 1992 and 1996 (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 151) that seemed to draw the most criticism, particularly from people such as politician Winston Peters, the leader of the New Zealand First party who used the threat of an 'Asian invasion' as an electioneering strategy (Spoonley, 2011b). A national identity survey in 1996, in questioning more than 1,000 New Zealanders over the age of 18 about immigration, found that although immigrants were seen to be good for the economy (47 per cent) and for making New Zealand more open to new ideas and cultures (76 per cent), more than half of the respondents (57 per cent) thought there were too many immigrants coming to New Zealand (Gendall, Healey, Kennedy-Moffat, & Jeffcoat, 1996).

The Labour-led Government's strategy since the 1990s had been to focus on "an open and inclusive society, celebrating both its diversity and partnership with Maori in a bicultural nation" (Murphy, 2007, p. 98). However, the concept of an all-encompassing multicultural identity did not find favour with everyone.¹⁷ A greater intolerance of diversity in the attitudes of New Zealanders was observed which was fuelled by a

¹⁶ Asian immigrants at this time came mainly from Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea (Bedford, 2003).

¹⁷ Negative reaction to immigrants may have been perceived as emanating mainly from the dominant majority, but this was not to say that other minority groups already established in the country did not engender the same beliefs. The negative sentiments of some Maori against immigrants contributed to a clash between multicultural and bicultural ideologies and a perceived threat to employment opportunities and resources (Gendall et al., 2007; Gregory, 2005, March 7). There was also criticism by some Maori that as Treaty Partners they should have been consulted before the implementation of changes to immigration policy in 1986 (Spoonley, 2011b).

growing global concern about multiculturalism.¹⁸ Ethnic minorities too felt anxious in their adopted countries because of the emergence of a xenophobic discourse.

Two episodes of vandalism on Jewish graves in Wellington within three weeks in 2004 sparked a wider political and public debate about the existence of racial prejudice in New Zealand. The New Zealand Parliament passed a resolution “condemning anti-Semitism and all forms of racial discrimination” (De Bres, 2006, p. 3) and a New Zealand Diversity Action Programme, to promote and support positive race relations, was set up by the Race Relations Commissioner. Although the Prime Minister Helen Clark remarked that this anti-Semitism and a number of other racist incidents, such as the physical and verbal abuse of Somalian students and the sending of hate mail to Muslims in Wellington, were “the actions of a small number of people” (2006b, February 27), prejudice against minority groups still existed in New Zealand on various levels. Media reports indicated the racism and xenophobia encountered by new migrants (Knox, 2003; Rowan, 2008, April 5; Tan, 2006, October 30), and the difficulties they experienced settling in New Zealand (al Attar, 2008, March 14) or in gaining employment (Williams, 2004, August 25). With news headlines such as “Clark calls for action to combat extremism” (Young, 2006, December 27) in *The New Zealand Herald* – the country’s largest daily newspaper – it was not surprising that New Zealanders felt nervous.

One of the concerns about the effects of diversity on national identity has been the lack of a shared “language, a culture, a sense of history and collective destiny” (Sacks, 2007, p. 8). Barrer (2004) points out the difficulty of having one national identity in an era of globalisation when “a British-born, French-speaking Indian or an American-educated Russian-born New Zealander, may after all feel a part of multiple national communities, or indeed of none” (para. 1). The desire of some groups to maintain their own cultural identities, or in fact develop dual or transnational identities, translated to New Zealanders’ fear that their nation’s traditional identity would be fragmented. This was exacerbated further by a number of clashes between ethnic groups overseas particularly those occurring in France and Australia in 2005 (Chapter One).

¹⁸Besides incidents of ethnic rioting in some multicultural countries, terrorist attacks on innocent victims from the Western world also caused alarm. These included the attack on the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001, the underground bombings in London on 7 July 2005 and attacks on mainly Australian tourists in Bali in 2002 and 2005.

Even the media contributed to a discourse of discrimination. One example that attracted a great deal of attention was a controversial *North and South* magazine article by journalist Deborah Coddington in 2006 titled “Asian Angst”. This article dwelt on negative aspects of Asian immigration such as Asian crime and the dominance of bright Asian students in New Zealand schools over their ‘ordinary’ New Zealand counterparts, which led to a public furore and the submission of a number of complaints to the New Zealand Press Council.¹⁹ In another instance, a law lecturer from The University of Auckland complained of the “highly xenophobic and hateful rhetoric of media pundits and politicians” in Australia and New Zealand towards Muslims (al Attar, 2008, March 14, p. A15).

Observations that racism in New Zealand had in fact been bubbling under the surface of supposedly harmonious race relations (Kemeys, 2009; Racism’s ugly face needs unmasking, 2009, August 5) motivated people such as Mervyn Singham (2006), the director of New Zealand’s Office of Ethnic Affairs, to comment:

We are no longer so naïve as to think we can simply bring people from all parts of the world together and expect them to integrate or adapt to each other. Multiculturalism is a complex issue with potential for both disaster and opportunity. (p. 33)

But it was not only the negative portrayal of multiculturalism that unsteadied New Zealanders’ attitudes to race relations during the early 2000s. Biculturalism too, became a source for the politicisation of national identity as the two major political parties prepared for the general election in 2005.

4.3.1 Politicising national identity through biculturalism

A politically charged debate between the Labour and National Parties as to the future of New Zealand’s national identity arose in 2004 when Don Brash, leader of the National Party, gave a public speech on the issue. He warned that New Zealand’s dream of being a unified nation state was threatened by the Labour Coalition Government’s emphasis on “the ‘principles’ of the Treaty of Waitangi as a basis for nation building” (Pearson, 2005, p. 21) and on a funding system based on race (Brash, 2004, January 27). Brash’s vision of New Zealand as a unitary nation state – resurrecting the ‘one law for all’ discourse – aligned with a number of polls and surveys of New Zealanders that

¹⁹Complaints to the New Zealand Press Council were upheld against this article including one from a group of academics led by New Zealand Chinese writer Tze Ming Mok, the *Yellow Peril* blogger who features in Chapter Seven in this study.

indicated “limited tolerance for Maori to demand additional rights and resources, especially on ‘racial’ grounds” (Pearson, 2005, p. 33).

National’s stance was that the government should be a “protector of a nationhood which Maori may join, not on their own terms, but on the terms of the populist politics of the day” (O’Sullivan, 2007, p. 124). This appealed to those Pakeha New Zealanders who felt that both multiculturalism and biculturalism threatened the “core values of Pakeha New Zealand identity” (Murphy, 2007, p. 101). National’s stirring of the debate about biculturalism by defending its ‘one law for all’ policy unsteadied Labour which continued to emphasise that its policy of tolerance and inclusion had, in fact, prevented incidents of ethnic rioting occurring in New Zealand (Murphy, 2007). National persisted in pressing its point of view throughout its 2005 election campaign, yet it was not enough for the party to be elected as Government, and Labour formed a coalition with minor parties to rule the country for another three years. However, the politicising over national identity between Labour and National brought the undercurrents of tension between biculturalism and multiculturalism to the fore.

Maori were perceived by some as being in an advantageous position whereby their collective status as an indigenous minority, who suffered through colonisation, allowed them to take a political standpoint (Thakur, 1995). Therefore, biculturalism as a partnership between Maori and the Crown was considered to exclude other minority groups in New Zealand (Thakur, 1995). Conversely, it was argued that multiculturalism failed to “address the priority of indigenous people in colonised societies” (Pearson, 2009, p. 33). Maori viewed multiculturalism cautiously because it potentially undermined biculturalism, threatening the unique status of their relationship with the Crown. Walker (1995) considered multiculturalism to invalidate biculturalism because it reduced Maori “to a position of one of many minorities” thereby “negat[ing] their status as the people of the land and enabl[ing] governments to neutralise their claims for justice” (p. 292).

But regardless of who won the 2005 election, it was clear that building an inclusive society with a unified national identity that dealt with both biculturalism and multiculturalism was a major feature on the government’s nation branding agenda.

4.3.2 Building an inclusive society

Taking the perspective of an “*observer* of multiculturalism”, Thakur (1995) recommended that the “state must strive for a balance between the *rights* of the individuals, the *interests* of identity groups and the *interests* of the state” (his italics) (p. 281). While having a national identity might satisfy personal desires for collective belonging, it is important to be conscious that the “nation-state... is still the chief political instrument for getting things done” (Deutsch, 1966, p. 4).

Putnam (2007) suggests that identifying problems associated with diverse communities assists in developing wise policies that can create a new ‘we’ and that this is the solution to the challenge that immigration and diversity pose to social capital and solidarity in the United States. Rather than trying to make people of difference more like ‘us’, he says, a commonality that is not defined by ethnicity but fosters a sense of shared citizenship needs to be found. He believes that for a desirable outcome of a more diverse, multicultural society in which social capital exists, nations must firstly experience a period of transition.

In looking to establish a new and inclusive ‘we’, the New Zealand Government followed the political strategy of a number of multicultural countries in pursuing ‘social cohesion’ to stabilise the country. A universal interpretation of ‘social cohesion’, however, is elusive because of confusion surrounding a proliferation of definitions and theories both academically (Friedkin, 2004) and in policy use (Toye, 2007). However, a common thread of social cohesion is its focus on combating social exclusion and building social capital. This is demonstrated in the words of a New Zealand government document *Connecting diverse communities* which states that a socially cohesive society is defined as “one where people live together in harmony, where conflicts can be resolved and there is generalized support for a government and the rule of law” (Ministry of Social Development & The Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2008, p. 5).

Building alliances between groups to create ‘social capital’ that ultimately “help[ed] society to function effectively” (Statistics New Zealand, 2006, para. 5) was one way the Government saw for making the country more unified. Population and immigration patterns were together reported as one of the five areas the Government saw as influencing levels of social cohesion (the others being: economic factors; natural environment; development of children; and information and technology). It specifically

stated that New Zealand's national identity was "likely to change as the people in New Zealand become more diverse, the Māori and Pacific populations grow, and as the European ethnic population decreases in proportion to other ethnic groups" (Statistics New Zealand, 2006, para. 9). The Government identified gaps in New Zealand's "national indicators" to develop social cohesion. These indicators included those characteristics that related to "people's sense of belonging; sense of place; trust of others; trust in public institutions; tolerance of diversity; freedom of cultural expression; social support networks; social exclusion/isolation; and integration of new migrants into New Zealand life" (Statistics New Zealand, 2006, para. 15).

Measures taken to promote tolerance and understanding of diversity had included the preparation of government statements on race relations and religious diversity in New Zealand, the annual support of interfaith forums, the holding of an annual 'race relations day' organised by the Human Rights Commission and the establishment of a project to connect diverse communities (Ministry of Social Development & The Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2008). Underlying this strategy for inclusion was the political discourse about a new identity that reflected social cohesion as part of the New Zealand way in moving forward. While the Government worked proactively to delicately balance the concerns of minorities and 'mainstream' New Zealanders (a situation aggravated by the National Party), it also seized the opportunity to persuade the nation to take on its vision of a new New Zealand national identity. However, the Government's intent to build an inclusive society was an ambiguous one because, as some academics point out, its true ambition was to establish a national identity as a brand for New Zealand that would position the country competitively within the global economy (Skilling, 2010; S. Turner, 2007).

4.3.3 Ambiguities and contradictions

National identity had been included as part of the Labour-led Government's budget strategy in 2000 (Cullen, 2000, 15 June) and was further acknowledged in various government documents as one of three priorities for the next decade alongside 'economic transformation' and concern for the 'young and old' (Department of Labour, 2008; Ministry for the Environment, 2007; Ministry of Social Development, 2006b). Challenges of increased globalisation and the need for New Zealand to become a competitive player in the world economy had prompted the Government to seek out a new brand for the nation (Skilling, 2010). To achieve this required a population that was re-imagined 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, pp. 178–179). A lack of tolerance and potential conflict between ethnic groups could threaten the positive branding of New Zealand. However, as Skilling (2010) points out, the state could use national identity “to deliver on its promise of security and prosperity for citizens, while also suggesting a greater sense of subjective meaning and belonging” (p. 177).

The manufacture or branding of New Zealand by the Government, which included a socially cohesive society, meant its management of difference created a “compulsory national identity” (S. Turner, 2008, p. 8) for all citizens. The concept of a ‘Kiwi nation’ where everyone was a New Zealander regardless of their ethnicity erased any sense of difference according to Turner (2008) who went on to state that:

The idea that there can be no independent settler identity if there is not in the longer term a viable economy and hence a good reason for migrants to stay, makes a national identity compulsory for indigenous Maori as well as for second settlers (p. 7).²⁰

In Foucauldian terms, the strategies of governments that try to produce the citizen best suited to fulfil their policies is referred to as governmentality (Foucault, 1991) (see Chapter Six). The political discourse about the new national identity was repeatedly connected with the idea of economic prosperity and transformation which the Governor-General Dame Silvia Cartwright summed up as “the pooling [of] our collective talent for the good of our economy and society” (Cartwright, 2005, November 8). Previously marginalised groups were co-opted into New Zealand society and celebrated based on their willingness and ability to “contribute to the shared vision” (Skilling, 2010, p. 186). This compulsory national identity therefore had an impoverishing effect that “limit[ed] the freedom to expand what New Zealanders might also be” (S. Turner, 2007, p. 102).

The issues surrounding New Zealand national identity not only in terms of competing states of biculturalism and multiculturalism, but in the politicisation of immigration and diversity are complex and, as demonstrated, fraught with ambiguity and contradiction. It is difficult to know whether the promoted new national identity was based on either ethnic or civic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism, relies on one ethnicity dominating a nation and might be regarded as a “dangerous antidote” for countries which accommodate a variety of ethnic groups (Belich, 2007, September 26, p. 10), because of

²⁰ Stephen Turner’s reference to ‘second settlers’ includes new migrants as well as the New Zealand Europeans to distinguish them from Maori as the first settlers in New Zealand.

the control that one ethnicity might exert over another. Civic nationalism on the other hand, emerging in response to diversity, allows a community of people to “share a state regardless of ethnicity” (Belich, 2007, September 26, p. 7).

The concept of ‘civic nationalism’, according to Sacks (2007), was that “the identity [that] comes not from colour or creed, but from the fact that, with all our differences, we come together to build something larger than any of our groups could achieve alone” (p. 12). The key point of civic nationalism is that different groups “contribute to society as a whole, not just to our particular subsection of it” (Sacks, 2007, p. 12) and that it is “concerned with society-building through the strengthening of the state” (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 75).

However, in reviewing the progression of a dominant majority view of New Zealand national identity from early settler days through to the first decade of the millennium, I argue that the new national identity could be viewed as one that masqueraded under a civic nationalism concept when, in reality, it was the dominant majority’s perspective (ethnic or otherwise) that controlled how New Zealanders saw themselves. My perspective is supported by Byrnes who believes that the idea of nation as a singular shared identity and the reality of New Zealand’s multiculturalism and multiple identities were incongruous. She regards the ‘nation’ as being “increasingly exposed as a falsely homogenous entity” and, in spite of New Zealand’s acknowledged diversity, there appeared to be only “one recognised nation-state” (Byrnes, 2007, September 26, para. 10).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has situated my study within the historical context of New Zealand national identity construction in order to background my empirical research about the discursive construction of New Zealand identity between 2005 and 2008. I argued that the dominant majority ‘colony-to-nation’ narrative of New Zealand national identity took time to emerge from an identity that considered itself British. However, even the development of a ‘distinct’ national identity based on British roots, with a smattering of Maori culture, came to be challenged by a number of factors such as “post-colonial anxieties, Maori-Pakeha relations, racial issues, globalisation, and a move towards multiculturalism through immigration policies” (Kukutai & Didham, 2009, p. 46). I also suggested that an identity crisis was a prime mover in the evolution of New Zealand

identity from the dominant majority perspective as its position of superiority became threatened.

More recently, the population's increasing diversity has become one of the most significant challenges to the signifiers of New Zealand identity, interfacing with biculturalism, multiculturalism and the attitudes of dominant majority New Zealanders, Maori, new immigrants and the Government. A belief in the need to protect New Zealand's identity was also intensified through ethnic conflict overseas and at home, as well as the political wrangling between Labour and National political parties about how national identity should be constructed.

The New Zealand Government's pursuit of a socially cohesive society – the common solution put forward by governments to dissipate friction between ethnic groups within nations – also entailed an agenda to market New Zealand as a competitive player in the political and global economy. Through a process of governmentality, the need to rebrand New Zealanders involved the channelling of an increasingly diverse nation into one that was unified with a shared national purpose. The question at the core of this study about how New Zealanders constructed their identity, in an environment where the official discourse heralded the emergence of a new national identity requires a robust discursive method of analysis. The method and design of this research is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Design and method – Following the discursive path for analysis

The relationship between...[discourse and text]
is one of realization.

Discourse finds its expression in text.

Kress (1985, p. 27)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the method and design of my research that seeks to identify discourses about national identity as they are expressed in texts. I highlight the steps taken in the research process, namely the collection of data, the method of analysis and the formulation of critique based on the interpretation of results.

The first section of the chapter presents the ‘discourse-historical’ approach (DHA) as the analytical foundation for my study. This approach is marked by its advocacy for the principle of triangulation whereby various theoretical tools and theories are applied in the examination of a range of texts in many different genres. It also highlights the need for reflexivity in discourse analysis where a number of interpretations are possible.

In the second section, I outline the nature of two sets of texts selected for analysis. The first set of the official texts, which are mainly political, that support my observation of the widespread discourse about the emergence of a ‘new’ national identity, are drawn from a range of genres. The second set of texts includes the case studies of two online discussions that involve everyday talk about New Zealand national identity – the *Yellow Peril* weblog and the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network (AEN)* e-list. I describe the preparation of the data for analysis and the inclusion of a number of subsidiary texts that demonstrate intertextual linkage to the discussions.

The third section of this chapter discusses the discourse analytical tools of the DHA employed in this study, which are based on those developed by academics at the Vienna School of Critical Discourse Analysis (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 1999). I outline the three dimensions of the DHA – contents, strategies, and linguistic means and forms of realisation – which provide the basis for the analysis leading to the final stage of the study, the formulation of critique.

5.2 Selecting a methodology

A number of different traditions fall under the description of discourse analysis including conversation analysis, Foucauldian research, critical discourse analysis, critical linguistics, discursive psychology, Bakhtinian research, interactional linguistics and ethnography of speaking (Wetherell, 2001). Each of these traditions represents a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives which affect how analysis is conducted and interpreted.

Given that my selection of texts involved a range of genres from Internet websites to political speeches, media releases and posters, I required a methodological approach that was comprehensive in its analysis and interpretation, which considered context and which could be applied to a variety of text genres and modes of communication that went beyond the written word. At the same time, I wanted to take a critical view of the data, and also to consider New Zealand's past and its effects on the discursive construction of national identity. The DHA of critical discourse analysis (CDA) was the most accommodating for these purposes.

5.2.1 The 'discourse-historical' approach

Chapter Four's historical review of New Zealand's evolving national identity indicated many contestable aspects about the dominant narrative reinforced by the Government, the media and institutions. CDA, which emerged as a "research programme" involving varying theoretical and methodological approaches in the early 1990s (Wodak, 1999, p. 186), highlights the significant role of language in the "production, maintenance and change of social relations of power", creating a greater awareness of the domination of some people over others (Fairclough, 1989, p. 1). At the same time, CDA advocates suggest that certain discourses can be resisted and counteracted with alternative discourses.

My research required a critical approach that would provide a systematic way of identifying and analysing New Zealand discourses about national identity. At the same time, it needed to take into account the historical context within which these discourses arose. CDA encapsulated a number of different approaches though they maintained the common principles of "de-mystifying ideologies and power" and incorporated the systematic examination of semiotic data (Wodak & Meyer, 2009a, p. 3).

Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk and Ruth Wodak are perhaps the three most significant proponents of CDA, though differences between some of their theoretical perspectives and methodological processes exist. Van Dijk, for example, focuses on socio-cognitive theory and the view that social representation is an experience of shared social-cultural practice, while Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach is more concerned with social conflict in the Marxian tradition and analyses the dialectical relationships between semiosis and social practice (Wodak & Meyer, 2009a, pp. 26–27). The DHA, as developed by Wodak and her colleagues, emphasised historical background and sources as instrumental in its research design. It has been applied to a number of studies concerning identity and politics, exploring aspects such as exclusion, racism, discrimination and stereotyping (Kovács & Wodak, 2003; Kryzanowski & Wodak, 2007; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2007; Wodak et al., 1999; Wodak & Wright, 2006), and therefore had the greatest relevancy to my study about New Zealand identity.

5.2.2 DHA characteristics

The DHA is characterized by three concepts – critique, ideology and power. Critique, with its roots in critical theory, requires researchers to describe and explain the various discourses under investigation. A critical analysis of the text, its discursive strategies and linguistic aspects, along with contextual information, are required to justify the researcher's own interpretation or reading of a discursive event. The second concept of ideology is concerned with the representation of particular perspectives or world views that are influential in the establishment and maintenance of unequal power relations particularly through social institutions, while the third concept of power relates to its legitimisation or de-legitimation in discourse not only in texts, but also through the control of access to “certain public spheres” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 89).

Taking into account the relationship between critique, ideology and power, the DHA operates on two levels by:

1. contextualising texts through the examination of the historical sources and backgrounds of the social and political environments in which discursive events are found;
2. looking at the ways certain discourses change or evolve over time.

(Wodak, 1999)

Crucial to the DHA process, and in fact to CDA in general, is the need for reflexivity because both the object of investigation and the researcher's own position must be transparent. The researcher needs to be objective and to critically identify any inequalities through his or her analysis and interpretation. Wodak (1999) reminds us that no one true interpretation exists as "each communicative event allows numerous interpretations, linked to the positions of the readers', listeners', or viewers' respective contexts and levels of information" (p. 187). The role of the researcher, therefore, is not to evaluate "what is 'right' or 'wrong'" (Wodak, 2001, p. 65) but rather to provide theoretical justification for the validity of "certain interpretations and readings of discursive events" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 88).

Widdowson (2004) criticises this interpretive stance stating that regardless of the depth of detail in the analysis of a text, the "textual features that are activated in interpretation are only those which are perceived" (p. 166). CDA scholars in fact agree to some extent with Widdowson's comments, but argue that CDA offers opportunities to make multiple and contested readings of text (Henderson, 2005). As CDA can never be considered to be objective, Fairclough suggests that each researcher simply needs to be open about the perspective they take and acknowledge that their interpretation is from a particular position (Fairclough, 2001). As Wodak emphasised during an interview published online (G. Kendall, 2007), critical self-reflection of the researcher's choice of object to investigate, the choice of methods, design of theoretical framework and the interpretation need to be consistent.

In Chapter One, I provided autobiographical information to identify and make transparent my own position and identity which may impact subconsciously on my interpretation of discourse. Several other dimensions of reflexivity that further consolidate transparency and justify my interpretation of discourses in this study are incorporated into the tools of analysis discussed later in this chapter. However, one particular feature of the DHA that ensures reflexivity in the design of the research is triangulation.

5.2.3 The principle of triangulation

Triangulation according to Janesick (2000) is "an important part of the design process" and can feature in various forms ranging from analysis of a range of data, using different researchers or evaluators, or by applying multiple methods or theories (p. 391).

The DHA's advocacy for triangulation is based on the premise that it enables the inclusion of "historical, political, sociological and/or psychological dimensions" of a discursive act in its analysis and interpretations (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 35) thereby to "minimiz[ing] the risk of critical bias and to avoid simply politicizing, instead of accurately analyzing" (Wodak, 2000, para. 17). But, most importantly, the combining of various theories and methods can lead to "an adequate understanding and explanation of the research object" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 95).

The DHA focuses on middle-range theories that "guide or influence the collection of empirical evidence" (Bryman, 2004, p. 5) and provide a better theoretical basis than does the abstract nature of grand theories (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009) such as structural-functionalism or symbolic interactionism. As Johnstone (2008) points out, grand theories fail to realise that "human actions, discursive and otherwise, are always multiply determined and the result of a large number of intersecting factors" (p. 270). In fact, the DHA applies both a bottom-up and a top-down approach, involving a process of moving back and forth between text and theory during analysis, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. In addition, the inclusion of a wide range of texts as a data source adds a further dimension to discursive studies in offering a broader perspective of the object of analysis in different contexts, which in turn can identify differing and competing discourses.

Ultimately the principle of triangulation places the research within a context which Reisigl and Wodak (2001) say takes into account:

- the immediate language or text-internal co-text (the semantic environment);
- the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;
- the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation';
- the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (p. 41).

The DHA's adherence to triangulation is demonstrated in the investigation by Vienna School academics into Austrian national identity which began with a description of the history of Austrian nationalism followed by the discursive analysis of texts from three different sources: the public arena (political speeches, documents and newspaper articles); semi-public discussions (that is, focus groups of eight to 10 participants representing five different areas in Austria, and one group of non-Austrians); and semi-private opinions (interviews with 24 Austrian residents of differing gender and background). A range of theories relating to topics such as identity, nations and discourse was integrated into the study as these arose during the interpretation of texts (de Cillia et al., 1999; Wodak et al., 1999). The authors emphasised the importance of complementing the study of political discourse with data from everyday life and experience "to grasp the tensions and interdiscursive relationships within and between official, semi-official and quasi-private discourse as well as between discursive and other forms of social practice" (de Cillia et al., 1999, p. 170).

My research follows a similar format to that used in the analysis of Austrian national identity addressing official discourse and the populace discourses about national identity. As limitations on the amount of data were necessary to keep the study within manageable proportions, the selection of texts required careful consideration. These data sets are discussed in the next section.

5.3 Collection of data

Two sets of data were required for this study – one that would validate and explain my observation of an official discourse about a new national identity in New Zealand, and one that would demonstrate any alternative discourses amongst the populace.

5.3.1 Official texts

The criteria for the selection of official texts required them to have originated from individuals or groups connected with the New Zealand Government or its agencies, to have been produced within the time period of the investigation and to relate to national identity. Texts needed to have been public and accessible either in their original form or in an archived version, such as a transcript. Texts were identified through Internet and library searches, as well as on the New Zealand Government website (www.beehive.govt.nz), which has an internal search engine to identify political

speeches, news releases and reports from a comprehensive archive. Speeches, in particular, proved to be a dynamic source of data because they involved speakers from various political levels (Prime Minister, Governor-General, Ministers of the Crown) addressing a variety of audiences (politicians, minority groups, conference delegates, the nation). Some speeches were delivered on significant days such as Waitangi Day, or the days of the opening of Parliament, while others were made at interfaith or diversity-focused conferences which would harness a more multicultural audience.

The 12 official texts selected for analysis were:

- three speeches by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark. These include two statements to Parliament setting out the Government's priorities for 2006 and for 2007 respectively, and a speech to an interfaith conference in New Zealand. The decision for this weighting was based on Clark's daily exposure via the media to a wide range of audiences as the leader of the Government. By 2006, Clark had already been Prime Minister for six years and had just entered her third three-year term of office;
- two ministerial speeches, one by Winnie Laban the Minister for the Community and Volunteer Sector and the first Pacific Island Member of Parliament, and the other by Chris Carter, the Minister for Ethnic Affairs;
- two speeches by two Governors-General of New Zealand. The time period of this study coincided with a succession of Governor-General – therefore one speech is given by Dame Sylvia Cartwright, a New Zealand European, the other by Sir Anand Satyanand who is of Fijian Indian descent;
- two government media releases for the 2006 and 2007 Budgets, which specifically focused on the Government's national identity strategy;
- two posters produced by the Human Rights Commission to celebrate Race Relations Days in New Zealand in 2006 and 2008 as part of the New Zealand Diversity Action Programme;

- the home page of the Office of Ethnic Affairs website in 2008 which provided resources and information for ethnic groups in New Zealand.

Because of the length of some of the texts, only some excerpts specifically focusing on national identity appear in Chapter Six though the context of each whole text was still taken into consideration during analysis. Each of these texts was accessed via the Internet, downloaded and saved either electronically or in hard-copy format.

5.3.2 The discourses of people – the online discussions

The second data set focused on the discourses of people – that is, the everyday talk of people about New Zealand national identity. Data could not be collected through focus groups or interviews because the study specified an historical time period. Media sources such as opinions sourced from the archives of newspapers, magazines, television or talkback radio programmes were difficult to access or not available. However, the relatively new medium of the Internet offered a promising source for accessing talk.

As indicated in earlier chapters, discussions conducted via the Internet using CMC provided access to discourse whether they occurred two years or two seconds ago. Texts that existed within cyberspace²¹ provide a valuable data source for research to observe past behaviour. Mautner (2005), in fact, wrote a paper specifically calling upon critical discourse analysts to pay more attention to web-based data because the Internet offered “key sites at which social life is being played out in contemporary society” (p. 812). Mautner also stated that the investigation of new genres on the Internet brought exciting benefits to CDA research with “the diversity of voices, rich multi-modality, and the speed with which it reflects and engenders social change” (p. 822).

The selection of online discussions for discursive analysis for this study relied on four factors. Firstly, the discussions had to involve a mainly New Zealand constituency including people from diverse backgrounds.²² The naturally occurring conversations of the online discussions enabled the inclusion of ethnographic material for the study – an important principle of the DHA research because it allowed the study to be conducted

²¹See glossary.

²²Although the number of participants in the online discussions could be counted, this was not indicative of the actual size of the audience which can include a large number of people who do not show their presence and whom some people refer to as ‘lurkers’, ‘silent partners’, ‘passive users’ or just ‘observers’.

“from the ‘inside’” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 95). This presents the opportunity for the researcher to try and gain a sense of a social actor’s point of view from the inside, to gain an “empathic identification” by understanding their experience and interpretation (Schwandt, 2000, p. 192).

The second deciding factor for selecting case studies was that the online discussions involving talk associated with national identity needed to coincide with the research period when a new national identity was being promoted. This would position the data to reflect, or reject, the official discourse giving an indication of the influence of political rhetoric, or offer alternative competing discourses. Given the retrospective nature of this study, the online discussions had to exist as archived texts.

Thirdly, in keeping with the principle of triangulation and the intention to include different genres, the case studies warranted online discussions that were conducted in distinct ways. These could include chat rooms, forums, weblogs and e-lists²³ each with its own style, format and conventions. For example, some genres may involve instantaneous chat, enable participants to retain anonymity or use particular types of Internet language (netspeak)²⁴ or behave in certain ways (netiquette)²⁵ (Crystal, 2001) or follow certain rules set by website administrators regarding the posting of information. In fact, this data set introduced the opportunity to explore discourse in a virtual environment that was partly shaped by the technology whereby people, who did not necessarily know each other, communicated via their computers, sometimes across vast distances and without face-to-face contact.

The fourth requirement of the case studies was that the discussions needed to be downloadable or saved from the Internet in “paper-based” or “permanent electronic form” either as text documents or as screenshots²⁶ to avoid the “shifting sands of the internet” (Mautner, 2005, pp. 818–819). It is not uncommon for the owners/administrators of websites to alter, update, edit or eliminate web pages or online commentary altogether. Therefore, it was important that a record of the original format of the discussions could be saved.

²³ Detailed descriptions of these genres appear in the glossary.

²⁴ See glossary.

²⁵ See glossary.

²⁶ Screenshots are snapshots taken of a website as it appears on screen and saved in a picture format.

5.3.3 The systematic collection of online data

I located various online discussions through the Google²⁷ search engine using phrases such as ‘New Zealand national identity’, ‘New Zealand diversity’ and ‘New Zealand multiculturalism’. This resulted in a range of possibilities from newspaper forums to blogs. But I also explored other avenues by talking about my research with other people and observing what was available to me online on a daily basis. I had originally planned to compare at least five different Internet discussions. However, my final selection was limited to two: the *Yellow Peril* blog site and the *AEN* e-list.

It was unlikely that I could locate case studies of online discussions that were representative of the views of the whole New Zealand population given the immense range of options available and the tendency for Internet sites to attract people with similar ideas and interests. The discussions on the *Yellow Peril* blog site and the *AEN* e-list simply provided a snapshot of the views of a finite number of people about the meaning of ‘New Zealander’ in an increasingly diverse society. Therefore they would need to be judged as “exemplifying case[s]” (Bryman, 2004, p. 51) enabling intensive examination to which the theoretical arguments surrounding identity construction could be applied. Stake’s (2000) comment that “case studies are for refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping to establish the limits of generalizability” (p. 448) supported my intention that this research would act as a starting point to ignite many conversations about New Zealand identity.

However, the nature of CMC meant that the case studies were not wholly confined to just one text. While intertextuality relates to any texts that link to each other referencing either the same topic, the same events or the same themes, and interdiscursivity relates to texts drawing on multiple discourses (Fairclough, 1992), both have implications when it comes to the Internet. The capability for Internet users to navigate, or link, from one text to another through the simple click of the cursor on a URL²⁸ created a greater opportunity to understand the context of the discourse. The URL hyperlink is the node (often signalled as underlined words) on which a reader clicks their cursor to transfer to a specific hypertext.²⁹ It is a “uniquely effective tool” that avoids a text from becoming overburdened with information but, at the same time, “lend[s] instant credibility” (Ng,

²⁷ See glossary.

²⁸ See glossary for full explanation of URL.

²⁹ See glossary.

April 2007, p. 19) to support an argument or opinion. URLs, for the discourse analyst, provide an automatic introduction to an array of texts suggested by an Internet author that can be examined for intertextuality and interdiscursivity. As a result, researchers could follow the recontextualisation of discourse through its transfer via links inserted by the social actors as part of their contribution to the discussion. For example, people posting a message on the *Yellow Peril* blog site or through the *AEN* e-list frequently included links to other texts whether online news stories, websites or other forums, enabling other readers to experience their own reading of an original text.

Although this contributes an interesting aspect to the analysis because it creates a bigger picture of the flow of information and discourse through various texts and genres, it also increases the amount of data for investigation. Mautner (2005), although in favour of Internet research, recognised the challenge of using web-based corpora for researchers because of links creating a “bewildering criss-crossing of intertextual paths” (p. 821). Therefore, while I refer to some of the links contained within each case study because I regard them to be important contextual elements, I have limited description and analysis of these texts based on their relevancy to the research – though the analysis of networks is promising for future study.

Details about *Yellow Peril* and the *AEN* e-list discussions appear in the relevant analysis chapters. However, a brief description of each case study and the texts to be analysed within them is an important part of the research design that needs to be highlighted.

Yellow Peril

Yellow Peril was the name of the blog site belonging to Tze Ming Mok – a literary writer, journalist and political commentator in New Zealand. A ‘weblog’, more commonly referred to as a ‘blog’, is similar to a diary of comments that is published online through the World Wide Web. A blog consists of “a series of archived posts, typically in reverse-chronological order” and may include hypertext links to other blogs or web pages and, in some cases, allows online audience feedback (Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004, November 6-10, p. 222).

Yellow Peril was one of several blogs located on the *publicaddress.net* (PA) website as part of a “New Zealand-centric community of blogs” (publicaddress.net/default,about.sm). It was established by a well-known New Zealand journalist and media commentator

Russell Brown in 2002. Brown, who also ran his own blog *Hard News*, moderated the PA site which at times included up to 11 different blogs. The bloggers Brown invited to contribute to publicaddress.net were mainly journalists or writers with an interest in politics and events topical for New Zealand.

Mok was one of two New Zealand Chinese bloggers on PA and wrote her *Yellow Peril* blog during the years 2005 to 2007. *Yellow Peril* was initially a monologue until November 2006 when PA introduced software that enabled people to respond publicly online to blog postings. I selected the *Yellow Peril* for analysis because it was located within one of the most influential groups of blogs in New Zealand, and because of its large audience which included many opinion – and decision-makers (Ng, April 2007). The fact that it was written by a blogger of Chinese ethnicity was also significant given the dramatic increase in Asian immigration in recent years which contributed to the emerging debate about multiculturalism. But, most importantly, one of Mok's blog postings ignited a discussion about who could be labeled a New Zealander; this exchange had implications for the construction of national identity.

This case study focuses on Mok's blog site and her posting titled "the identity game" which appeared on 7 Dec 2006 and attracted a great deal of online discussion over several months. Mok's posting had included criticism of Statistics New Zealand's decision to allow 'New Zealander' as an ethnic category in the census, but she also drew attention to the scaremongering in a news article highlighting concern that Asians, as the fastest growing minority group in New Zealand, threatened the status of Maori as the largest minority group. Chapter Seven presents the findings of the analysis of Mok's blog site, "the identity game" posting, and the texts of the URL links contained within her posting which included data from the 2006 New Zealand census, the offending news article and two of Mok's earlier *Yellow Peril* postings on similar topics. These texts established the discursive context of "the identity game" to which readers responded. Chapter Eight presents the findings from an in-depth analysis of the online discussion responding to "the identity game". It involved 53 commenters³⁰ who debated issues such as the New Zealand census' selection of ethnic labels, the meaning of 'New Zealander', and the difference between nationality and ethnicity.

³⁰ Brown uses the term commenters to refer to people who respond online. Therefore, I use this descriptor throughout the analysis of the *Yellow Peril* case study and to differentiate between its participants and the AEN e-list participants whom I refer to as posters – because they post messages via email.

Figure 5.1 represents the flow of the texts analysed in this case study beginning with Mok's blog site, posting and links, through to the online discussion. "the identity game" posting, discussion and hyperlinked texts were accessed through the PA archives which were publicly available online. I took screenshots of Mok's blog site and posting to maintain a record of their visual elements. In addition, I copied and saved all of the texts as Word documents, including the URL links that were analysed.

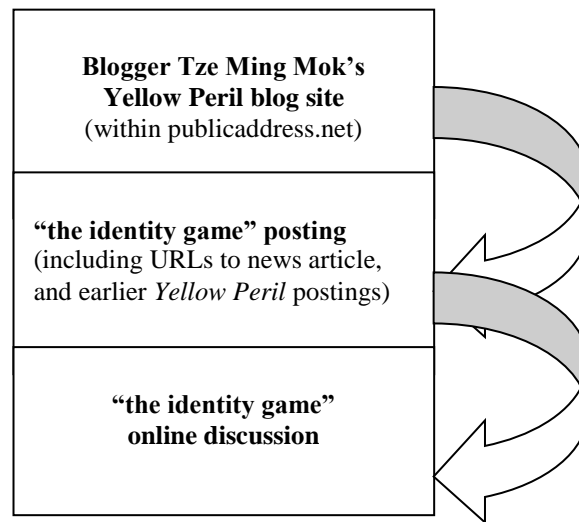


Fig 5.1: Diagram showing texts analysed in the *Yellow Peril* case study.

Aotearoa Ethnic Network e-list

The second case study is an online discussion conducted through the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network* (AEN) e-list. An e-list (also known as an 'email list', an 'automatic mailing list server', a 'listserver' or a '*LISTSERV*')³¹ is a list of people, with a common interest, who have subscribed to receive an automatic distribution of emails from other group members. These emails are received singly or in a digest form on a regular basis and can become an online discussion when members respond to each other through the collective list regarding a particular subject.

The AEN is a non-profit organisation started by two New Zealand immigrants – Ruth DeSouza (a child immigrant from Goa) and Andy Williams (from the United Kingdom) – who sought to connect diverse communities from around Aotearoa/New Zealand. AEN publishes an online journal and has an e-list enabling members to discuss topics and provide information on ethnic issues in New Zealand. Currently there are more than

³¹ *LISTSERV* became a registered trademark in 1996 (L-soft International Inc, n.d.) so I elected to use the term e-list in this study.

500 members who have subscribed to *AEN* and this includes politicians, journalists and policy-makers as well as members from different ethnic groups.

I joined the *AEN* e-list in 2007 because of my personal interest in diversity in New Zealand, but not with the intention of using it for research. Coincidentally, during the preparatory stages of my research proposal, I observed an online discussion (between 6 and 13 March 2008) involving 16 members of the *AEN* e-list. The discussion began when an email from an *AEN* member drew attention to a news article from *The New Zealand Herald* website. The headline “NZ Passport Holder Dies in Iraq” generated discussion amongst members on the *AEN* e-list about the meaning behind the label “NZ Passport Holder”. The use of the term ‘New Zealander’ by minority groups became a focus of the discussion. This had implications about the inclusion and exclusion of people through labels denoting national identity.

I was not involved in this discussion and none of the posters was personally known to me at the time. However, I saved the emails of this discussion into a Word document as it proved to be a suitable case study from which various discourses about New Zealand identity could be identified and analysed. As with the *Yellow Peril* case study, the analysis involved an investigation of a number of texts.

The findings in Chapter Nine firstly present my analysis of the online story from *The New Zealand Herald* that became the focal point of the *AEN* e-list discussion, as well as an investigation comparing the nationality labels that other local and international media used in the reporting of the same story. My findings also refer to a section in the New Zealand Human Rights Commission newsletter providing background information about the news story in response to the *AEN* e-list discussion. Finally, I analysed the emails of the *AEN* e-list discussion – the main focus of the analysis of this case study. Figure 5.2 presents the flow of analysis through texts from the online news story and other media coverage, through to the online discussion as they are presented in Chapter Nine.



Fig 5.2: Diagram showing the texts analysed in the *AEN* e-list case study.

Although the e-list discussion was distributed to all *AEN* members, it was not publicly archived (unlike the *Yellow Peril* online discussion). It was therefore necessary to obtain permission from the 16 posters to analyse the text of their emails. Appendix 1 provides the ethics approval to conduct this part of the research and Appendix 2 includes the information sheets and ethics consent forms sent to the 15 *AEN* e-list posters – one poster could not be contacted. Thirteen out of the 15 posters responded and consented to their messages being analysed. Two of them elected to remain anonymous. Once all the texts of both data sources were selected and ethics permission was obtained, analysis could proceed.

5.4 Discursive tools for analysis

The third part of this chapter discusses the analytical tool box used in this study. As indicated earlier, I modelled my framework for analysis on the DHA studies about national identity discourses in Austria as these were most similar to my own object of analysis (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak et al., 1999). Although Austria and New Zealand are quite different countries, the concepts about collective belonging and attachment to the nation remained the same. However, to keep the study within manageable parameters, I adapted some of the analytical methods to best suit my research questions. As Phillips and Hardy (2002) concur, developing an appropriate design and method is not a straightforward process and, in fact, it becomes “more art than science” with each new study “requiring creativity and innovation” (p. 80).

Because the wide range of texts analysed encompassed a variety of genres – from the blog and the e-list, to websites, speeches, reports and posters – a general analysis of each genre type is included in each analysis chapter to “identify the idiosyncratic peculiarities of a specific singular text” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 36). This involves description of the macro-structures and particular stylistic features which may influence what, and how, information is disseminated according to a particular genre type.

The discourse analysis tools used for this research followed three interrelated dimensions of the DHA that will be described in this chapter:

- (i) identification of discourse topics and themes;
- (ii) the investigation of discursive strategies; and
- (iii) an examination of the linguistic means by which the discourses are realised.

(Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak et al., 1999)

A detailed analysis of all the selected texts within these three dimensions would overburden the study. Therefore, I modified the analytical tools for each data set, taking into account the differing genres and the amount of text involved. As the official discourse about a new national identity for New Zealand had already been identified, the analysis of these texts focused mainly on the discursive strategies and specific linguistic aspects used by political elites and institutions to reinforce specific themes. In contrast, the key texts for this study – the online discussions – required a more comprehensive analysis involving all three of the above dimensions because they involved many individuals, from varying backgrounds, with diverse opinions. However, the additional selected texts associated with the online discussions – that is, the *Yellow Peril* blog site and its posting “the identity game”, as well as the media reports and documents connected with both the *AEN* e-list and the *Yellow Peril* posting – were limited to specific aspects for analysis that concentrated on context, intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

5.4.1 Identification of discourse topics and themes – preparation of data

Identification of discourse topics and themes relevant to the construction of New Zealand identity was the starting point for analysis. While topics related to content within the texts, their grouping helped to identify themes that were important to the

overall research question and exhibited “patterns of meaning” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). Where texts were relatively short or involved one individual or organisation in their production, themes could be easily identified through a close reading. This was applicable mostly to the official texts. I took into account the scholarly literature about national identity (Chapter Two) and the historical construction of New Zealand national identity (Chapter Four), as well as various issues that have emerged as affecting the construction of identity over the years such as biculturalism, multiculturalism, immigration, myths and symbols.

The online discussions, however, required a more systemised approach to identifying themes because they involved numerous participants and a great deal of informal, conversational language. Therefore, I employed a qualitative thematic analysis as devised by psychologists Braun and Clark (2006). This particular type of thematic analysis was chosen because its authors relate its flexibility and adaptation for use beyond psychology as a foundational method for qualitative research. Not only was Braun and Clark’s (2006) thematic analysis compatible with a constructivist approach, but its methodological tool kit also allowed the researcher to actively make choices in their analysis and to interpret “various aspects of the research topic” (p. 79).

The identification of topics and themes are data driven in that there is no pre-existing coding frame, although coding occurs as patterns of meaning are established. Therefore, this particular thematic analysis is an inductive, interpretive process in that it pays close attention to ideas and topics in the data as the analysis proceeds. The phases of Braun and Clark’s thematic analysis, which I modified to suit my research, are:

1. **Familiarisation with the data.** This was achieved through multiple readings of the text and note taking. I also took the opportunity during these close readings to simultaneously record details about the online discussions such as the number of participants, the frequency with which they contributed to the discussion, their ethnicity (when disclosed) and, in some cases, geographic location.³²

Although my research is about patterns of language, such quantitative analysis

³² The identities of the participants in the online discussions were kept confidential in the research because the focus was on the language and not the people. Although Internet research ethics is still an area of much debate, I followed the recommendations of Amy Bruckman, a member of the Association of Internet Researchers ethics working committee, who specified that Internet material may be freely cited when: (i) it is officially, publicly and permanently archived; (ii) no password is required to access archive; (iii) no site policy prohibits it; and (iv) the topic is not highly sensitive (Jankowski & van Selms, 2007, p. 282).

provides contextualisation of the qualitative data which can be drawn upon during the analysis if necessary. For example, this information allowed me to understand the constituency of the discussion participants, to identify those commenters/posters who dominated the discussion or made only one comment, whether they were interested in one or many aspects of the discussion, and how arguments developed.

2. **Generation of topic codes based on key words.** Using the search function of the computer, I located key words such as New Zealander (and any hyphenated/hybrid versions such as ‘Chinese-New Zealander’), ‘New Zealand’, ‘nation’, ‘nationalism’, ‘national identity’ and ‘ethnicity’. Other words noted from the literature review studies (Chapter Two) such as ‘dominant majority’, ‘white majority’, ‘indigenous’, ‘diversity’, ‘multiculturalism’, ‘biculturalism’ and ‘racism’ also proved useful in making a list of frequently-used topics of conversation.

I elected not to use any forms of text-based qualitative software, such as NVivo or NUDIST, in spite of the large amount of text in the online discussions. The capability of such software to “improve” the analysis has not been wholly substantiated and is not considered to make the analysis any more “rigorous” or “valid” (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 78). I preferred to locate key words in the context of the online discussion as I felt that important rhetorical devices of identity construction might be overlooked if I did not take the overall argument into account.

3. **Collation of codes and topic data under potential themes for review.** In this phase, I reviewed topics from each case-study discussion (such as diversity, ethnicity, nationality and bi- and multi-culturalism) and grouped them under common themes such as the need to belong to a nation and a concern about dominance. This list of themes was then refined based on their frequency within the discussion and their relevancy to national identity.

Once the thematic analysis was complete, I used this list of themes to identify discourses about national identity based on the social, political and cultural context that had already been established through the literature review (Chapter Two) and the historical background of New Zealand national identity (Chapter Four). The next stage

was to examine the discursive strategies and linguistic devices used in the construction of national identity.

5.4.2 Discursive strategies and linguistic devices

Discursive strategies are defined as the conscious or subconscious use of language to “achieve a certain political, psychological or other kind of objective” (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 31). In this section I begin by describing the discursive strategies, and the linguistic devices that support them, that are found in discourses about racial, national and ethnic issues (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak et al., 1999). These are: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, and intensification/mitigation. This is then followed by a specific description of argumentation strategy (and its relationship with metaphors) which is a key feature in my analysis of the online discussions.

(i) Constructive discursive strategies

Discursive strategies and linguistic devices function in the construction, justification (or preservation), transformation and dismantling (or destruction) of identities (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). Those strategies and the devices that are applicable to my research are:

- **Nomination** to establish how persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions are named and referred to linguistically. This is achieved through linguistic devices such as membership categorisation, metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches;
- **Predication** to identify characteristics, qualities and features attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes which are realised through adjectives, nouns and pronouns or stereotypical or evaluative attributions of traits;
- **Argumentation** to look at the justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness which is developed through schemes which may be plausible (topoi) or fallacies;

- **Perspectivisation**, framing or discourse representation to see from what perspective these nominations, attributions and arguments are expressed. For example, a speaker's or writer's point of view, involvement or distance. This can be conveyed through linguistic devices such as indirect or direct speech, metaphors, deictics or quotation marks;
- **Intensification or mitigation** of respective utterances which is supported through the use of linguistic devices such as participles, tag questions, vague expressions and verbs of saying, feeling or thinking.³³

(Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2001)

While the investigation of these discursive strategies and how they are used by individuals and groups in the construction of national identities was relevant to my analysis, argumentation strategy and the use of metaphor featured prominently in my research and therefore requires further elaboration.

(ii) Argumentation and metaphor

My analysis commenced by first focusing on the topoi (argumentation strategies) used to support the discourse themes. In this study, I use van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2004) definition of the purpose of an argument as "aim[ing] to convince a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed" (p. 1). Reisigl and Wodak (2001) however expand on this definition by distinguishing between argumentation for rational negotiation to convince, and persuasive argumentation with the intention to manipulate.

Argumentation is discussed in this study in terms of topoi (singular:topos) – "the content-related warrants... or 'conclusion rules' which connect the argument or arguments with a conclusion, a claim" (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 34). In other words, topoi provide a reason for the argument and help to build it towards conclusion. Topoi are particularly useful in discussing different forms of social exclusion and discrimination (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). For example, Wodak et al. (1999) identified the topos of

³³ It should be noted here that all extracts from commenters and posters messages, and the official texts, are reproduced faithfully in the analytical chapters. Therefore any grammatical or spelling errors have not been corrected.

threat as a strategy to warn against the loss of Austria's "national autonomy and uniqueness" (p. 38). This can also be demonstrated in M. Phillips' (2006) argument against multiculturalism in England, referred to earlier, where she used the topos of threat, reasoning that the increasing diversity of the country was responsible for the increasing fragmentation of national identity. The topos of threat is one of a list of formal classical topoi that Kopperschmidt (1989) devised to apply to various research topics. I elected, however, to follow the example of other academics (Bauder, 2008; Kienpointner, 1992; Wengeler, 2000) by adding my own fund of dominant topoi which emerged from the analysis of my selected texts and can be found in the relevant chapters.

Metaphors work as a linguistic device to support topoi in framing certain perspectives using various forms such as personification or predication. Metaphors enable an understanding of the way people think because they construct analogies to explain abstract ideas or convey feelings and emotions in "indirect but powerful ways", (Cameron & Maslen, 2010, vii). In considering national identity emotional metaphors of home, family, and group membership, also play a role in supporting topoi of belonging, citizenship and attachment to place.

While metaphoric language can be "striking and memorable" it also acts as an "attractor for future talking-and-thinking" and metaphors can be instrumental in marking the identity of groups (Cameron, 2010, p. 88). Reisigl and Wodak (2001) note that speakers, for example, use metaphor in their arguments to differentiate between groups of social actors by dividing them into polarized groups "black and white and ... good and bad" which in turn emphasise positive or negative self-presentation and negative or positive other-presentation (p. 58). So while on the one hand metaphors can serve to unify groups and reinforce collective identities such as the label 'Kiwi' to denote positive connotations associated with the characteristics of New Zealanders, at the same time they can be used to reinforce negative stereotypes such as calling someone 'a Jew' to suggest miserliness, or referring to the 'Yellow Peril' to convey a derogatory view of Chinese immigrants.

In addition chains of related metaphor can work intertextually – that is across different texts and genres, and simultaneously in visual and verbal forms – to create a "powerful cohesion" (Mautner, 2008, p.43). For example, the new political language of integration

with its reoccurring metaphors of building, growing and construction to support nation branding projects in the 1990s and the 2000s, has worked on both a global and local scale through speeches and documents to support and promote an idealized vision of socially cohesive societies in a number of Western countries.

My use of online discussions as case studies for analysis also highlighted another intertextual and interdiscursive dimension through which metaphors could spread. While CMC has occurred largely through a text-based format or visually presented language (Herring, 2001), new forms of communication technology such as the Internet require CDA to “move[s] beyond language” (Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 292), to include other devices or modes of communication available through the Internet. Examples include images, icons, videos and emoticons which offer a range of linguistic, visual and aural features to convey discourse.

Emoticons in particular have impacted on the way people communicate. These emotional icons, constructed by using certain characters on the computer keyboard (the most common ones are the smiley face :-)) or the sad face :-(are used for emotional conveyance or to add meaning to the written text (Dresner & Herring, 2010) and can themselves be regarded as visual metaphors. Some software programs automatically convert these characters to icons, that is ☺ and ☹. Another feature of CMC I note here is that of URLs³⁴ (hyperlinks), because they provide not only a unique function to navigate the reader to other online texts, but they also enable the easy spreading of discourse and chains of related metaphors. For example, a negative stereotype of a white New Zealander constructed through a racist metaphor that appears in a blog discussion, might be picked up by a commenter and posted in a message on another forum, which in turn might be commented on by a journalist through the more traditional media outlet of a newspaper that reaches a wide public audience.

The discursive analytical tools described in this section involving thematic analysis, strategies and linguistic devices have together presented a systematic way of analysing discourses about national identity. However, integral to the DHA process is the formulation of critique based on the interpretation of this data.

³⁴ See glossary.

5.4.3 Critiquing the results – a reflexive stance

The formulation of critique is dependent upon the interpretation of results and this, in turn, requires reflexivity that indicates the transparency of the research and of the researcher. To achieve this, I have incorporated several dimensions of reflexivity into the design of the study based on those recommended by Phillips and Hardy (2002, pp. 83–84).

Firstly, I have grounded my research by explaining my theoretical and philosophical approach in the first half of this thesis outlining the origins of the research, my social constructivist positioning stemming from Anderson and my framework for critical analysis using the DHA. I aimed to be open in my interpretation of discourse by following the objective of the DHA to work abductively whereby the researcher constantly moves between theory and the empirical data. I incorporated the theoretical, historical, social, political and cultural contexts of national identity laid out in initial background chapters, but also considered these in my analysis as I examined the empirical evidence.

Secondly, it was important to indicate my positioning as a researcher. Although I had my own voice, I needed to demonstrate transparency in declaring my own biases and experiences that might influence my interpretation of the research. After all, the researcher constructs knowledge through their stance “in relation to the observed and through the ways in which an account is transmitted in the form of a text” (Bryman, 2004, p. 500). In the first chapter, I presented autobiographical information to explain my own national identity that has been influenced by the experience of my family as part of a minority group – Jewish New Zealanders on my maternal side – and as part of the dominant majority – British settlers on my paternal side. However, I see personal experience as aiding an understanding of the research because I am an intimately engaged participant (Collier, 1988) who can view the research from the inside.

Allowing different voices to pervade the text was an important aspect of my research, though, as Phillips and Hardy (2002) point out, “discourse can never be studied in its entirety” therefore “not all possible voices appear in the text, and those that do are not expressed on equal terms” (p. 85). However, I still sought to acknowledge the existence of many different meanings and alternative representations of discourse, which is why I included two sets of data – the official discourse and the discourses of people – to

provide a cross-section of views and constructions of national identity. In addition, to clarify my understanding of discourses about national identity as expressed in the online discussions, I also conducted interviews with *publicaddress.net* founder and moderator Russell Brown, *Yellow Peril* blogger Tze Ming Mok and Ruth DeSouza of the *AEN* e-list so that they too became voices in the research. (See Appendix 3 for approval for interviews from AUTECH – the AUT University ethics committee.)

Brown, Mok and DeSouza all agreed to participate and be identified in this research. They were given ethics information sheets and consent forms (see Appendix 4) advising them of the purpose of the research and details of the proposed structure of the interviews. The consent form also advised that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed and any text referring to the moderators/administrators in the thesis would be sent to them for feedback. The interviews, conducted privately and lasting approximately one hour in each case, provided contextual information, such as the history of the sites and the constituency of the respective discussion groups, to aid my interpretation of the research.

In particular, my contact with *Yellow Peril* blogger Mok also enabled me to gain a better understanding of the construction of her *Yellow Peril* blog site and “the identity game” posting. Mok’s perspective as New Zealand Chinese was unfamiliar to me particularly because of the differences in our backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, her feedback about my interpretation assisted my analysis, taking into account its interpretive nature and its attention to critique.

From these three dimensions of reflexivity – grounding research in theoretical and philosophical approaches, positioning myself as the researcher and allowing other voices to pervade the text – it can be seen that the formulation of a critique of the research involved complex methodological processes that brought the various strands of this thesis together. To me it was akin to putting together the various pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. At times, some pieces did not fit yet, if left for a period allowing time to consolidate information, explore other theories or approach the puzzle from a different angle, the connections eventually became clearer.

Finally, it must be noted that the research process itself constructs knowledge through the production of academic discourse. This highlights the circular nature of discourse

analysis in that researchers too are “users of language” (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 84), which is why the need for reflexivity is so critical.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the formulation of my research design and method by discussing discourse analysis and the various approaches that exist. I argued that the ‘discourse-historical’ approach within CDA provided the best framework for my analysis because of its focus on critique, power and ideology, its emphasis on history with regard to context and its application of the principle of triangulation, advocating an interdisciplinary, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological stance.

The second section outlined my two categories of data – texts confirming the official discourse about a ‘new’ New Zealand identity and the two case studies of online discussions demonstrating populace discourses. The two online discussions were a *Yellow Peril* blog posting and an e-list discussion involving members of the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network*. Other subsidiary texts hyperlinked to these discussions were also included for analysis such as media articles and blog postings as they performed an important intertextual and interdiscursive function.

The final section of the chapter detailed the discourse-analytical tools based on the discursive studies of Austrian national identity conducted through the Vienna School. The three dimensions of the DHA – content, discursive strategies and linguistic analysis – were outlined along with a description of the analytical procedures involved for the various categories of text. The depth of analysis for each category varied, dependent upon their significance to the research objectives and the length of the text. I posited my intention to foreground argumentation strategies as the main focus of the analysis of the online discussions, but also suggested that examination of multi-modal features of CMC were warranted because of their impact on discourse.

The final step in the DHA process involved the formulation of critique based on the results of analysis. With the DHA’s interpretative stance, the need for reflexivity in the research was clear and I listed a number of procedures to follow during the analysis to support this.

The next four chapters present the findings of my study about New Zealand identity. The official texts feature first in Chapter Six, followed by the analyses of Mok's *Yellow Peril* blog and posting in Chapter Seven and "the identity game" discussion in Chapter Eight. The findings from the final data set of texts for analysis in the second case study – the *AEN* e-list discussion – are detailed in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Six: Public discourse – the official texts

Effective foreign policy rests upon a shared sense of national identity, of a nation-state's 'place in the world', its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations. These underlying assumptions are embedded in national history and myth changing slowly over time as political leaders reinterpret them and external and internal developments reshape them.

Hill & Wallace (1996, p. 8)

6.1 Introduction

What is meant by a new national identity? What makes it new and, perhaps more importantly, how did the New Zealand Government try to persuade the populace to accept change? This chapter explores the official discourse between 2005 and 2008 that sought to transform New Zealand as a nation. It provides context for the analysis of the discourses of people about national identity by highlighting the discursive strategies that encouraged a re-conceptualisation of the way New Zealanders saw themselves, and the way others saw them.

The historical, social, cultural and political events that had challenged the dominant majority narrative about national identity through the processes of colonisation, recolonisation and decolonisation (Belich, 2001) were outlined in Chapter Four. This chapter examines selected texts to understand how the official discourse in the 2000s constructed a new national identity as part of the Government's strategy to build a socially cohesive society. Through an analysis of the discursive strategies employed and the linguistic means that supported them, I argue that the official discourse tried to rebrand the nation and that this was part of a global trend that had begun at the end of the 20th century (Skilling, 2008).

The DHA involving the analysis of multiple texts is used to demonstrate how discourse circulates in the public arena through a range of different genres. It is also useful to illustrate how discourse can reorientate itself in response to different contexts and audiences, and reach multiple publics. In turn, different publics might respond and interpret the original discourse in different ways (Wodak et al., 1999). This chapter

therefore examines two sets of official texts targeted at differing audiences in New Zealand to indicate the discursive shifts that occurred as a result. (A table showing the complete data set of the official texts can be found in Appendix 5, while abridged versions of the political speeches of Clark and Cartwright discussed in this chapter are in Appendix 6.)

The first section focuses on those texts that spoke directly and indirectly to the nation as a whole. These include the Governor-General Dame Silvia Cartwright's *Speech from the throne*¹ announcing government policy and legislation for the forthcoming term of office in 2005, Prime Minister Helen Clark's annual statements to Parliament in 2006 and 2007 setting out the Government's priorities for the forthcoming year, and two media releases, one in 2006 and one in 2007, that focused specifically on national identity as a budget strategy. Although the speeches of the Governor-General and the Prime Minister were delivered within the setting of Parliament, their dissemination into the community at large via broadcast, media release, news articles and speech transcripts available on the Parliament website indicated the potential of the official discourse to reach a much wider audience. My analysis will show that these texts, directed to the nation as a whole, rebranded New Zealand as a stable, economically competitive and valuable member of the global community. Diversity, while a feature of these texts, was just one of a number of characteristics put forward as part of the new national identity.

The second section focuses on the selected official texts that purposively spoke to the nation as a diverse entity through speeches, posters and a website. Audiences included delegates at interfaith conferences, attendees at Waitangi Day celebrations, people interested in Race Relations Day in New Zealand and ethnic communities seeking assistance with their settlement in New Zealand. These texts had a greater emphasis on inclusivity compared with the first data set as they sought to reassure minority groups that all peoples in New Zealand, regardless of ethnicity, culture or religion, were part of this new national identity.

¹ In this study, I follow Wodak et al.'s (1999) example in not differentiating between the politicians as speakers and authors of a text because the deliverer of the speech was ultimately responsible for its content. This follows Goffman's (1981) concept of footing and the different modes adopted by the speaker as animator, author and principal. However, in the case of the *Speech from the throne*, the text was prepared – as was customary – through a process involving the Prime Minister and government officials with final approval from the Governor-General as the Queen's representative (New Zealand Government, 2008).

6.2 Addressing the nation

In this section I argue that the official discourse in the texts that addressed the nation as a whole indicated government intent to rebrand the nation. As part of the Government's objective to position New Zealand in an economically competitive global environment (Chapter Four), it recognised that it was critical that the positive presentation of the nation be stable and unified, in spite of bicultural and multicultural issues that had arisen over the years.

My analysis of the official texts identified a theme that Wodak et al. (1999) had found in their investigation of political speeches about Austrian national identity – that is, the discursive construction of a common political present and future. Although the historical and cultural circumstances of Austria and New Zealand were vastly different, the motive behind this theme to “stimulate identification, solidarity and union among... [the] listeners” (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 98) was similar. Co-opting all New Zealanders into a unified national identity that focused on “individual responsibility, initiative, and competitiveness” resulted in a reorientation of any sense of belonging to New Zealand as a geographical place, to one that emphasised its present and future role in the global community (Skilling, 2008, p. 106).

This renegotiation of national identity was signalled as an opportunity for New Zealanders to progress to a better future. Specific references in the texts in this dataset to bicultural and multicultural issues were handled carefully, avoiding sensationalism, choosing to reassure the nation about its race relations rather than to allude to any difficulties.

In Clark's *Statement to Parliament* (2006a, February 14), she spoke of reconciling the past and adjusting to the diversity of the present as part of the nation-building process. She emphasised that “... the efforts New Zealand is making are pioneering – both through the Treaty settlement process and through the efforts we make to build social cohesion and tolerance” (2006a). The personification of New Zealand in this extract as a nation leading the way in constructively dealing with minority issues, created a sense of collective purpose that was designed to empower and reinforce the positive aspects of a new national identity. One way the official discourse encouraged acceptance of a new national identity involved the topos of learning from the mistakes of the past

particularly in relation to the injustices affecting Maori, which were being addressed and would soon be laid to rest.

Similarly, the Governor-General emphasised the progress made with Maori and, in particular, the “acceleration of the Treaty settlement process”. In the *Speech from the throne*, the “emergence of a new, dynamic, confident Maoridom” was acknowledged yet, at the same time, Cartwright placed Maori alongside other groups, subsumed within a multicultural framework, as demonstrated by this comment:

It is time to lift aspirations, celebrate and encourage success, and not dwell on past failure. Pride in the achievements of all New Zealand communities and peoples must be seen as a cornerstone of the New Zealand way.

(Cartwright, 2005, November 8)

Any issues about multiculturalism were also dealt with in the texts in terms of emphasising inclusivity and social cohesion as part of a new national identity. The following two extracts reinforced the concept of a common political future that could be realised only by the involvement of all New Zealanders:

New Zealand’s growing diversity is recorded in last year’s census. A commitment to social cohesion and the willingness to be inclusive across ethnicity, culture, and faith is more important than ever before. It’s critical that all New Zealand’s peoples benefit from the progress our country makes and have a stake in our society.

(Clark, 2007, February 22)

This [New Zealand] approach aims to be inclusive, forward looking, and focused on lifting the aspirations and developing the abilities of all New Zealanders.

(Cartwright, 2005, November 8)

Ethnic, cultural and religious diversity was portrayed as a foregone conclusion in New Zealand as evidenced by the reference to the census data. Both the extracts by Clark and Cartwright above use inclusive language in referring to “all New Zealand’s peoples” and “all New Zealanders” to demonstrate the commitment to social cohesion. The potential for everyone to willingly contribute to the progress of the country was emphasised as a counterbalance to other public discourse that has indicated concern about the effects of immigration and ethnic conflict. Cartwright repeated the idea of “lifting aspirations” already used in reference to Maori, but this time in an attempt to

persuade the audience about the benefits to be gained from “all New Zealanders” (including minorities) working together.

In another extract from the same speech, Cartwright is more forceful and more revealing with her language about any resistance to a new national identity:

It is important to build a broad consensus about the way ahead. Divisions within the community, perceived or otherwise, must not be allowed to get in the way of the transformation of New Zealand, to a prosperous, confident 21st-century nation.

(Cartwright, November 8)

Here there is a more definitive attempt to counteract any obstacles in moving New Zealand forward. The noun “divisions” is an interesting choice as its vagueness creates confusion as to whether this relates to differences between ethnic groups, between the dominant majority and minority groups, between Maori and Pakeha or between Maori and other minorities, or simply differences in opinion. Regardless of this, it is somewhat contradictory when acceptance and tolerance or diversity is being preached in the official texts on the one hand while, conversely, this statement suggests that difference, in the form of division, in fact will not be tolerated. This reinforces Skilling’s (2008) conclusion from his study of government policy involving the new national identity that:

[d]ifference could be accepted so long as it contributed an element of uniqueness to [New Zealand’s] externally projected brand and so long as it didn’t undermine an internally protected cohesion. (p. 261)

Other positive characteristics of New Zealand’s new national identity conveyed through the official discourse related to more abstract traits that would aid the country economically. A phrase which frequently occurred in the texts was “the New Zealand way”, or “an evolving New Zealand way of doing things” (Clark, 2006a, February 14).² In fact, New Zealand was rebranded by augmenting the pioneering image of earlier generations with new attributes, as this extract from the *Speech from the throne* demonstrates:

²Interestingly, Clark (2007) also referred to “Labour’s ‘New Zealand way’” to ensure that the concept was seen as a Labour Party vision and not one of the opposition National Party.

The New Zealand way is much more than the clichés of ‘number eight wire’ or ‘punching above our weight’. It is based on the belief that, as a confident, diverse, inclusive Pacific nation, we can work together to find new opportunities and market our best ideas profitably to the world.

(Cartwright, 2005, November 8)

The New Zealand way emphasised the role of New Zealanders as being more than just the stereotypical, hard-working pioneers from earlier years. These age-old attributes of New Zealanders’ number eight wire mentality³ and their ability to stand out in the world even though part of a small nation, reflected the dominant majority narrative based on the country’s British settler roots (Chapter Four). Although Cartwright reinforced the concept of a common future where everyone should “work together”, the construction of a new identity based on Pakeha values was still evident through the inclusion of these clichés. But even more so the alignment of Pakeha mainstream values with those of other post-colonial countries, which sought to position New Zealand within the company of other like-minded nations, is directly stated by Clark (2007, February 22):

We are part of a community of shared values, which makes us feel at home in dealing with Australia, the United States and Canada, and the nations of Europe.

The concept of the New Zealand way in fact echoed the Third Way political ideology underpinning national rebranding that surfaced in the mid-1990s amongst Western political leaders such as British Prime Minister Tony Blair, United States President Bill Clinton and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder (Dickson, 1999). Although it is difficult to identify one all-encompassing definition of the Third Way, it can still be characterised, though somewhat simplistically, as the state favouring and playing a major role in the development of “growth, entrepreneurships, enterprise and wealth creation” along with “greater social justice” (Dickson, 1999, September 27, para. 5).

Part of New Labour Third Way politics, which differentiated itself from the division between “(‘old’) left and (‘new’) right”, emphasised Britain’s “improved” competitiveness with other countries in the global economy (Fairclough, 2000, p. 22). Fairclough’s (2000) examination of the language of New Labour found that this desire for national renewal had three requirements: the transformation of civic society, the concept of an inclusive “one nation” and a “deal” between the Government and the

³ New Zealanders became known as having a ‘number eight wire mentality’ in the first half of the 20th century because of their ability to make or repair anything with basic materials even if it was just number eight fencing wire (Peden, 2009).

people (p. 22). This deconstruction and reshaping of national identity has particular resonance with the findings in my study supporting the notion that Third Way political ideology influenced the Labour Party in New Zealand, even though it never “consciously decide[d] to become a Third Way Party” (Maharey, 2003, June 3, para. 27). Although Clark talked of her Labour Party as being Third Way (Maharey, 2003, June 3), it seemed that the preference for the descriptor “the New Zealand Way” combined a Third Way ideology with a distinctively New Zealand brand. However, there is some irony in this as New Zealand could be seen to imitate Britain, its former colonial power, and other post-colonial nations in an effort to create a new identity. This is evidenced in the following extract from Clark’s (2007, February 22) statement to the nation where the linkage of ‘core values’ are emphasized as part of a global branding exercise:

We are part of a community of shared values, which makes us feel at home in dealing with Australia, the United States and Canada, and the nations of Europe.

The two media releases (produced in consecutive years 2006 and 2007) that reported the Government’s allocation of budget funds for its national identity strategy, outline more clearly those attributes of the New Zealand way which had little offering for minority groups. Areas targeted for funding were listed including defence (with a focus on its international peacekeeping activities), foreign affairs, the arts, cultural heritage, conservation and Treaty settlements. As with the speeches of Clark and Cartwright in this section, the construction of a new national identity concentrated on abstract characteristics with the objective of positioning New Zealand positively on the world stage. These included independence, strength, pride, responsibility, creativity, competitiveness and commitment to success – all of which were designed to make New Zealand stand out as the following extracts from the media releases show:

It is about who we are, what we do, where we live, and how we are seen by the world.

(New Zealand Government, 2006, May 18)

We are proud of who we are and what we stand for.

(New Zealand Government, 2007, May 17)

The use of the deictic ‘we’ in these extracts emphasised the common bond and shared national purpose amongst New Zealanders to work towards becoming a successful

nation. But this pronoun also featured strongly in the texts as in ‘we, the Government’ to convince the nation of its leadership qualities in helping to achieve success. As (Clark, 2006a, February 14) stated: “We are in government to make a difference for the better”. Fairclough’s study of New Labour noted a similar use of ‘we’ which he said was often ambivalent because it was not clear whether it meant ‘we’ the Government or ‘we’ the nation (2000). Using passive and nominalisation as a form of elision - particularly through the use of ‘we’ - is a “favourite way[s] of introducing ambiguity into a text (Sutherland, 2005, pp.198-199). According to Fairclough, the use of ‘we’ put New Labour in a politically advantageous position because it suggested that the Government was speaking for the whole nation. The same could be said for the New Zealand Government, the Prime Minister Helen Clark and the Labour Party in my study because they positively self-represented as taking responsibility for building a socially cohesive society and strengthening the country’s national identity for the betterment of the people.

The movement towards a new identity was addressed through metaphors of growth and building, and of all New Zealanders going on a “journey” whereby the nation would emerge as “creative”, “competitive” and “stronger” than it was before (Clark, 2007, February 22). Identity was seen as constantly changing, as Clark related in one of her statements to Parliament:

New Zealand in 2006 is in many ways a work in progress. Our country is on a journey – away from the old economy to a new one; improving the health, education levels, and living standards of all our people – and the services which support our needs; and building a nation from an increasingly diverse population.

(Clark, 2006a, February 14)

Using a constructive metaphor for New Zealand as “a work in progress” suggested effort was required to achieve a better quality of life for everyone. The handling of diversity was neatly inserted into a list of other government priorities – improvements in the economy, health, education and living standards. However, the use of the deictic ‘our nation’ was somewhat ambiguous. While the statement to Parliament addressed other politicians, it also indirectly targeted the nation as a whole, connecting the people with the Government as they embarked on a metaphorical journey together. Talk of the “increasingly diverse population” from which the nation could be built, highlighted the existence of diverse groups and in fact marked them as the ‘Other’.

The speeches analysed here positioned the Government in a superior role where a transformation of the nation to a new and higher status was achievable through the leadership and management of the Government. This reflects Foucault's (1991) theory of governmentality whereby the ability to organise, control, manipulate or regulate populations⁴ was attainable through efficient governing by the state. Governmentality, Foucault stated, could occur through policies of immigration, health, labour or economy, which in turn could determine the nation's behaviour or at least dictate the parameters within which the government wants the nation to behave. It also meant that the ideal citizen could be produced through the power of the government.

These texts targeting a wide national audience reflected diversity as a component of a new national identity, though the nation's inclusivity was referred to superficially so as not to stir up dominant majority fears about the watering down of New Zealand's national identity. The official discourse focused instead on the need for 'everyone', regardless of background, to work together with the Government in building a successful nation that would achieve global recognition and success. However, the next dataset of texts, directed at a more diverse audience, indicated a shift in the official discourse that gave greater attention to minority groups and their contribution to a new national identity.

6.3 Addressing the nation as a diverse entity

Fears about rising multiculturalism in New Zealand had been fuelled by global events of ethnic conflict such as the 2005 riots in France and Australia (Murphy, 2007). Engagement and dialogue with the public were deemed important "to prevent increasing ethnic and religious diversity in New Zealand becoming a catalyst for the kinds of negative events that have taken place recently in other countries" (Ministry of Social Development & The Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2008, p. 4). In contrast to the official discourse in the first set of texts that directed the nation towards a new internationally recognised national identity, the texts in this section worked to reassure minorities and those people concerned with the welfare of diverse groups, that New Zealand was in fact an inclusive society. These texts – which will be discussed under their various genres of speeches, posters and website – are:

⁴ Biopolitics and biopower in Foucauldian terms (see Chapter Three).

- a speech by Prime Minister Helen Clark to delegates from various religious groups at the *Third National Interfaith Forum* held in Wellington on 27 February, 2006;
- a speech by the Minister for Ethnic Affairs Chris Carter at the *Metropolis Plus* forum in Wellington on 15 October, 2007, attended by academics and representatives from government and non-government organisations with an interest in immigration and diversity;
- a speech by the Associate Minister of Pacific Island Affairs and Minister for the Community Voluntary Sector Winnie Laban at the launch of the draft *National Statement on Religious Diversity* at the New Zealand Diversity Forum in Wellington, 21 August, 2006;
- a speech by Governor-General Sir Anand Satynand, as part of the Waitangi Day celebrations he hosted at Government House, Wellington, 6 February, 2007;
- two Race Relations Day posters produced by the Human Rights Commission, one in 2006 and one in 2008;
- the home page of The Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA) website that offered resources and information for ethnic communities living in New Zealand.

6.3.1 The speeches

The politicians and officials delivering these speeches sought to restore confidence amongst minority groups about their place in New Zealand. Clark (2006b, February 27), in her speech at the Third National Interfaith Forum, mitigated concern about racism in New Zealand by referring to recent events as “acts of religious and ethnic intolerance” as “isolated incidents”.⁵ She allayed fears by positively presenting the Government’s efforts to “step up our efforts to promote interfaith and intercultural awareness and understanding” through the activities of its agencies the Human Rights Commission and The Office of Ethnic Affairs.

⁵These incidents included the desecration of Jewish grave sites, the attack on a group of young Somali men in Newtown and hate mail sent to members of the Muslim community in Wellington.

Clark, in her role as Prime Minister, authoritatively demonstrated confidence in New Zealand's inclusiveness by highlighting in her speech the opportunities she had observed of people of difference, such as Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and people from the Baha'i faith, freely celebrating their cultural and religious traditions in New Zealand. She urged conference delegates to share the positive outcomes of the interfaith conference with their communities and families because "[t]hat way we help make New Zealand a place where diversity is valued and reflected in our national identity". In other words, the dissemination of the official discourse about an inclusive national identity into the domain of minority groups would further strengthen their belief in New Zealand as a socially cohesive society.

The Minister for Ethnic Affairs Chris Carter also emphasised the association between diversity and national identity to delegates at the Metropolis Plus forum – though his underlying discourse suggested an element of governmental control:

Diverse communities no doubt see our national identity differently but, at the core of it, New Zealand is an environmentally conscious, non-nuclear, multi-cultural nation which was founded on the basis of two very different cultures having to learn to live together.

As a centre-left government we have made a conscious decision that the only way a multi-ethnic, multicultural population is going to prosper and thrive is by embracing diversity and promoting its cultural and economic opportunities.

(Carter, 2007, October 15)

Although Carter attempted to construct a positive vision of New Zealand as a multicultural nation, he took care to indicate the conditions on which diverse communities were part of it. He highlighted some of the core values of national identity such as being "environmentally conscious" and "non-nuclear". However, he sidestepped reference to biculturalism by simply referring to New Zealand as being founded on "two very different cultures having to learn to live together". His use of the words "having to learn" suggested that the coexistence of Maori and Pakeha had not been an easy process and therefore diverse communities in New Zealand also needed to learn to live with the dominant majority – but on the terms of the Government.

Carter's reference to the Government "making a conscious decision" regarding the need to embrace diversity because it is the only way it can manage different ethnicities and cultures implied political control over the future success of New Zealand. However, he

attempted to instil confidence in his audience about the inclusion of minorities by employing the topos of advantage whereby, if diversity were welcomed, then it would have cultural and economic benefits for the nation as a whole.

Other official speakers also made a point of highlighting New Zealand's inclusivity by offering a more personal account of living in a multicultural New Zealand. Winnie Laban, the Associate Minister for Pacific Island Affairs and Minister for the Community Voluntary Sector, speaking at the New Zealand Diversity Forum in Wellington on August 21, 2006, and Governor-General Sir Anand Satyanand speaking at a Waitangi Day celebration February 6, 2007, for example, both presented narratives about their own ethnic backgrounds, providing optimistic views about diversity and inclusivity as key concepts of New Zealand. Both Laban and Satyanand emphasised the positive transformation of national identity by indicating the changes that had occurred during their lifetimes. Laban used metaphors of differing colours and patterns to reflect the depth and richness that multiculturalism brought to New Zealand and included the collective pronoun 'we' as a way of using inclusive language:

In New Zealand, we have our own unique contours and patterns of migration and settlement... Difference and pluralism is becoming central to New Zealand identity, and there is great depth and colour within the community and voluntary sector.

Laban went on to contrast the vibrancy of multiculturalism with the blandness of society in the 1950s, based on her own experience:

The New Zealand I was born into in the 1950s was a homogeneous, monolingual, monocultural, bland, colourless society. The New Zealand of the 21st century is a heterogeneous, multilingual, multicultural, vivid and colourful society.

To draw a distinction between two different time periods in New Zealand to which she had been witness, Laban juxtaposed histories and adjectives – monocultural versus multicultural, colourless versus colourful, for example. She used personal narrative to demonstrate the pride she had in her multiple identities exclaiming that “as a woman of the Pacific and a proud New Zealander, I advocate for celebrating difference every time”. Laban called for “discussion as a healthy and robust mechanism to gain better understanding of our different cultural and religious perspectives” (2006, August 21).

Satyanand too, focused on the need for dialogue whereby different groups would learn and hear the histories and experiences of different communities and “the part each has

played in New Zealand's larger story". Although his speech was delivered to dignitaries and invited guests at a private Waitangi Day celebration he hosted as Governor-General, it was still made public. Although Waitangi Day focused on the bicultural relationship between Maori and Pakeha, Satyanand took the opportunity to introduce his own "New Zealand story" about diversity.

My own New Zealand story began during the first half of the last century when my Indo-Fijian family settled here. I was born in Auckland and, when I am in my home city now, or in Wellington, or when my wife Susan and I visit any part of New Zealand, we know that we live in a very special country. This is a place made vivid not only by the culture of the Maori who came to New Zealand first, but by the contributions of all who have migrated and settled here.

(Satyanand, 2007, February 6)

Satyanand presented New Zealand positively by referring to the "very special" nature of the country that has developed through migration. He approached his audience acknowledging their diversity by referring not just to the "culture of the Maori", but also to immigrants, including his own family, who made New Zealand their home and made it "vivid" – the same adjective used by Laban in her colour and pattern metaphor.

These speeches of Clark, Carter, Laban and Satyanand demonstrate how the speaker and occasion affected the positioning of the official discourse about national identity. Clark as Prime Minister, although taking an authoritative stance in reassuring multi-faith groups about the Government's commitment to inclusivity, mitigated the existence of racism in New Zealand on any great scale. Carter's speech to researchers and policy-makers, while referring to the need to embrace diversity, indicated a greater level of governmentality in managing diversity to produce the ideal citizen. Laban and Satyanand, who were both born in New Zealand but were of Samoan and Indo-Fijian backgrounds respectively, were more celebratory about diversity and the positive aspects it brought to the nation. Both of them highlighted the vibrancy of multiculturalism and the inclusivity of the nation in present-day contexts. They were also the only ones in this selection of texts to open their speeches with greetings in multiple languages. The narration of their personal experiences of life in New Zealand, enhanced by metaphors of colour and growth, reinforced a positive perspective on a national identity that had become increasingly diverse. But the emphasis on diversity in the official discourse was also susceptible to a reinforcement of the 'Other', as will be discussed in the two remaining genres to be analysed in this section.

6.3.2 Race Relations Day posters and the diversity fern logo

Each year since 2003, the Human Rights Commission has produced a poster as part of International Race Relations Day (21 March)⁶ that raises awareness of the negative effects of racism and fosters “respect, equality and diversity” (Wellington City Council, n.d.). The Race Relations Day posters analysed in this study were freely available and used by schools, by government organisations, by NGOs and in workplaces to highlight the day. They conveyed visual messages involving text and images to promote positive race relations from a New Zealand perspective, supporting the Government’s objective to build a socially cohesive society, but also implicitly reinforcing a national identity based on diversity. Compared with the earlier texts in this section, the posters emphasised New Zealand as a place where all peoples were welcomed. Both posters incorporated the diversity fern logo of the HRC’s New Zealand Diversity Action Programme that worked on practical initiatives to promote cultural tolerance and understanding. A description of the diversity fern and contextual information about its adaptation from a much older national symbol – the silver fern (referred to in Chapter Four) – provides insight into the construction of a new national identity based on difference and are therefore a precursor to a discussion of each poster in this chapter.

From silver fern to diversity fern

The silver fern – a native plant of New Zealand (*Cyathea dealbata*) with a dark-green upperside and silver underside – has been an unofficial emblem and symbol of national pride since the 19th century, used particularly by sports teams competing internationally. It continues to be used in various ways as Figure 6.1 illustrates.

⁶March 21 was chosen by the United Nations as international race relations day because, on this date in 1960, 70 peaceful anti-apartheid demonstrators were fatally shot in Sharpeville, South Africa. The day has been dedicated by the United Nations to the achievement of the goals of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. New Zealand signed the Convention on 25 October 1966 and ratified it on 22 November 1972 (NZ History Online, n.d.)



Fig 6.1: Examples of the silver fern being used as a New Zealand emblem (clockwise from left): on the New Zealand passport;⁷ a tattoo;⁸ and an unofficial flag.⁹

The 1888 New Zealand Natives rugby team which toured Britain, for example, was the first to use the silver fern and the New Zealand netball team today goes by the name the *Silver Ferns*. But this New Zealand symbol has also been used on military uniforms and graves, as a trademark for meat and dairy exports, and as an unofficial flag at international sporting events (Squidoo, 2011). More recently, in 2008, it began to be featured as a motif on the New Zealand passport to give the passport a “more of a Kiwi look” (Donovan, 2008, September 3).

The diversity fern logo that was designed in 2005 (Figure 6.2) is an adaptation of the silver fern symbol.

⁷Photograph by Simone Smith.

⁸Reproduced with permission from Tikiroa <http://tikitatau.blogspot.co.nz/2012/08/welcome-to-official-tiki-tattoo-koh.html>

⁹Reproduced with permission from Parrs Products Ltd, New Zealand.



Fig 6.2: The diversity fern logo with arrows indicating its ethnic/religious patterns as located on the Human Rights Commission website <http://www.hrc.co.nz/race-relations/te-ngira-the-nz-diversity-action-programme/the-diversity-fern>.

It was produced for the New Zealand Diversity Action Programme after a series of racially motivated events beginning with the desecration of Jewish graves in Wellington in 2004. A parliamentary resolution was passed deploring these acts and representatives of various ethnic groups in New Zealand, in a public meeting on the parliamentary forecourt, unanimously adopted an outline for a diversity action programme.

Designed by Malaysian-born New Zealander Jean Voon, the diversity fern adapts the symbolic silver fern and applies a different ethnic or religious motif to each frond to indicate a diverse New Zealand. The choice of ethnic groups represented on the diversity fern is an interesting selection. According to the HRC website (Human Rights Commission, 2008a), the European population is “loosely” represented by the decorative Fleur de Lys design (historically associated with the French monarchy), from the hinges of a Catholic Church with an Irish name (St Patrick’s Cathedral) in

Auckland. Maori too are symbolised through the painted panel pattern from the Manutuke Church representing one particular tribe (Rongowhakaata iwi) when there are many different tribes in New Zealand. Pasifika people are represented by the Samoan tapa-cloth pattern although Pacific groups include Tongan, Niuean, Cook Island and Tokelauan. The Middle East is signified by a motif from Iran – just one of many countries in that area – and the other three fronds representing Chinese, Indian and Vietnamese groups would be labelled under ‘Asian’ though there are many more different groups within this pan-ethnic identity. The baby fronds of the diversity fern represent new growth and, in the context of the Diversity Action Programme, the logo indicates a continuously changing identity based on difference.

However, the diversity fern has not superseded the silver fern. Rather, it has been used in a limited fashion and features mainly in situations targeting an audience with an interest in diversity. It appears in publicity material supporting New Zealand Diversity Action Programme activities and in numerous documents (Human Rights Commission, 2008a), including featuring on the covers of the national statements on race relations and religious diversity in New Zealand and, of course, the Race Relations Day posters discussed next.

The posters



Fig 6.3: Race Relations Day poster in 2006 – Aotearoa, New Zealand Turangawaewae, Our Home.

The slogan on the 2006 poster (Figure 6.3) “Turangawaewae, Our Home” defines Aotearoa, New Zealand as a home to all. The Maori word ‘turangawaewae’, which translates as “a place to stand” where people feel “empowered and connected” (Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, 2009), is closely linked to the concept of home. The

connotations of belonging to a bicultural Aotearoa/New Zealand (indicated by the use of both Maori and English language place names) are strong. The diversity fern covers two-thirds of the poster and the different fronds are markedly distinguishable by the contrast of white on a green background. The date of Race Relations Day is noted below, along with the HRC's web address directing the reader to more information.



Fig 6.4: Race Relations Day poster in 2008. *We all sit under the same stars Te Rā Whanaungatanga* – Finding Common Ground.

The 2008 poster (Figure 6.4) combines representations of nature in New Zealand: the kereru (native wood pigeon), the (diversity) fern, and the Southern Cross constellation in the night sky. These visual images along with the slogan “We all sit under the same stars” suggest that all peoples – regardless of background – are unified in that they share New Zealand as a place to live. The inclusive “we” in the poster’s slogan and the sedentary act of ‘sitting’ suggests permanency in a place where everyone is welcomed. No matter who a person is, the stars above are the same, as is the ground on which they sit. This reflects a Maori worldview where a connection with one’s ancestors through the land in which they live is considered sacred.

While this poster reinforces a sense of unity as does the 2006 poster, it also incorporates an additional message. The Maori words Te Rā Whanaungatanga in the poster translate as signalling “a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging” (Te Whanake Resources, 2011). The sentiment of ‘working together’, also reflected in the Race Relations Day theme of

Finding Common Ground noted at the bottom right corner of the poster along with the HRC logo, echoes the words of Clark and Cartwright in their speeches from the first dataset of texts implying the need for cooperation for the common good of the nation.

The purpose of these posters was to promote peace and unity on Race Relations Day. Using the fern as a metaphor of growth suggests that something is grounded or rooted in one place and the themes in the catch phrases and the images of the posters play an essential part in this concept. Although realistically plants do not grow with different fronds unless artificially grafted on, the diversity fern presents an image of inclusion and tolerance. All the fronds emerge from a central stalk and grow together – but without restriction or interference from each other. The order of the fronds is interesting as they reflect the temporal establishment of the various ethnic groups in New Zealand, beginning with Maori, followed by European, and then other minority groups.

Although the diversity fern represents a socially cohesive society, difference is still noted by the different fronds. But a strong bicultural presence is also evident in the posters through the use of te reo¹⁰ and English words, and through the Maori worldview of a sense of belonging created through an attachment with the natural world. The greater prominence of Maori in these posters compared with the other official texts in this chapter reflects the HRC's commitment to human rights and the Treaty of Waitangi which, it states, protects all people living in New Zealand (Human Rights Commission, 2011b). However, the concept of celebrating difference was not always a unifying feature as the analysis of the home page from The Office of Ethnic Affairs website demonstrates.

6.3.3 The Office of Ethnic Affairs homepage

The purpose of a government department, ministry or agency website is to offer information about policies, resources, news and events, access to reports and documents, and to give contact details. The home page is usually the first page that links a person to a site providing introductory information along with further links to other pages and sources of information. The home page of the Government's OEA website (seen in Figure 6.5 as it appeared on 11 June 2008) acted as a gateway to resources for ethnic communities living in New Zealand. A broad analysis of this page enabled an examination of how diversity was sanctioned as part of the new national identity. I

¹⁰ Maori language.

argue that, while the official discourse of the OEA strived to celebrate and recognise diversity in New Zealand, making minority groups feel welcome, the site in fact overemphasised this concept and, as a result, reinforced ‘Otherness’.



Fig 6.5: Screenshot of the home page from The Office of Ethnic Affairs website as it appeared on 11 June 2008.

The OEA home page was constructed as friendly and welcoming. It used bright colours, a range of font styles and photographs which made it less formal and less complicated than what one might expect from a government office. The banner slogan “New Zealand My Place in the World” positioned New Zealand as a place where people had chosen to live, where they could belong and where they felt positive about their decision. The section below the banner that listed links to other pages – “Advisory

Services, What's Happening, Resources, Community Directory, Language Line, Policy & Guidelines” – highlighted the accommodating activities of the OEA in assisting ethnic communities to become established in New Zealand.

But the most illuminating aspect about the representation of ethnic minorities in New Zealand appeared in the red section below these links. A colour photograph of the Minister for Ethnic Affairs Chris Carter dominated this section. The smiling head-and-shoulders portrait of Carter dressed smartly in a dark suit, complemented by a red tie (the colour of the Labour Party), identified him as not just a politician, but also a New Zealand European and a member of the dominant majority in New Zealand. To the left of his portrait his personal statement read:

This website celebrates New Zealand and it's [*sic*] ethnic communities. Ethnic People and their families are part of New Zealand's national Identity and support our nation's economic transformation.

The two sentences in this statement were characteristic of the official discourse about New Zealand's national identity found in some of the other texts. This first sentence implied that the website had been specifically created to celebrate ethnic communities in New Zealand. Immediately the description “ethnic communities” singled out ethnicity as a marker of difference within the nation, though the verb “celebrate” suggested that this was a positive feature. However, in the second sentence, “Ethnic People and their families” were emphasised as being connected with the nation's economic transformation. While ethnic people may well have been happy to aid New Zealand in this way, this sentence created an expectation and a reason for their inclusion as part of the nation's identity.

To the right of Carter's portrait is a montage of eight close-up head shots of what are suggested to represent ethnic people living in New Zealand. The inclusion of these images of young people – two females and six males (including a young boy) of varying ethnicities and skin tones – sought to dispel any myths or stereotypes of minority groups by indicating their diversity. The eight people gaze directly at the viewer with expressions that suggest their contentment with living in New Zealand. However, the division between us and them implied in Carter's statement is more definitive in the sentence below the montage of ethnic people:

The Office of Ethnic Affairs is focused on people whose culture and traditions distinguish them from the majority in New Zealand.

This sentence emphasised the authoritative role of the OEA as a government “Office” that held a superior position of power with the mandate to manage “ethnic affairs”. The “focus” of the Office was stated as being on people who were different from the “majority” in New Zealand based on their “culture and traditions”. Several social actors were identified here: the OEA as an abstract body but personalised through the representation of the Minister, the ethnic people who were singled out because of their difference and the majority who commanded a dominant place “in” New Zealand. This scenario created a tension between celebrating diversity and constructing ‘Otherness’. Although the OEA attempted to represent itself as an active body intent on helping ethnic communities fit into the New Zealand way of life, its ambition to highlight difference as part of the nation’s identity, in fact marginalised such groups in the process.

6.4 Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the new national identity was constructed through an official discourse that included diversity as one of its distinct and unique characteristics that made it stand out in the world. New Zealand’s increasing diversity, against a background of global ethnic conflict in multicultural countries, had caused concern amongst some about the country’s future stability and the threat it might have to its national identity. At the turn of the new millennium, representing New Zealand as a secure and unified nation, that was creative, innovative and forward thinking was an important part of its image if it wanted to have a significant presence in the global market place. Based on Foucault’s concept of governmentality whereby the state sought to create the ideal citizen, the new national identity was constructed as one in which all New Zealanders – regardless of ethnicity, culture or religion –shared a common purpose to help New Zealand succeed as a competitive player in the world. The new national identity focused on the theme of learning from the lessons of the past and pursuing a common political present and future that included an acceptance of diversity.

The official discourse that conveyed the emergence of a new national identity was directed in various ways dependent on different audiences as my analysis of the two datasets of texts has shown. The first set of texts addressing a wide national audience,

including speeches and government media releases, tactfully included the tolerance of minority groups as just one of a number of positive attributes of the new identity along with an anti-nuclear stance, the country's desire to be economically and environmentally sustainable, and its creativity, innovation and competitiveness. This downplayed any sense of concern about the nation's increasing diversity that the host community may have felt.

The analysis of the official discourse in these texts demonstrated the use of discursive strategies by which the nation could be assisted, if not persuaded or cajoled, to imagine or think of itself in a certain way. Martin-Rojo and van Dijk (1997) interpret this as "official legitimating discourse...[that] contributes to the management and the reproduction of power" (p. 562). Metaphors of 'building' and 'strengthening' of national identity, for example, were used to persuade people that the construction of a new national identity required effort. But, at the same time, the Government presented itself as being most suited to guide the nation on this journey. The repeated emphasis on the 'New Zealand Way of doing things' (echoing the Third Way political ideology that existed at the time in countries such as Britain and the United States), served to empower the population in believing that a better future was possible. The focus on this shared national identity was in fact part of the rebranding of the nation (Skilling, 2008), but one that relegated bicultural and multicultural issues to the background.

The second set of texts addressed minority groups and those with an interest in diversity, seeking to reassure them of the valued place of people with different cultures and religions as part of the new national identity. The speeches, posters and websites disseminated an official discourse that endeavoured to show inclusiveness as an important attribute of New Zealanders. Discursive strategies employed included reoccurring metaphors of patterns to show the interweaving of difference to make a colourful society, symbolic representations such as the diversity fern, inclusive language such as the poster slogan "We all sit under the same stars", personal narratives of the positive experiences of living in New Zealand as a minority, and the topos of advantage to persuade groups of the recognition of the contribution that they made to the nation. Although the target audience of this set of texts differed to the first, chains of metaphors could be seen across the various genres of speeches, news releases, website and posters. This interdiscursivity ensured that a powerful discourse about national identity conveying the same messages of inclusivity and socially cohesiveness,

and constructed through reoccurring metaphors of growth, building, and the weaving together of fabric and colours, reached a wider audience in New Zealand.

However, both sets of texts also demonstrated how the dominant majority retained its superior position under this new identity in its management of issues relating to minority groups. While the freedom to celebrate cultural/ethnic/religious customs and traditions was welcomed, minority groups were still represented as marginal and on the periphery of the nation. On the one hand, encouraging people to retain and express their different backgrounds highlighted a positive characteristic of a new New Zealand identity, compared with the assimilationist attitude of earlier years. On the other hand, the acceptance of minorities as New Zealanders was conditional on their taking on mainstream values and not obstructing the transformation of New Zealand the way the Government wanted it.

Although the dominant white majority might well be imagined as “benign mainstream” (Hage, 1998, p. 46), it was the continual positioning of superiority in the official texts and the concept that diversity must be managed which reinforced the existence of the ‘Other’ whether referred to as “ethnic communities”, “ethnic people and their families”, “Maori”, “Pasifika”, “Asian”, “Muslim” or “Jewish”. Increasingly since the 1990s, research into multicultural, post-colonial nations such as Australia and Canada has highlighted official discourses as accommodating notions of whiteness and, in particular, privileging the interests of the dominant cultural status of the ‘white’ (Anglo/European) population. Elder, Ellis and Pratt (2004), for example, suggested that perceptions of Australia being inclusive and more accepting and tolerant of minority groups were actually part of a ‘white’ nation fantasy which in reality was “another way of controlling the White nation-space” (p. 215).

In advocating the use of discourse theory in nation-building research, Sutherland (2005) states that “in a world constructed in terms of difference, any impression of cohesion conveyed in a text must be treated as suspect” (p. 198). So while on the surface the official texts suggested a transparent agenda to construct a more-inclusive national identity that would lead to a more-harmonious society, the deeper discursive analysis in fact offered an interpretation that the dominant majority was privileged and that governmentality enabled the White nation space to be carefully managed to “satisfy [the] desires” and “alleviate [the] fears” of white people (Elder et al., 2004, p. 211). The

creation of a “national will” whereby the dominant majority could feel justified in their position of superiority was achieved when there was a legitimate entitlement reinforced by government (Hage, 1998, p. 46).

Overall, the findings from this analysis of the official discourse demonstrated that a new national identity was constructed as the Government’s idealised version of how the nation’s identity should be imagined. Using persuasive language, the discourse marketed the new identity as being in the best interests of the nation. Rather than seeking to construct it as an “ethno-cultural homogeneity”, the focus of a unified and collective identity was “based on the attitudes and behaviours required by global economic competitiveness” (Skilling, 2008, p. 252). This included the construction of a socially cohesive society as part of a political project where diverse groups such as Maori and ethnic minorities might have felt it preferable to be celebrated on the Government’s terms rather than ignored (Skilling, 2008).

The significance of the Government’s role in leading the people towards a positive political future was evident in the official discourse with references to strong leadership and sound policies (Clark, 2007, February 22). But governance also needs to be considered in a broader sense in how people comply, resist, negotiate, rationalise or avoid (Mickler, 1998) a “managerial attitude towards others” (Hage, 1998, p. 46). As Jones, Pringle and Shepherd (2000) have argued, managing diversity initiatives may in fact “reinstate and reinforce the patterns of difference and dominance that many diversity practitioners are seeking to change, while giving the appearance of creating new, better possibilities” (p. 378). The analysis of the two online discussions that follow offers an opportunity to gauge whether the official discourse about a new national identity had any resonance with New Zealanders.

Chapter Seven: The discourses of people – Part I: the *Yellow Peril* and “the identity game” blog posting

People in virtual communities do just about everything
people do in real life, but we leave our bodies behind.

Rheingold (2000, p. xvii)

Two archived online discussions set within the research time period of this study (2005–2008) are the focus of this analysis of the everyday talk about New Zealand national identity. Debate about the meaning of ‘New Zealander’ was at the heart of these discussions on the *Yellow Peril* blog site and in the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network (AEN)* e-list which are explored in the next three chapters. Tze Ming Mok’s *Yellow Peril* blog site and her posting titled “the identity game” are discussed in Chapter Seven. This provides context for the analysis of the lengthy online discussion following the posting which is examined in Chapter Eight. The findings from the analysis of the *AEN* e-list discussion are detailed in Chapter Nine where posters responded to the unusual descriptor of “New Zealand passport holder” that appeared in an online news story.

7.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the nature of the blog genre to contextualise “the identity game” posting on the *Yellow Peril* blog site by investigating the circumstances within which it was conceived, its content and how it was constructed. At the same time it functions to demonstrate Mok’s self-positioning in a publically accessible blogsite as a New Zealand Chinese writer and advocate for minority groups and of social justice. These are key steps in the process leading to the identification and analysis of the discourses of people about national identity in the online discussion that responded to Mok and to a particular blog posting.

Firstly, I background Mok and look at the origins of her *Yellow Peril* blog site located within a community of New Zealand blogs known as *publicaddress.net*. Secondly, I examine the structural framework of the *Yellow Peril* blog site, paying attention to how Mok personalised it using the construction of her own identity. Thirdly, I analyse “the identity game” posting in which Mok satirised Statistics New Zealand’s (StatsNZ)

inclusion of ‘New Zealander’ as a new ethnic category in the 2006 census data in order to show the absurdity of this decision. The analysis of this posting also diverts to discuss two separate texts accessed through URL links Mok embedded in the posting – an earlier posting and an online news article. The texts accessed through these links provided additional information to support her views in “the identity game” demonstrating interdiscursivity and intertextuality.

7.2 *Yellow Peril* blogger Tze Ming Mok

Yellow Peril blogger Tze Ming Mok describes herself on her personal website as a “New Zealand Chinese writer” (www.tzemingmok.com). Her achievements have been publicly acknowledged with her success as winner of the literary *Landfall*¹ essay competition in 2004 and the selection of her poem *An Arabic poetry lesson in Jakarta* as one of New Zealand’s best poems in 2004 (The Arts Foundation, n.d.). But Mok’s literary skills also extended to journalism and political commentary with her articles appearing in publications in Asia, New Zealand and Australia. (In 2006, she was a regular columnist for the New Zealand weekend newspaper the *Sunday Star Times*.)

Mok, who holds a master’s degree in Political Studies from The University of Auckland, has a strong, forthright and often-satirical writing style that reflects an independent and outspoken attitude. Her personal website refers to her political writing as offering “opinions and diversions on New Zealand Asian identity, cultural training resources on media representations of Asia and Asian people, speeches, human rights and migrant issues, and encounters with dissidents” (Mok, n.d.). But Mok has also been active in these areas outside of writing, particularly in defence of Asian New Zealanders who have been the target of racism and xenophobia. In 2004, she led an anti-racism march to Parliament in Wellington (Mok, 2004, October 23) and, in 2007, the New Zealand Press Council upheld a complaint by Mok and several others against a *North and South* magazine article titled “Asian Angst: Is it time to send some back?” The article was deemed inaccurate and discriminative against Asians living in New Zealand (New Zealand Press Council, 2007).

¹*Landfall* is New Zealand’s foremost arts and literary journal to which many notable writers and artists have contributed. Its essay competition, run annually since 2009, was started in 1997 as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations.

Mok's award-winning *Landfall* essay "Race You There" was reprinted in the book *Great New Zealand Argument* (Brown, 2005) which ran contemporary debate about New Zealand identity alongside historic texts. The editor of the book was Russell Brown – a journalist, broadcaster, media commentator and founder of *publicaddress.net*, a website that ran a number of sociopolitical blogs written by New Zealanders (including his own blog titled *Hard News*). Impressed with Mok's thought-provoking approach to New Zealand race relations, Brown invited her to publish her own blog on *publicaddress.net* which she called *Yellow Peril*.

The *Yellow Peril* blog gave wider exposure for Mok's political commentary. Although she knew that *publicaddress.net* – which had been operating since 2002 – had an established audience, Mok (2009, December 18) believed that her blog would provide an alternative reading space for minority groups in New Zealand that would not be overshadowed by a dominant majority narrative. *Yellow Peril* provided Mok with the opportunity to further express her opinions publicly in a virtual environment, particularly in response to issues of racism and stereotyping of Asians and other minority groups in New Zealand.

Yellow Peril operated from the *publicaddress.net* website from 11 April 2005 to 5 December 2007. Until November 2006, all of the blogs on *publicaddress.net* had been monologues. Limitations of the initial software meant that, for the first five years, people were unable to respond directly online to blog postings, though it was possible to email bloggers privately with their feedback.² The opportunity to respond to *publicaddress.net* bloggers within a public domain had not been available when Mok first started the *Yellow Peril* blog. Originally, responses were made to Mok via her personal email address. However, with the introduction of new software, the *Yellow Peril* audience – at least those who commented online – became visible and vocal.³

In reviewing Mok's archived *Yellow Peril* blog postings (accessed through *publicaddress.net*), it was clear that she had no hesitation in responding to topics such as the xenophobic immigration policy of political party New Zealand First, or to respond to personal attacks on her (both verbal and physical) by members of the National Front, a New Zealand right-wing extremist group. In addition, *Yellow Peril*

² This type of personal communication is termed 'back channelling'.

³ Those people who read online discussions but do not contribute to them, known as lurkers, are also part of the audience but cannot be identified.

presented an opportunity for her to address the mainstream media's misrepresentation and oversimplification of ethnic issues (Mok, 2009, December 18). A greater understanding of Mok's provocative approach in publicly challenging issues she felt strongly about with regards to diversity can be gained by examining the construction of her blog site and the ways she represented herself.

7.3 The *Yellow Peril* blog site

Access to the *Yellow Peril* blog site was via the *publicaddress.net*'s home page on the Internet where the heading and first few lines of each blogger's most recent posting featured. Clicking the cursor on the heading of a blog posting directed the reader to the selected blog site and the full text of the posting. Figure 7.1 is a screenshot of "the identity game" blog posting from 7 December 2006, embedded within the *Yellow Peril* blog site, which I retrieved from the *publicaddress.net* archives in 2008.

This archived version of the blog in Fig 7.1 differs from its original display in 2006 in that the peripheral features surrounding the posting, such as the listing of other public address weblogs and advertisements of *publicaddress.net* sponsors, have altered automatically over time as it is updated. However, the text of "the identity game" and the structure of the *Yellow Peril* web page remained the same as they are in this screenshot, such as the heading, icons and images on the *Yellow Peril* banner, and Mok's blog roll down the right side of the page,⁴ which are part of my analysis.

7.3.1 The banner

The public address logo in the form of a speech bubble on the left side of the banner reminds the reader that *Yellow Peril* is located within the *public address.net* blog site where people can voice opinion in a publicly accessible domain. However, the remaining banner space incorporates a number of features that mark the *Yellow Peril* blog as strictly Mok's territory. On the right side of the banner are the words *Yellow Peril* in large letters with the tag line "the weblog of Tze Ming Mok" in a smaller font below it. This acknowledges that the postings below are those of Mok, creating the expectation that what is encountered here reflects her own perspective and opinions. The yellow background of the banner reflects both the 'colour' in the name *Yellow Peril* and the stereotypical portrayal of people of Chinese ethnicity as having yellow skin.

⁴ A blog roll is a list of links to other blogs or websites selected by the blogger.

Mok's play on Chinese ethnicity is further reinforced by the image of a bowl of rice and what initially appears to be a pair of chopsticks lying across it. On closer inspection, it can be seen that the chopsticks are in fact two sharpened pencils, suggesting to me, as the reader of the blog, Mok's passion for writing on topics such as social justice and her sharpness of wit involving the clever use of metaphors.

public address

Yellow Peril
THE BLOG OF TZE HING MOK

Join the discussion at Public Address System

RECENT POSTS... Page 21 of 30 archive

The gift that keeps on giving | Dec 20, 2006 13:28

Look. You're bloated and sleepy after the latest pre-Christmas office lunch/booze-up. You're not going to do any work. You're *definitely* not going to think any more about the *Thread that Would Not Die*. You will instead open the *best present ever* from Justin Timberlake and SNL.

I am aware that posting Youtube clips does not count as blogging. Will get back to you once bloat subsides.

PRINT LINK REPLY DISCUSS

Dig this Scoop!

the identity game | Dec 07, 2006 09:17

Ethnic Group as a Percentage of the Total Population⁽¹⁾
2001 and 2006 Censuses

Ethnic group	2001 (%)	2006 (%)
European	~75	~85
Māori	~15	~18
Asian	~10	~8
Pacific peoples	~5	~5
Other (including MELAA)	~2	~2
MELAA ⁽²⁾	~1	~1
Other (including New Zealanders) ⁽³⁾	~1	~1

(1) People were able to identify with more than one ethnic group, therefore percentages do not add up to 100.
(2) MELAA, or Middle Eastern and Latin American and African, was introduced as a new category for the 2006 Census. Previously, 'MELAA' responses were allocated to the 'Other ethnicity' category.
(3) 'New Zealander' was introduced as a new response option for the 2006 Census. 'New Zealander' responses form part of the 'Other ethnicity' category. For 2006, 'New Zealander' responses had the largest contribution towards the 'Other ethnicity' category. For 2001, and previous censuses, 'New Zealander' was counted with the 'European' category.

They're taking over. The 'New Zealanders' I mean. As you can see, they're actively killing off the white-folk, looting their homes and renaming their children. Once *this demographer* realises that we 350,000 'Asians' *aren't actually one ethnic group*, she may choose instead to worry about the 'New Zealanders' threatening to outnumber Māori to become the minority with the most leverage.

Now, there are undoubtedly *some* people in this new ascendant minority group who are not *just white people who don't like to be called 'Pakeha' or 'European'*. But... you can see it right? How the dip from the 'European' category on the left appears to tetrise itself rather exactly into the 'New Zealander' category on the far right? The more you look at it, the funnier it gets.

If we could just bump up the MELAA (learn to love this random pan-ethno-acronym) and the Pacific bars, we could make the whole bottom row disappear!

Plink!

PRINT LINK REPLY DISCUSS

LINKS...

- [about tze ming mok](#)
- [2006 SST columns](#)
- [emergency invasion kit](#)
- [angry asian man](#)
- [secret asian man](#)
- [poplicks](#)
- [global voices online](#)
- [skykiwi](#)
- [EastSouthWestNorth](#)
- [sapla mutiny](#)
- [ultrabrown](#)
- [hanzismatter](#)
- [Send Feedback](#)
- [View Archive](#)

TOPIC SEARCH...

- [Chinese in New Zealand](#)
- [pan-Asianism](#)
- [History](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [word on the street](#)
- [language is a virus](#)
- [amateur art-crit](#)
- [an embarrassment of parliamentarians](#)
- [idiotwatch](#)
- [hip-hop](#)
- [food](#)

SEARCH WEBLOG...

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- [Positions \\$150k+](#)
- [NZ Govt Jobs](#)
- [Contract Positions](#)
- [NZ Salary Guide](#)

GO TO PAGE...

wap.publicaddress.net
Read us on your mobile

http://publicaddress.net/ Internet 96%

Fig 7.1: Screenshot of “the identity game” posting from 7 December 2006, on the *Yellow Peril* blog site.

The *Yellow Peril* name for Mok's blog site is a teaser for the reader because of its ironical use. Historically, the words *Yellow Peril* had been used as a derogatory reference to Asian people in New Zealand and overseas (Chapter Five). Used by Western nations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to describe the military threat

from China and Japan, *Yellow Peril* was also adopted in New Zealand by those who perceived Chinese immigrants as a threat to the racial purity of the nation's identity (Murphy, 2009). The Chinese people, as the "first non-indigenous, non-white ethnic group to settle in New Zealand", made up one of the country's "highly visible immigrant communities" – yet they were marginalised and faced periodic episodes of racial discrimination (Ip, 2009a, p. 8). A poll tax on Chinese immigrants, for example, was introduced by the Government in 1881 to deter them from coming to New Zealand (Ip, 2010). However, discrimination against the Chinese has also prevailed in more recent years, encapsulated for example within xenophobic terms such as 'Asian Invasion' (Trlin & Watts, 2004).

Mok, however, saw the use of *Yellow Peril* as an opportunity for empowerment – though this was not the first time she had used the words in this way. When I interviewed Mok in 2009, she related how she had been intrigued by a 1960s' photograph of an Asian-American protester holding a sign announcing "*Yellow Peril* supports black power". This man was showing his support for American Black party members who claimed that the Californian police were racist and corrupt.⁵ The term '*Yellow Peril*' used in this context demonstrated how it could be appropriated to display resolve and determination, transferring a derogatory term for Asians into a more positive framework. Mok chose *Yellow Peril* as the name for her 'riot grrrl' punk band⁶ in the late 1990s and early 2000s for similar reasons, exhibiting what she refers to as an "ironic self-reflexiveness" (Mok, 2009, December 18).

This empowerment found within the term '*Yellow Peril*' clearly translated to the naming of Mok's own blog where much of what she wrote focused on sociopolitical issues, particularly relating to justice and the rights of minority groups.⁷ To a certain extent, Mok can also be seen to personify this transformation of '*Yellow Peril*' in that she, as a New Zealand Chinese writer, strongly defended minority groups and condemned discrimination.

⁵ (see www.newsreel.us/panthers/index.htm to view this poster *Yellow Peril - Oakland, California - 1969*, no. 14 by Roz Payne).

⁶ 'Riot grrrl' bands were a feminist response to the exclusivity of hard-core punk rock which, in the 1980s and 1990s, was largely dominated by males. Female identity was strongly represented in riot grrrl bands which tackled sociopolitical themes for women dealing with frustration, depression, desperation and anger (Scaruffi, 2009).

⁷ The appropriation of traditional negative stereotypical labels such as '*Yellow Peril*' has been discussed by others including Libby Hakaraia director of the television documentary *Chinks, Coconuts and Curry-munchers* who believes that when you make stereotypes your own they don't hurt you (Bates, 2010).

7.3.2 URL links

Blog roll

The blog roll on the right-hand side of the *Yellow Peril* blog site provides a list of URL links to other websites selected by Mok. The first three links to pages on Mok's personal website (www.tzemingmok.com) are:

1. "about tze ming mok" – a brief autobiography of Mok mostly about her various writing roles from literature to political editorials;
2. "2006 SST columns" – a selection of Mok's *Sunday Star Times* columns from 2006 which cover topics such as leader of the National Party Don Brash's comments on immigrants and the ethnic stereotypes of characters on a New Zealand television soap opera;
3. the "emergency invasion kit" – a page of various resources which Mok has offered somewhat ironically for those "suffering confusion or curiosity about demographic change and ethnic identity in Aotearoa". This includes examples of anti-Asian articles that had appeared in New Zealand publications in the early 2000s, and some tongue-in-cheek satirical photographs and texts demonstrating the "Asian Invasion" movement. In everyday circumstances, an emergency kit provides the basic necessities for survival. Therefore Mok's humour in using this metaphor as a way of offering tools and resources to understand the moral panic about New Zealand's increasing diversity speaks to Asian New Zealanders (and more broadly to ethnic minorities) about the absurdity of the stereotyping and prejudice they repeatedly encounter.

These first three hyperlinks establish an autobiographical orientation of Mok, particularly with regard to her professional writing on sociopolitical issues and to her approach to tackling issues about which she feels strongly. Her ethnic background is also emphasised. All of these aspects support her credibility as the *Yellow Peril* blogger.

The remaining nine links in the blog roll function differently in that they direct readers to websites selected by Mok which have an Asian focus. A blog roll such as this also gives an indication of the networked system of blogs that the blog author might read, refer to and link to (Blanchard, 2004), but also an indication that the author may have an

affinity with the bloggers who wrote them. Mok's listing of the following URLs, which I describe briefly, highlight the complexity of the Internet and the opportunity for readers to navigate to other sites:

4. "Angry Asian Man" – a blogger who self-labels as an "Asian-American guy" with a particular interest in Asians in popular culture and entertainment (angryasianman.com/angry.html);
5. "Secret Asian Man" – the site of a comic strip which has a particular focus on racism against Asians (www.imdiversity.com/villages/asian/Secret_Asian_Man/Secret_Asian_Man_Home.asp);
6. "poplicks" – the blog site of Oliver Wang who has an interest in pop culture and politics (poplicks.com/v1);
7. "global voices on line" – a resource providing access to "communities of bloggers with an interest in minority groups; global voices online" that the media often ignore (globalvoicesonline.org/about);
8. "Skykiwi" – the largest Chinese website in New Zealand providing information on New Zealand culture and lifestyle for the Chinese community – whose text is written in *jianti* – the short-form Chinese used by Mainlanders and Singaporeans (www.skykiwi.com), though the use of 'kiwi' in the title locates the website in a New Zealand context;
9. "EastWestSouthNorth" (www.zonaeuropa.com/weblog.htm) is a political blog site with comments, recommended reading and postings relating to Chinese topics and investigations into suspicious incidents involving Chinese people;
10. "sepia mutiny" (sepiamutiny.com/blog) – a site for a number of 'desi' bloggers (desi are people from the Indian subcontinent with a focus on South Asia including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives and its diaspora communities); the site was started by a group of Indian students in the United States in 2004;

11. “ultrabrown” (www.ultrabrown.com) – a community of bloggers with Indian ethnicity;
12. “hanzismatter” (www.hanzismatter.com)⁸ – is a blogspot “dedicated to the misuse of Chinese characters in Western culture” featuring a number of people posting photographs of their tattoos using Chinese characters, and requesting verification of their meanings. Rather humorously, the site points out a number of inaccuracies in the translation of these tattoos giving quite different meanings to what people thought they said.

While individual exploration of these links is beyond the scope of this study, this brief overview illustrates Mok’s interest in giving voice to minority groups both locally and globally, and she opens up quite a different world view compared with what traditional print and broadcast media offer. While this selection of sites both informed and entertained, Hevern (2004) suggests that links inserted by a blogger “invite[s] the reader to assume the perspective of the author by experiencing what the author experienced at that link” (p. 331). While navigation to these sites selected by Mok lead to other experiences for the reader, it cannot be assumed that they necessarily accept the blogger’s perspective. Certainly Mok’s links provide exposure to websites operated by minority groups, organisations or individuals that many readers may not have been familiar with or even attempted to access. But a reader’s response or interpretation of them is likely to be dependent on that person’s own life experience, background and belief system.

Topic search

Below the blog roll is another list of hyperlinks under the title “Topic Search” that enable readers to access Mok’s archived *Yellow Peril* blog postings under her nominated topics of: Chinese in New Zealand; pan-Asianism; History; Human Rights; word on the street; language is a virus; amateur art-crit; an embarrassment of parliamentarians; idiotwatch; hip-hop; and food. These links are no longer active so consideration of them is limited to Mok’s choice of titles such as “pan-Asianism” and “Human Rights” which have already been identified as areas of specific interest to her. However, some of the titles allude to the satirical style of her blog writing about society

⁸ A number of these links have changed in design and/or content since appearing on Mok’s website.

with titles such as “an embarrassment of parliamentarians” and “idiotwatch” that point out the less-than-impressive behaviour of others and, in particular, politicians.

Mok is predominantly characterised through the design and features of her *Yellow Peril* blog site – images, links, use of colour, choice of words, blog roll selection and topic search labels. These contribute a “mosaic structure” (Jakubowicz & van Leeuwen, 2010, p. 375) in which her postings are set and, when viewed in their entirety, reflect her concerns on topical issues about discrimination, equality and human rights. In particular, the multi-modal feature of hyperlinks that Mok includes adds a richness and depth to her writing by directing the reader to other sites and texts.

My initial interpretation of Mok’s blog site was that it gave an opportunity to demonstrate pride in her ethnicity. Such a perspective reflected my belief that all people have the right to display, present or celebrate their culture or religion as they wish. This assumption might well reflect an influence of the official discourse (Chapter Six) on my attitudes and also reflect on concerns about my own diverse background (Chapter One). Additionally, my reading about Mok in other texts and her self-description as New Zealand Chinese, influenced my view that Chinese ethnicity was important in the presentation of her identity. However, Mok pointed out to me in later correspondence discussing my analysis (2011), that her blog was in fact constructed with a different objective. She says *Yellow Peril* aimed to be “unapologetic” and “intentionally provocative” towards the dominant culture and particularly those who felt threatened by minority groups. In fact, Mok related that her style was to hide behind the irony in the blog’s display of Chinese ethnicity, specifically to avoid making “positive identity statements” that were too “simplistic” (Mok, interview, December 18, 2009).

The difference between my interpretation as a researcher of Mok’s blog and her stated objective illustrates the multiple ways that texts can be understood or misunderstood, interpreted or misinterpreted. However, this is dependent on the reader and their background, assumptions and intentions that they bring to the text. The exploration of the *Yellow Peril* blog site in this chapter has gone some way in providing context in which to understand Mok, her perspective and her specific writing style. But it also reflects an important aspect of critical discourse analysis which calls for transparency and explanation in discursive research that is interpretive in nature.

However, the focus of this chapter now turns to an analysis of the *Yellow Peril* blog posting that attracted intensive online debate about the meaning of New Zealander. It is not just the subject matter that is relevant to this study, but also the events that prompted Mok's blog posting and the way she worked creatively to express her opinion. Such contextualization that explores the "interconnectedness of discursive and other social practices as well as structures" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 40) is part of the principle of triangulation that is so central to the DHA.

7.4 "the identity game" posting

"the identity game" blog posting from 7 December 2006 is reproduced and enlarged in Figure 7.2. This posting criticised the official use of 'New Zealander' as a new, stand-alone ethnic category in the 2006 census alongside other categories of European, Maori, Asian, Pacific peoples, other and MELAA.⁹ Such categorisation had implications for how national identity might be constructed in New Zealand based on a person's ethnic background. This had already been the subject of much controversy prior to census day in the media and in online discussions including those on *Yellow Peril*. Mok's posting also challenged the reported comments of a demographer in an online media story who, in responding to the released census statistics, showed concern that Asians were threatening to supersede Maori as the largest minority group in New Zealand.

The inclusion of the ethnicity question in the 2006 census was seen as an important analytical variable (Callister et al., 2009), particularly for public policy in an environment of increasing diversification in New Zealand. Such information assisted central and local government and regional service providers in deciding on the distribution of resources and "to plan... [where to] deliver programmes, particularly in health, social services and education" (Statistics New Zealand, 2009a, p. 6). However, Mok saw the category of 'New Zealander' as the deliberate conflation of nationality with ethnicity. She believed the claim on 'New Zealander' by people who previously self-categorised as 'European' was a strategy that excluded minority groups and maintained dominance for the white majority.

⁹ MELAA stands for Middle Eastern, Latin American and African.

the identity game | Dec 07, 2006 09:17

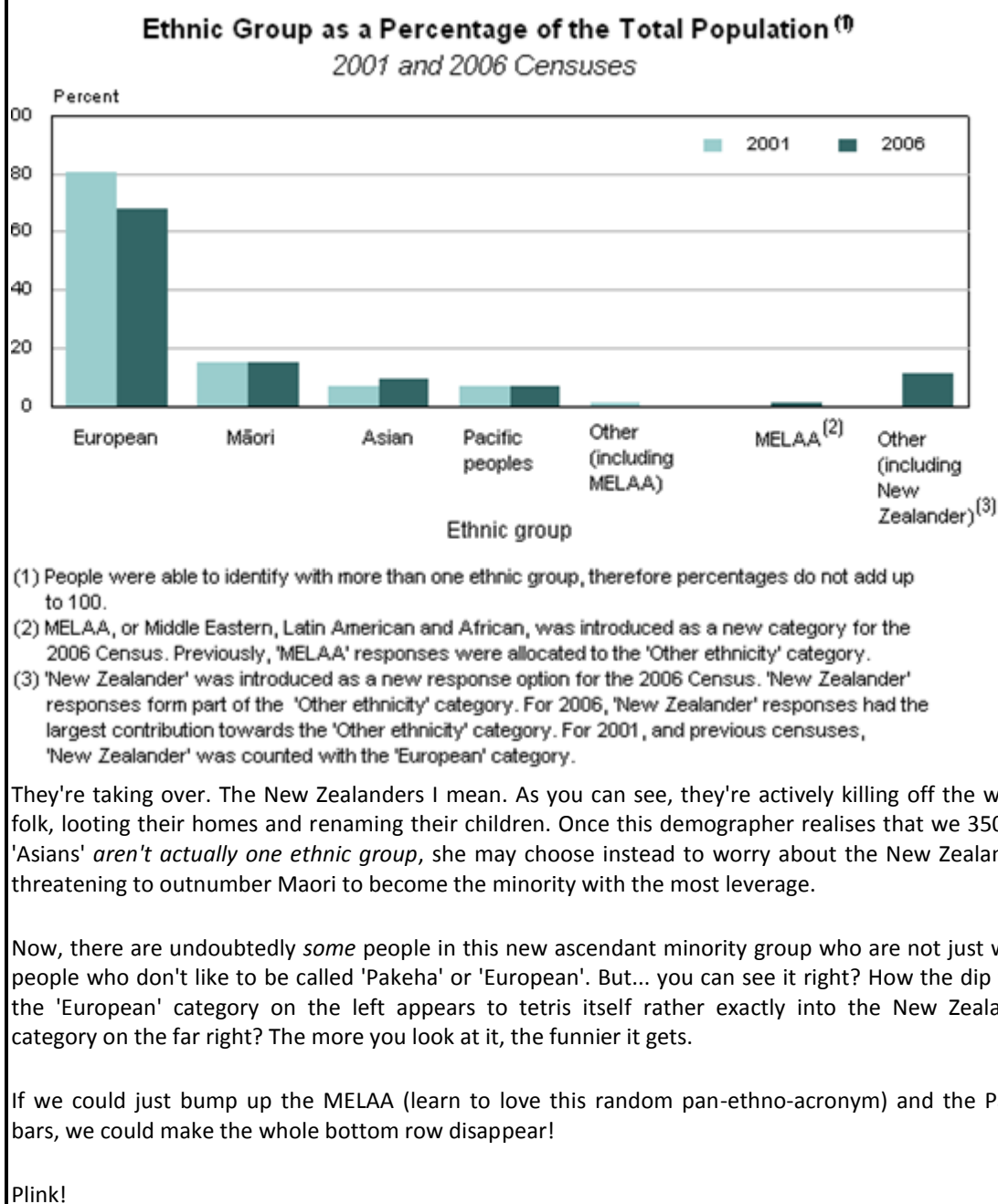


Fig 7.2: Text of the *Yellow Peril* blog posting “the identity game” on 7 December 2006.

Historically, StatsNZ – the government body which organises and processes the data of New Zealand’s five-yearly census – placed those people designating themselves as New Zealander under the ‘Other’ section of the ethnicity question. These data was then transferred into the ‘European’ category. However, a wave of public pressure urging the inclusion of ‘New Zealander’ as a new ethnic category occurred just prior to the 2006 census. It had begun with an anonymous email campaign to persuade people to write in ‘New Zealander’ as their ethnicity under the ‘Other’ section in the census survey. The

resulting media publicity, support from National Party deputy leader Gerry Brownlee (Middleton, 2006, March 1) and the “unprecedented increase” in the number of people reporting as ‘New Zealander’ in the census, convinced StatsNZ that a new ethnic category should be introduced (Statistics New Zealand, 2009a, p. 4). StatsNZ has the designated power to allow this through a process known as ethnogenesis – where new labels (ethnonyms) are introduced in response to either the emergence of a new ethnic group or the redefining of a particular ethnicity (Callister et al., 2009). In this respect, StatsNZ was within its rights to make ‘New Zealander’ an ethnic category in the 2006 census.

Mok posted the blog entry “the identity game” to highlight that StatsNZ’s manipulation of statistics (as displayed in the bar graph of ethnic groups) showed a decrease in New Zealand’s white majority (European) and portrayed Asians as the fastest-growing minority group.¹⁰ (This was not the first time Mok had written about the validity of ‘New Zealander’ as will be discussed later in this chapter.) My analysis of the posting is divided into three parts as it diverts to consider two hyperlinked texts Mok embedded within the posting which have relevancy to the online discussion. This is necessary to explore intertextual referencing that Mok included to enhance the meaning of her posting.

7.4.1 “the identity game” (part one)

As seen in Fig 7.2, Mok reproduced the bar graph comparing the data of New Zealand’s ethnic composition between the 2001 and 2006 censuses from StatsNZ’s website. Point three in StatsNZ’s explanatory notes accompanying the graph stated that ‘New Zealander’ was justified as a “new response option” because it made the “largest contribution” to the “Other ethnicity” section.

In “the identity game” posting, Mok highlights the illogicality of the new minority group of New Zealander by drawing attention to its representation in the graph. The size of this bar measures to be almost exactly the same size as is the diminishment of the ‘European’ bar over the five-year period between the censuses, suggesting that the inclusion of the ‘New Zealander’ category reflects the transfer of numbers between the two groups. To demonstrate the absurdity of StatsNZ’s manipulation of the statistics in

¹⁰ This thesis follows Pearson’s (2009) definitions of ‘majority’ status as referring to powerful, resourced persons who dominate other groups, while ‘minority’ indicates a lack of power in terms of “numbers, resources and political influence” (p. 33).

this way, Mok employs the metaphor of a game in the sense that numbers can be interfered with in a game-like fashion, and where rules can be made and changed at will by the group or institution that controls it. Mok was certainly not the first person to query the truth behind numbers, and “the identity game” brings to mind the oft-quoted idiom used by Mark Twain and others of “lies, damned lies and statistics” (Department of Mathematics, 2010, December 15).

Mok’s introductory remark “They’re taking over” immediately identifies a group of ‘others’ (through the pronoun ‘they’ rather than with an actual noun), thereby distancing ‘them’ from all other groups. This initially unnamed group is characterised as powerful through its association with the assertive active verb ‘to take over’. But it is not the resurgence of the *Yellow Peril* which is to be feared – perhaps an expected response from readers given the historical references in the media of the ‘Asian Invasion’. This time, Mok satirically suggests, it is the New Zealanders who are the real threat and she makes sure that the audience fully understands this by stating: “The New Zealanders I mean”.

Mok’s direct address to the audience using the pronoun ‘you’ in the first part of the next statement – “as you can see” – highlights her tongue-in-cheek interpretation of the graph. The implication is that the evidence is right before the readers’ eyes and clearly visible in the graph. Mok too can play the identity game and indicates that there is more than one way to read statistics, because there is the assumption that, if you can see it in the graph, it must be true.

Mok then directs attention to the genocidal actions of the New Zealanders in “killing off the white folk”, of “looting their homes” and “renaming their children”. These verbs of “killing”, “looting” and “renaming” are an ironic allusion to the alarming abuse and mistreatment of indigenous peoples and minority groups by some early white settler societies such as Australia, where ‘stolen generations’ of aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families by authorities (Read, 2006). But now, as Mok indicates, the tables have turned. The graph shows that New Zealanders (otherwise known as ‘European’ or ‘white people’ as Mok suggests later in the blog), are figuratively ‘killing off’ their own people.

Hyperlink one

The first hyperlink appears at this stage in “the identity game” text in the underlined words “[this demographer](#)”. Clicking on this link takes the reader to the text of an online news article published the previous day on newswire.co.nz.¹¹ This web page, as it appeared in 2006, is no longer accessible but a saved screenshot, reproduced below in Figure 7.3, displays the news report under the headline: “Maori advised to consider implications of no longer being largest minority group”.¹²

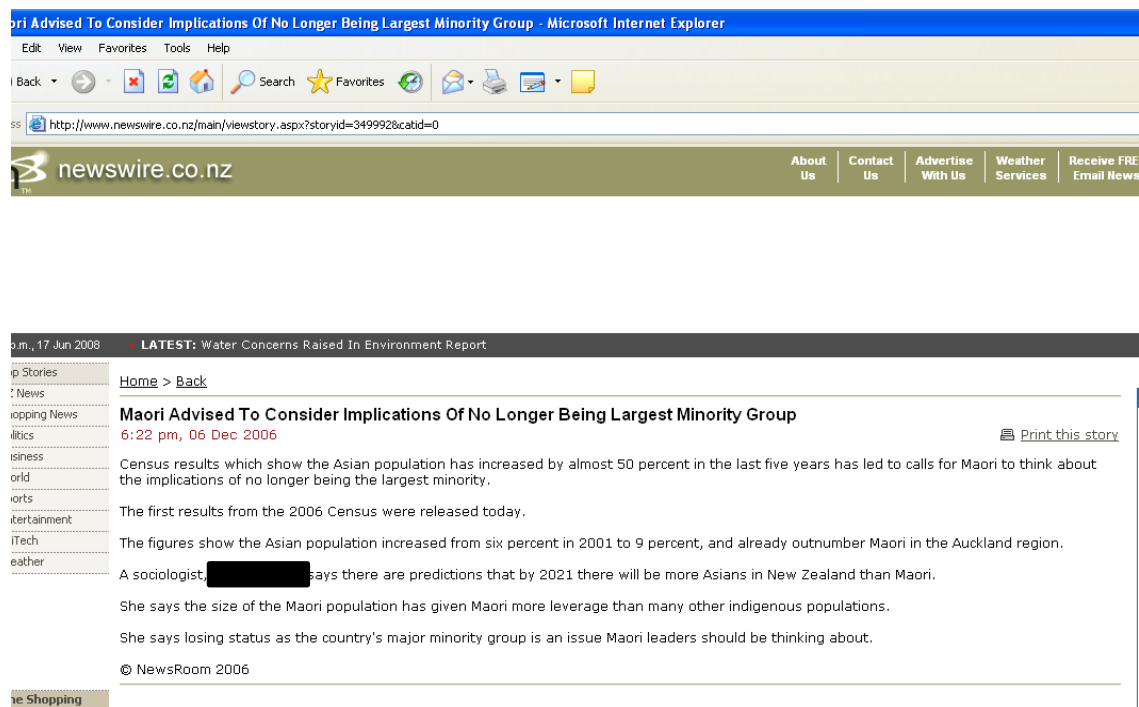


Fig 7.3: Screenshot of newswire.co.nz census story on 6 December 2006.

Mok links to this text to identify the source of her criticism of the census data and its interpretation by a sociologist (or ‘demographer’, as Mok refers to her in the posting, indicating her knowledge of this Maori academic’s specific interest in the study of human populations). The suggestion by the sociologist was that the potential for Maori to lose their status as the “major minority group” was problematic in the sense that their position of leverage with the Government for funding would be threatened. Her additional reported comment that a “loss” of status necessitated Maori to “think about” the implications of this (echoing and reinforcing the article’s headline), reflected the

¹¹ newswire.co.nz is the URL for the Whitireia Journalism School’s student-run publication which was publicly accessible online.

¹² The sociologist’s name has been deleted because of possible misquoting (Mok, 2009, December 18). Regardless of whether the sociologist’s comments had been incorrectly reported or taken out of context, the sentiments were still available publicly in the online article and could be accessed through Mok’s blog posting.

historical tension between biculturalism and multiculturalism often focused upon by the media.

The choice of the reporter to specifically quote a Maori sociologist about the census statistics was likely to have been premeditated because of journalistic motivation to write a sensational story that would attract attention. The media-directed representation of a negative relationship between Maori and the Chinese is not new and has been documented as far back as the state-produced Maori language newspapers in the 1840s and through to reports of negative statements by Maori about Asian/Chinese immigration in Maori-targeted media in the 2000s (Mutu, 2009).¹³ While the demographer's language in the online story was relatively restrained about the statistics, choosing the inactive verbs 'to think about' and 'to consider' when responding to the implications of the data, the reporter's representation of the story as ethnic rivalry was still enough to draw a response from Mok.

7.4.2 "the identity game" (part two)

Returning to the text of "the identity game" and Mok's commentary on this online news item, we see that the phrase at the beginning of the sentence "once this demographer realises..." uses the temporal conjunction 'once' and the verb 'realise' (indicating a process of consciousness towards comprehension), to suggest that it is only a matter of time until the truth behind the "350,000 Asians" being a pan-ethnic group will become clear.

The inclusion of "we" locates Mok's affinity with those blog readers who experience constantly being grouped together as Asian, when in fact there are many ethnic groups within Asia such as Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Indian. In empathising with an 'Asian' audience, Mok also speaks on behalf of them to the non-Asian audience, pointing out the frustration of being typecast as one ethnicity in competition with the indigenous Maori. Mok's use of italics in the phrase "we 350,000 'Asians' *aren't actually one ethnic group*" emphasises that people (and institutions such as StatsNZ) continue to 'lump' all Asians together, such that their combined total in the population creates the allusion of rapid growth and consequently sets them up for xenophobic

¹³ The book *The Dragon and the Taniwha* sought to present a more positive image of the historical relationship between Chinese and Maori, however, by bringing together a range of academics offering a variety of perspectives that provided "real insight into this country's race relations and national identity" (Ip, 2009b).

attacks. The use of italics for emphasis also suggests that this is not the first time that Mok and others have found it necessary to put forward this explanation.

Hyperlink two

At the beginning of the next paragraph of Mok's blog posting, she introduces her second hyperlink which is part of a sentence:

“Now there are undoubtedly *some* people in this new ascendant minority group who are not just white people who don't like to be called 'Pakeha' or 'European'.”

Clicking on these underlined words links the reader to one of Mok's earlier *Yellow Peril* blog postings on 7 March 2006 titled “I thought we ethnic minorities were the ones who were meant to have the identity problems” (publicaddress.net/default,2981.sm#post2981).

The content of this posting intensifies Mok's argument in “the identity game” without having to repeat herself. In it, she states that those who self-define as ‘New Zealander’ as their ethnicity were mainly New Zealand Europeans, intent on maintaining their majority status. She refers to the 25 emails she received at an earlier date from people wishing to defend the use of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity – 23 of whom she says were “basically white” people, with the remaining two indicating their mixed or hybrid ethnicity.

Mok's argument in this hyperlinked text is that while she acknowledges that anyone is free to label themselves as ‘New Zealander’, most of those who do so are white. People of ethnicities other than ‘European’, she says, prefer not to make this choice either because they feel they are denying their true ethnic grouping(s) or because they feel uncomfortable with being incorporated into an ethnicity dominated by the white majority. The term ‘New Zealander’ therefore remains exclusionary and Mok suggests that it is really the behaviour of the majority group in defending this new ethnicity that reveals their insecurities about their own identity.

This link to an earlier posting indicates Mok's continued participation in a public online debate about ‘New Zealander’. It also exemplifies how Mok used the Internet to network her various texts through URL links, which demonstrates how interdiscursivity and intertextuality can be aided by new media technology. While readers could navigate

to her earlier postings if they wished, she could continue with her latest argument in “the identity game” posting, concentrating on the statistics and without making the current posting too long.

7.4.3 “the identity game” (part three)

After the introduction of the second hyperlink, Mok begins the next sentence of “the identity game” post with the preposition “But”, followed by three full stops indicating a pause in her monologue. This helps to gain the attention of readers and sets them up to become personally involved when she poses two rhetorical questions:

“But... you can see it right? How the dip from the ‘European’ category on the left appears to tetris itself rather exactly into the New Zealander category on the far right?”

Mok invites her readers to analyse the StatsNZ graph and concede that there is an obvious transfer of data from the ‘European’ bar to the ‘New Zealander’ bar, implying a manipulation of data that allows a new category privileging white people to emerge. Mok uses a relatively recently created verb “tetris” to describe this transference of part of one bar to another.¹⁴ Tetris in fact is a noun describing a computer video puzzle game developed in the 1980s where ‘falling’ pieces – tetriminos – are moved and rearranged on a matrix (Tetris Holding, n.d.). Incorporating ‘tetris’ into the text reinforces the game metaphor and is an example of intertextuality where the imagery and textual references to a branded computer game are used in the blog posting as part of Mok’s argumentation strategy.

Mok emphasises that this transference (tetris) of data in the graph is so obvious that “The more you look at it, the funnier it gets”. Using the comparative adjective “funnier” not only highlights the increasingly apparent absurdity of the data, but it also reinforces the game metaphor in the sense that games are associated with fun, or can ‘make fun’ of a situation. This metaphor is further advanced with Mok’s suggestion in the final part of the blog posting that everyone can participate in the game. Using the deictic “we”, which this time is addressee-inclusive (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 46) in that it includes everyone who is viewing the graph, Mok states:

“If we could just bump up the MELAA (learn to love this random pan-ethno-acronym) and the Pacific bars, we could make the whole bottom row disappear! Plink!”

¹⁴ There is no reference to ‘tetris’ in the online Oxford dictionaries www.oxforddictionaries.com.

MELAA is also a newly introduced category into the 2006 census representing Middle Eastern, Latin American and African ethnicities under one label (see Fig 7.2 and point (2) under the StatsNZ graph). Previously, these groups were grouped together under ‘Other’ in the census yet, by mixing them into one acronym, the pressure of growing minority groups has been intensified numerically. Mok using an aside “(learn to love this random pan-ethno-acronym)” indicates that this is yet another category that has been creatively constructed by StatsNZ. The coalescing of ethnicities which have no common or collective identity – they derive from three different continents outside of New Zealand – is a liberty which StatsNZ has taken for the sake of numbers. Certainly MELAA creates the impression that New Zealand is becoming more diverse, yet it is still a category of ‘others’ and not one ethnic group. Mok suggests tongue-in-cheek that we “learn to love” the “random pan-ethno-acronym” because this linguistic (and ethnic) contraction is an example of officialdom taking the liberty of constructing one category from unrelated ethnic groups.

The onomatopoeic word “Plink!” describes the sound of the bottom row of ethnicities in the graph disappearing and provides an effective conclusion to “the identity game” post. One of the objectives of the tetris game is to manipulate the puzzle pieces and make lines disappear. Just like magic – a simple push-plink of a computer key would be all it takes to manipulate the statistics on the ethnicity graph. The ‘game’ of identity construction – or identity manipulation – from Mok’s perspective, is one that is very easy to play.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced contextual and analytical information to provide an overview of the social, political and cultural environment from which “the identity game” online discussion emerged. Through her *Yellow Peril* blog site, Mok established her position as a New Zealand Chinese with a passion for human rights and fighting discrimination. She used “the identity game” posting to illustrate two points about StatsNZ’s acceptance of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity:

1. that it was institutional manipulation of the 2006 census data as illustrated by its graph of ethnic group percentages;

2. that the use of ‘Asian’ as a pan-ethnic category in the graph created tension with other ethnic groups in constructing Asians as the fastest-growing minority group in New Zealand, when in fact there were many ethnicities which were included under Asian.

“the identity game” posting cleverly conveyed Mok’s resistance to StatsNZ’s acceptance of ‘New Zealander’ as a census category, by satirically turning the tables on the minority group of ‘New Zealanders’ to demonstrate what it was like to be viewed negatively as invaders. Mok addressed issues such as white majority domination and highlighted the tension between biculturalism and multiculturalism intensified through the media as demonstrated in her hyperlink to a news article.

Mok’s persona as New Zealand Chinese, as a political commenter and as a satirical writer and blogger, set the tone for readers to voice a range of opinions about the meaning of New Zealander through online discussion. Although the posting was focused on ethnic identity in New Zealand, the implications of the effects that ethnic categorisation in the census had on national identity was to become a major theme in the online discussion. The responses from the 53 commenters in the online discussion as a result of “the identity game” posting provided a data source from which the discourses of people about national identity could be identified and analysed. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Eight: The discourses of people – “the identity game” blog discussion

Three factors... are crucial to understanding
the processes of globalization and localization
on the individual level:
the increasing number of voices and countervoices,
the role of social power,
and the role of emotions.

Hermans & Dimaggio (2007, p. 31)

8.1 Introduction

The spread of technology has led us to become members of what Hermans (2004) refers to as “larger communicative networks”, where “the voices of other people, groups, communities and cultures become part of our private worlds and create new interfaces for dialogic relations to emerge” (p. 305). The online discussion responding to “the identity game” posting provided an opportunity to explore multiple voices on the *Yellow Peril* blog site as a way of accessing populace discourse about national identity.

The first part of Chapter Eight begins with an overview of the sub-genre of the blog discussion and its positioning within the *publicaddress.net* system, a description of “the identity game” discussion, its evolution and the constituency of the voices that appeared online. Such background for the analysis of the discussion is important because, as Reisigl and Wodak (2001) note, being aware of the features and structures of a particular genre enables analysts to “adequately capture” a specific text (p. 36).

The second part of Chapter Eight presents the findings from the discursive analysis of “the identity game” discussion, focusing on the identification of two dominant and opposing discourses that impact on the construction of New Zealand national identity – one that justified ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity and the other that resisted its use in this way. The analysis highlights the dominant topoi (argumentation strategies) that the commenters employed and this is followed by an examination of other discursive strategies and the linguistic means that supported these discourses.

8.2 *Yellow Peril* and the blog discussion sub-genre

The blog discussion is viewed as a sub-genre of the blog medium because it involves readers actively responding publicly to an existing blog posting. Features of the blog discussion sub-genre discussed here relate specifically to *publicaddress.net* and may differ from other blog sites. However, it is important to understand the nature of the blog discussion and how it shaped and channelled the comments.

The invitation to “join the discussion of Public Address System” contained within the small box under the banner of the *Yellow Peril* blog site (Figure 7.1 in the previous chapter), applies the metaphor of a public address (or pa) loudspeaker system often used to amplify speech at public events such as those at sportsgrounds, or protests or rallies. *publicaddress.net* was presented as a site for the freedom of speech where registered commenters could participate in online discussions relating to any of its blog postings.

To register as a commenter on *publicaddress.net* required the submission of details such as name or pseudonym, email address, website (if desired), location and password. Commenters also had to agree to abide by the site’s policy of appropriate online behaviour which prohibited personal abuse or aggressive behaviour. Once registered, a commenter simply clicked on the ‘discuss’ button at the end of a blog posting, or on the ‘reply’ link attached to another commenter’s message, to respond with their own message. Their comment appeared on the blog site with certain identification criteria as shown in Figure 8.1.

Commenters could hide their identities through the use of pseudonyms, though they also had the opportunity to include a photograph or image if they wished. The number of messages posted by each commenter was not restricted and messages could be sent at any time of day or night, from any location where Internet access was available. In line with the functioning of blog sites, commenters’ messages appeared asynchronously on screen (that is, they did not appear in real time, but were still posted on the site in the order they were received, often in reverse chronological order). This meant that the online discussion did not always appear as a linear ‘conversation’.

Some commenters addressed the *Yellow Peril* audience in their postings, while others responded either directly to Mok, another commenter or several commenters, which

often resulted in multiple conversations, or threads,¹ criss-crossing within the discussion.

Fig 8.1: Information in the *publicaddress.net* online registration form (left) was transferred to appear alongside posted messages that identified a commenter, gave an email address and a website link.

To avoid confusion when there were several threads within a discussion, Internet etiquette (netiquette) was often followed voluntarily whereby commenters contextualised their messages by either reproducing the relevant portions of another commenter's message to show what they were responding to, or by directly addressing a commenter by name. This not only created an "illusion of adjacency" (Crystal, 2001, p. 147) with one comment following another as in a conversation, but it also acknowledged membership of a virtual community, with commenters publicly conducting 'conversations' between themselves.

The mere act of such participation where "computer networks link people as well as machines" can result in the formation of "social networks" (Wellman et al., 1996, p. 213) or virtual communities (Rheingold, 2000). There was some evidence of this in "the identity game" discussion where a number of commenters' messages on the *Yellow Peril* blog site indicated an affinity with other members with expressions such as "cool thread" to indicate their enjoyment in being part of the discussion, or signing off with

¹ See glossary.

exclamations such as “Cheers Public Address Team!”² In fact, the inclusion of commenters’ email addresses alongside their messages enabled private correspondence to occur in what is known as back channel³ communication.

The commenters’ names or pseudonyms as they appeared in the discussion were not used in the presentation of findings as the focus was primarily on the content and constructions of the messages that were posted. However, an indication of commenters’ various backgrounds such as gender, age and ethnicity was important in understanding what was said, how it was said and, potentially, why it was said. Therefore a profile of “the identity game” virtual community was included in this study along with coding for each commenter.

8.2.1 Profiling the commenters

Examining the ways in which commenters discursively established themselves as social entities in “the identity game” discussion enabled a greater understanding of how they “express their involvement in the discourse and position their point of view in the discursive flux” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, pp. 81–82). The terms perspectivisation, framing and discourse representation are used to describe the discursive strategies of self-presentation and other-presentation that apply here (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

The popularity of *public address.net* was highlighted by its founder and moderator Russell Brown (2010, May 14), who stated that the 10 current blogs attracted approximately 30,000 individual readers a month making it the second-largest New Zealand blog site based on ‘traffic’.⁴ Brown’s roles as journalist, broadcaster and commentator, which he held before *publicaddress.net* was established, meant he was already a well-known media personality. Since 1991, he had presented *Hard News*, a radio programme publicly broadcast on The University of Auckland radio station bFM that not only tackled topical and political issues but also delved into other subjects including sport, music and science. The programme garnered a stalwart following

² Brown, in fact, related in his interview that he often organised offline social gatherings for the *publicaddress.net* community and other interested parties. This involved music, interviews and panel discussions and materialised from Brown’s belief that you could have a good time as well as be encouraged to think. However, details about which participants attended these events were not available and it is therefore not possible to know how many of the *Yellow Peril* commenters were involved.

³ See glossary.

⁴ ‘traffic’ is the registered number of hits that a websites receives – hits being the actual navigation of an individual to a website.

according to Brown and, by December 1995, he began posting the text of *Hard News* on an e-list, enabling his audience of 5,000 to interact and provide feedback.

Hard News became a blog in 2002 when Brown established the *publicaddress.net* site and his audience followed. Brown (2010, May 14) stated that a conservative media culture in New Zealand coupled with poor news content on mainstream media meant *publicaddress.net* filled a niche for a more liberal audience which included a number of ex-pat New Zealanders who took advantage of new media technology and used the site as both a news source and a link with home. *publicaddress.net* attracted a diverse range of readers including opinion-makers and shapers such as journalists, politicians, policy-makers, feminist groups, academics and political supporters as well as ex-pat New Zealanders, other bloggers and ordinary citizens. Through their experiences as bloggers and moderators, both Mok and Brown acknowledged in their interviews that it was mostly white liberal males who posted comments.⁵ However, this does not necessarily reflect the readership. Detailed demographic information about the *publicaddress.net* audience was limited and no specific market research data was available about who accessed individual blogs on the site such as *Yellow Peril*. However, the coding of commenters in this study provided some insight into who they were.

8.2.2 Coding the commenters

Neither the commenters' names nor their pseudonyms were used in this study in order to maintain confidentiality of their identities. However, a coding system was implemented that indicated details, where possible, of their ethnicity, nationality and gender. This enabled an understanding of their positioning and perspective in the discursive construction of national identity. Using a similar coding procedure to that employed by Kryzanowski and Wodak (2007) in their focus group research of European migrants,⁶ each commenter was assigned a number indicating the order in which they first responded in "the identity game" discussion, followed by letter(s) denoting their ethnicity or nationality based on self-definition within their postings, and their gender if discernible. The commenters' codes are listed in Appendix 7 which includes the frequency with which they posted messages to show how active they were in the

⁵ Brown, quoted in a *New Zealand Listener* article in 2004, stated that *publicaddress.net* readers were mainly professional people with 30 percent earning over NZ\$100,000 a year and 60 percent earning over NZ\$50,000 (Revington, 2004, November 13-19).

⁶Kryzanowski and Wodak (2007) coded focus group participants based on the number of their group, the country they belonged to and their gender.

discussion. However, the legend is reproduced in Figure 8.2 for easy reference in this chapter.

Legend:	Z = 'New Zealander'	A= Asian (includes Chinese and Indian)
	P= Pakeha	
	E= European/New Zealand European	T= Antipodean
	M= Maori	X= Expat-New Zealander
		AS= Australian
	M= Male	
	F= Female	U= Unidentified gender/ethnicity

Fig 8.2: Coding legend of commenters in “the identity game” discussion.

To demonstrate coding: 26ZM stands for the 26th commenter who defines himself as a ‘New Zealander’ and a male. Where a commenter identified with more than one ethnicity, the decision was made to include only the ethnic group they appeared to favour most. For example, the 16th commenter who said she was a Pakeha of Maori descent, and who also referred to herself as a New Zealander, was coded as 16PZF. However, it was not possible to know whether self-categorisation as ‘New Zealander’ related to ethnicity or nationality unless otherwise stated. Gender was identified through the names used by commenters, or how they self-defined in their messages. It was assumed, as there is no way of knowing for certain, that of the 53 commenters there were 36 males, six females and 11 who either used pseudonyms and/or had ambiguous names that made their gender unidentifiable.

A quantitative analysis of the ethnic or national identity of commenters could be only partially completed for this study – mainly because just under half of them (25 out of 51 – not including the moderators) gave any form of self-identification. Only five indicated they were Pakeha, eight used the label ‘New Zealander’, two Pakeha ‘New Zealander’, one Maori, one Indian, four expat New Zealanders and one Australian, while one indicated Scottish heritage, one termed himself ‘Antipodean’⁷ and one used the description ‘European Foreigner’. No commenters self-identified as Pasifika, Middle Eastern, Latin American or African indicating that the diversity of people in the discussion was limited mainly to Maori, Pakeha or people of European descent.

In some cases, a commenter’s location was used for coding when ethnic identification was unclear – although descriptions of location varied greatly ranging from suburb, city

⁷ The Antipodes signifies New Zealand as being on the opposite side of the world from the perspective of the United Kingdom or Europe.

or country to nonsensical locations such as “Momentarily Distracted” or “Drivelville”. A few commenters were from overseas (Australia or London for example)⁸ but, if they also indicated a New Zealand connection such as “expat”, “UK-ex-Auckland” or “London née Wellington”, they were coded as expat New Zealanders. Although these categories do not represent ethnic or national identities, they were included in the coding because they indicated ties with New Zealand even though the commenters were living elsewhere.

Details about location also gave some indication of the geographic spread of commenters within New Zealand who came from both the North and South Islands, though they were predominantly based in the two major cities of Auckland and Wellington. Some of these commenters were more specific with their locations, giving the town, city or even suburb in which they lived, and one commenter who voiced a strong Maori identity used the Maori translation of Auckland (Tamaki Makaurau) to name his location.⁹

It is important to note that coding could be conducted based only on a commenter’s name, their location or the content of postings and not as part of any survey or interview process. Therefore, a commenter’s identification was likely to have resulted from their own construction or negotiation of identity based on their interpretation of the “right response[s] for this situation, for what they see as the audience, their role for present purposes and the relevance to the ongoing interaction” (Myers, 2006, p. 339). In this case study, the commenters were participants in a virtual discussion responding to *Yellow Peril* blogger Tze Ming Mok, whose blog site was located within the *publicaddress.net* system, and whose blog posting “the identity game” presented a satirical approach to the use of ‘New Zealander’ in the 2006 census (Chapter Seven). Any, or all, of these aspects could have influenced commenter self-identification as well as the content of their postings and their discourse about New Zealand identity. It is the examination of the online discussion in the next section – its evolution and construction as well as the discourse analysis of the postings – that broadens the perspective of this

⁸ These are popular destinations for young New Zealanders, in particular, who can obtain employment there because of the New Zealand’s reciprocal immigration policy with Australia and working visa arrangements with the United Kingdom.

⁹ As stated earlier, the software used by *publicaddress.net* changed a commenter’s reported location when that person moved. Therefore, the actual location of a commenter at the time of “the identity game” posting might not always be accurate.

research to explore people's response to not just Mok's commentary, but also that of the official discourse generally and more specifically via StatsNZ.

8.2.3 “the identity game” discussion

“the identity game” blog posting appeared on the *Yellow Peril* site on 7 December 2006 at 9.17am. The first response was posted online 27 minutes later, followed by a stream of messages from other commenters. Initial comments responded directly to Mok's posting, supporting her sentiments and reflecting her negative reaction to StatsNZ and its handling of the census ethnicity data. However, commenters gradually introduced new threads to the discussion, shifting the topics of debate, and stimulating the conversations to continue.

The discussion involved 53 participants including Mok and *publicaddress.net* founder Russell Brown, both acting as contributors to, and moderators of, the discussion. Although Mok was moderator of her own site, Brown (2010, May 14) said that, as owner of *publicaddress.net*, he felt a legal responsibility to moderate discussions of all the blogs including *Yellow Peril*. But, in addition, Brown's long-held interest in national identity also motivated him to contribute his views on several occasions during “the identity game” discussion. Both Mok and Brown used their real names when posting messages in the discussion and were also identified as moderators, indicating their ability to scrutinise messages and remove them if the content was inappropriate.

Posting continued on a daily basis for nine days (there was a total of 50 postings on the first day ranging from a one-sentence comment to 13 lengthy paragraphs by one commenter) and then more sporadically after 15 December 2006. The thread ran over a five-month period with more than 250 messages posted – the last comment appearing on 25 April 2007. This was an unusually long duration for an online discussion, as acknowledged by some of the commenters who named it “the thread that would not die” alluding to the low-budget 1962 horror movie with the sinister title *The Brain that Wouldn't Die* (Internet Movie Database, 2011). While the intention of these commenters might well have been to add their own humour to the thread and perhaps emulate the colloquial tone of Mok's blog, they can also be seen as trying to undermine the seriousness of Mok's concerns about the treatment of minority groups in New Zealand.

The lack of face-to-face contact, the ability to use pseudonyms in the blog discussion genre, and finding like-minded people in the discussion, appeared to make commenters feel more at ease in expressing opinions online. The tone of the messages was informal and of a chatty style and included jokes, puns and emoticons, as well as links to other texts. Bolding or italicisation of words and exclamation marks were often used for emphasis in a text.

During “the identity game”, division between commenters about various topics arose. Group polarisation can result “as part of a group having a shared identity and a degree of solidarity”, which is “unquestionably occurring on the Internet” according to Sunstein (2007, pp. 67–69). Mok’s view (2009, December 18) that “the identity game” discussion was hijacked by mainly “white liberal males”, reflects findings from Cushen’s study (2009) of political blogs in New Zealand indicating a predominance of male readers (over 36 years of age) of New Zealand European ethnicity.¹⁰ Regardless of this, Mok (2009, December 18) related that her experience as a blogger where she reasserted and defended her views amongst the mainly Pakeha commenters, had a “demotivating” effect at times making her feel “strangely marginal in my own blog”. While she didn’t perceive the dominant white majority commenting on her blog as “evil or nasty right-wingers”, she still regarded some of their comments, particularly those directed at her, as “slightly irritating”. Mok said it was good for people to have online communities which were “progressive, polite, social space[s]”; however, she disliked “listening to Pakeha talk to each other about identity” when they already dominated New Zealand society and where “the media, every piece of social policy, every soap opera line¹¹ is an act of Pakeha identity”. The *Yellow Peril* blog site gave these commenters the opportunity to talk about their identities as the dominant group in the country, but Mok believed that this type of discussion belonged in other Pakeha forums and not on her blog site.

8.3 In search of discourses about New Zealand identity

The 254 messages that were posted in “the identity game” discussion were saved in a Word document with each line numbered for easy reference during the close reading and data analysis. The large number of participants meant that the data needed to be

¹⁰ Cushen notes similar demographics in a US study of political blog readers (2009), while Hindman comments “It is bewildering – and darkly humorous – to see white, male bloggers with Ivy League degrees writing about how the Internet is empowering ‘ordinary citizens’” (2008, p. 285).

¹¹ Mok (2006, July 7) wrote about the tokenism and stereotypical inclusion of minority groups in one of New Zealand’s most popular television soap operas in her *Sunday Star Times* newspaper column.

more manageable and I conducted a thematic analysis as detailed in Chapter Five. Kryzanowski and Wodak (2007) followed a similar procedure by identifying discourse topics as a way of systematising their large corpus of empirical data from 45 focus group sessions in their study of the construction of migrants in EU countries.

Twenty-one salient topics were identified in the discussion (Appendix 8) which were then grouped under five themes based on my judgment as to what could be captured (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with regard to understanding how national identity was constructed. Some topics appeared under more than one theme indicating interdiscursivity where discourse is linked “in various ways through topics and sub-topics of other discourses” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 90). The themes identified were:

1. that there was disagreement about whether ‘New Zealander’ was an ethnicity or a nationality;
2. that people interpreted a sense of belonging to New Zealand in different ways;
3. that diversity was a complex concept relating to many different factors;
4. that biculturalism needed to be considered when it came to defining the meaning of ‘New Zealander’;
5. that the dominant culture of Pakeha/New Zealand European had been, and still was, in a position of power in constructing national identity.

Figure 8.3 illustrates the grouping of topics under these themes as they relate to the construction of a New Zealand national identity. There is an overlap of some topics under various themes which are divided into: ethnicity versus national identity; belonging; diversity; biculturalism; and dominant culture.

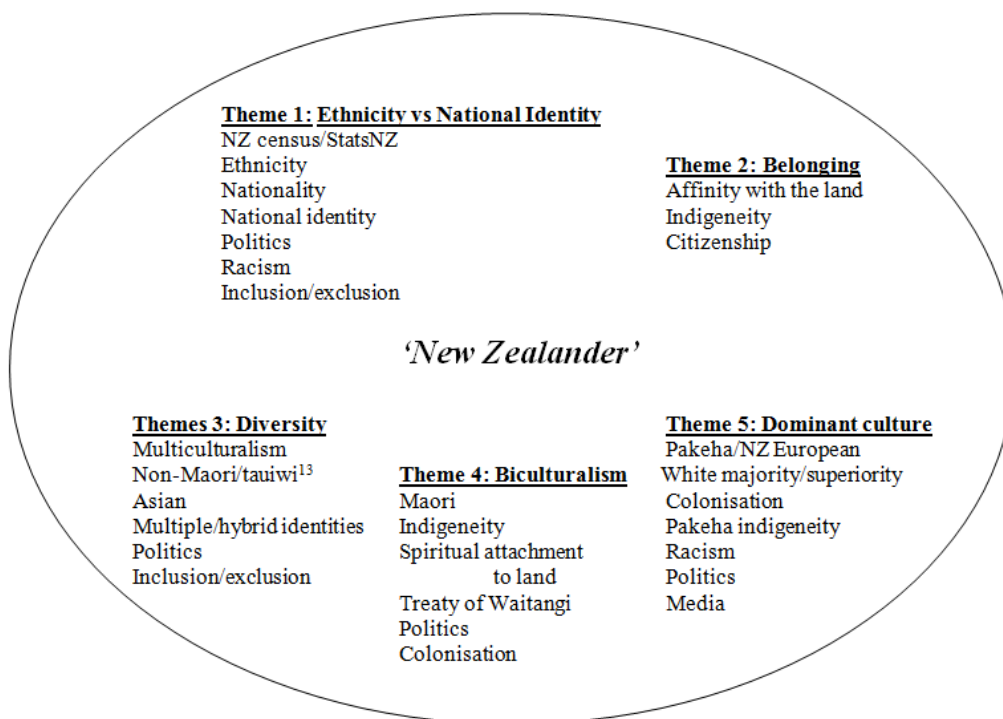


Fig 8.3: Discourse topics listed under themes as found in the “the identity game” discussion.

Triangulation as part of this study’s research design meant that identifying the discourses about national identity in the online discussions required consideration of these themes within various contexts. These included: the historical emergence of the dominant narrative about national identity, the emergence of Maori nationalism and the impact of changes in immigration policy (Chapter Four); the findings from previous studies particularly in relation to the media and to racism (Chapter Two); and the analysis of Mok’s *Yellow Peril* blog site and “the identity game” posting (Chapter Seven). As a result, two dominant and opposing discourses were found to be the most significant:

1. a discourse that legitimised ‘New Zealander’ as an emergent ethnic identity to which all people could belong;
2. a discourse that resisted the use of ‘New Zealander’ as an all-encompassing ethnic label, preferring to assign it to its original and more specific role as a marker of nationality or citizenship.

These discourses are discussed separately by focusing on opposing topoi (argumentation schemes) of ethnicity versus nationality, and inclusion versus exclusion, as the lead into the more detailed analysis. Where relevant, discussion about other

discursive strategies such as nomination, predication, perspectivisation, intensification and mitigation is included. Linguistic forms, such as pronouns, metaphors and verbs that contribute to the realisation of national identity, are also discussed. There are two further sections of the analysis where the discourses are evaluated together under the topoi of racism and belonging – the latter has a greater emphasis on the bicultural aspects of New Zealand national identity that were raised in the discussion.

8.3.1 A discourse of legitimacy

The discourse of legitimacy validated the use of ‘New Zealander’ as an inclusive ethnic category applicable to any New Zealand citizen regardless of where they were born or grew up. Some New Zealand European/Pakeha commenters felt that ‘New Zealander’ better expressed both their ethnicity and their nationality, rather than those labels that connected them with Europe or gave them an identity associated with colonisation.

Using the *topos of ‘New Zealander’ as ethnicity*, commenters resisted any pressure to identify with Europe regardless of any historical or ancestral ties. As 25XM, an expat from New Zealand stated:

How many Kiwi’s who are probably 5th–6th generation NZer still insist they are ‘Europeans’? Its nonsense.

25XM

25XM uses spatial and temporal references in this rhetorical question to emphasise that place of birth and length of time a person or their family has lived in New Zealand are reason enough to disregard any attachment to European origins. He believes that it would be ludicrous for others to suggest otherwise by using the emotionally charged exclamation “Its nonsense”.

Other commenters such as 26ZM and 16PZF also sought to discard the irrelevant European ethnic label and replace it with ‘New Zealander’ as part of a more emotional process:

This may be why many NZers are calling themselves NZers. No longer having close ties with Europe, perhaps never having been there, they now find it meaningless to call themselves 'European'.

26ZM

I'm not sure if people are saying they feel no connection to their European ancestry, just that they feel more "New Zealand" than a vague term like "European". I can only really speak for myself though.

16PZF

26ZM equates a lack of closeness with Europe as negating any meaningful relationship, while 16PZF focuses on the greater emotional connection with New Zealand as something that is experienced as a feeling. References to the descriptor of 'European' as "vague" and "meaningless" serve to reinforce the concept that being a 'New Zealander' had its own unique characteristics.

'New Zealander' as an ethnic label was seen to fill an ethnic 'vacuum' for those people who disliked the New Zealand European label particularly when faced with the census ethnicity question. As 33ZM asserts:

I am not a Maori (although the few local Moari [sic] are mostly cousins or family conections). I can hardly put European as the male line of the family left there in the 1570s [...] I am not indigenous, maybe my sons are What else but 'New Zealander' can I put on the form.

33ZM

33ZM sets out his personal dilemma of searching for an ethnic identity, suggesting that any European connection for him has dissipated over time and is irrelevant. He repeatedly emphasises what he is not ("I am not..." and "I can hardly...") to intensify the argument that weak connections to both Maori and European mean that 'New Zealander' is his only option as an ethnic category.

Legitimation of 'New Zealander' is also argued for on the basis that support by an official body, such as StatsNZ, validates the label. As 05UM announces:

National identity can become an ethnic group - at least according to my reading of the ethnicity definition used by Stats NZ.

05UM

Although 05UM has no doubt that national identity can translate to ethnic identity, he admits that this is based solely on his interpretation of StatsNZ's definition. But the authority of this Government body that organises the census and publishes the nation's

statistics is presumed, by implication, to hold greater weight than does Mok's interpretation.

Another way of legitimising 'New Zealander' was through the *topos of inclusion*. Commenters often used collective nouns such as 'anyone', 'everyone' or 'anybody' to display their commitment to an inclusive society. 34ZM demonstrates the democratic process in New Zealand where anyone – even a Chilean – can identify as 'New Zealander' in the census (even if this, in fact, merges one national identity into another):

If a Chilean wants to put "New Zealander" then they can put it, if anybody from anywhere wants to put it then they can put it.

34ZM

Such freedom to mould one's own identity in New Zealand was manifest in the discussion, enabling the blurring of ethnic boundaries, as 40ZM also indicates:

If a long-term resident of the country who felt like a 'New Zealander', but happened to have, say, one parent from Ghana and another from Guernsey, did so, I wouldn't give a toss. **It's not a particularly exclusive category.**

40ZM

40ZM puts forward a hypothetical example to demonstrate the inclusiveness of New Zealand society. In presenting a case where a person's parents came from quite differing backgrounds – Ghana and Guernsey – 40ZM emphasises that, as long as a person "felt like a 'New Zealander'" then that was all that mattered. The use of the verb 'to feel' was used frequently by commenters in the discussion to emphasise that an emotive, yet abstract, connection was a major component in the formation of national identity. Ethnic background, 40ZM implies, is irrelevant when it comes to being a 'New Zealander' and this is further emphasised by his decision to bold the statement "**It's not a particularly exclusive category**".

Both 40ZM and 34ZM in these aforementioned extracts present imaginary situations to show how widely they believed the 'New Zealander' term could be applied. Inclusiveness is presented as a positive aspect of using 'New Zealander' as an ethnic label, echoing the official discourse about national identity that "we are all New Zealanders". But even some commenters like 23PM who self-identified as Pakeha,

suggest that the decision to name oneself a ‘New Zealander’ was a matter of personal preference:

New Zealander I have no problem with, and it potentially includes everyone irrespective of ethnicity.

23PM

23PM topicalises the object ‘New Zealander’ by bringing the noun to the front of the sentence, giving greater prominence to the label. Although 23PM downplays any difficulty with the label, the use of “potentially” in the second half of the sentence mitigates the argument that the label is inclusive, allowing for the possibility that exclusion might still exist in some situations – though these are not specified.

Another commenter, 34ZM, shows his enthusiasm for the all-inclusive ‘New Zealander’ classification in the census. In echoing the official discourse theme about unifying the nation through a common political future (Chapter Six), he states:

I think the census figures could be a great way to bring NZ together. Wouldn't it be fantastic to have 80% of the population saying that they are a "New Zealander" and then separately have ethnic breakdowns as to how that is made up. Time to take the next step and start pulling a few more fences down I think. They are starting to fall down every 5 years anyway so why not help them topple a bit faster?

34ZM

Pleas to break down barriers and look to the future serve to recast the use of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity in a positive light. Not only does 34ZM use the toponym ‘New Zealand’ to personify the country as a collective people that can be literally brought together through the census process, but also he applies metaphors of pulling down and toppling fences that stand in the way of an inclusive society. He uses the adjective “fantastic” to present an idealised vision of unity that encompasses the majority of the nation. The official discourse metaphor of moving forward is also reiterated in this extract through the suggestion to “take the next step” towards inclusiveness by embracing diversity. Inclusiveness is presented as a positive aspect of using ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnic label, echoing the official discourse about national identity that “we are all New Zealanders”. Some commenters, however, could not be persuaded to agree with this concept of ‘New Zealander’ and, in resisting such a notion, employed their own strategies to construct a different discourse.

8.3.2 A discourse of resistance

A discourse of resistance to collapsing ‘New Zealander’ as nationality into a label for a new ethnicity (that was predominantly Pakeha) was forcefully put forward in the discussion. Pakeha or European New Zealanders were seen to have claimed ‘New Zealander’ for themselves and therefore excluded other ethnic groups from the same identification.

The *topos of ‘New Zealander’ as a nationality* was used to indicate the true meaning of the term as a marker of national identity and citizenship, and at the same time highlighted that ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity was a fallacy. As 18MM asserts:

its just not healthy to let a small group of people, lets face it, predominantly white people, who occupy a priveleged position in New Zealand, to appropriate a term strongly associated with National Identity and the status of citizenship.

18MM

18MM constructs a division of groups by naming those who misused ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnic label as being “privileged” and therefore – by implication – suggests the existence of the unprivileged. 18MM uses a synecdochal reference¹² of ‘white people’ to negatively construct the other group – that is, New Zealand European/Pakeha – who seek a privileged position. Although 18MM mitigates his accusation somewhat by describing ‘them’ as only “a small group of people”, this also indicates that even a few can wield power over others.

On several occasions, Mok, as moderator, intervenes in the discussion she has been watching unfold and, in the following instance, reasserts her views to the mainly Pakeha commenters (though she uses a third-person context) that ‘New Zealander’ was a nationality and not an ethnicity:

It’s quite heartwarming to see all the Pakeha here on this thread describing and affirming their national identity, but national identity is not actually ethnicity, and Pakeha ethnicity is not 'New Zealand' national identity...

we have plenty of other opportunities to state and affirm our national identity. So why pretend one ‘is’ the other? That's actually rather unfair to the rest of us.

¹² Synecdochal references are where the “name of a referent is replaced by the name of another referent which belongs to the same field of meaning and which is semantically wider or semantically narrower” (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 43). In this case, it is used to link “negative features to individual groups” (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 142), that is, New Zealanders are the dominant white majority.

Mok talks about Pakeha as the ‘they’ group particularly since they dominate the discussion on her blog site and incorrectly translate ‘New Zealander’ by merging nationality with ethnicity. The use of an addressee-inclusive deictic ‘we’ reinforces the notion that all ethnic groups have the opportunity to express their national identity on various occasions. Although Mok attempts to balance power relations between groups by refocusing ‘New Zealander’ as nationality, the rhetorical question “so why pretend one is the other?” highlights Pakeha action in seeking a dominant position. Even though Pakeha had claimed ‘New Zealander’ as an all-inclusive ethnicity, the verb ‘pretend’ to describe their actions intimates that they are well aware that this label is a way of maintaining superiority. Mok’s statement that this is “unfair” further reinforces the dominance of Pakeha.

A number of commenters such as 21UM sought to urge “white New Zealanders” to retain Pakeha as their ethnic label to avoid misunderstandings:

pakeha is the most appropriate label for white New Zealanders. but also need to reiterate that it is an ethnic label. 'New Zealanders' is *supposed* to be the nationality. the fact that the national characteristics are dominated by pakeha characteristics is just a product of colonialism, and the natural inclination of nationalism.

21UM

21UM makes a clear distinction between Pakeha ethnicity and New Zealand national identity emphasising that Pakeha is the best label available to describe white New Zealanders. The power of Pakeha to dictate the construction of national characteristics on their terms is linked to their domination through colonisation and nationalism.

One particular strategy employed by commenters who resisted ‘New Zealander’ was to dismantle ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnic category by using the *topos of exclusion*. 18MM, who has already been quoted, remarked that “It is an exclusionary practice”. In this next example, 41PM uses the indefinite pronoun ‘you’ to help the audience experience the forced dichotomy of us and them, the in-group and the out-group, that results from transforming ‘New Zealander’ into one ethnicity, by giving them a subjective viewpoint:

If you name the ethnicity that you identify as your own as “New Zealander”, people who are ethnically different to you are not New Zealanders.

41PM

The readers are made to feel the responsibility for excluding others when ‘New Zealander’ is used. Repetition of the pronoun ‘you’ personalises the audience so that they experience a sense of power and control – “you name...”, “you identify...”, “different to you...” – and can understand how division is created. This, in effect, instils a sense of guilt.

In a similar vein, 14UU uses a slightly different discursive strategy to demonstrate dominance by connecting ‘they’ (the New Zealanders) with two verbs of power and control – ‘to claim’ and ‘to allow’:

they want to claim NZness for themselves, and allow others to be New Zealanders as long as they share the values ‘we all have in common’.

14UU

In essence, 14UU, along with some other commenters, reinforces the representation of ‘the New Zealanders’ as dictatorial in determining the values which “others” must have in order to belong to their group. The negative representation of ‘the New Zealanders’ is tied to the official discourse identified in Chapter Six, whereby the phrase about sharing the values ‘we all have in common’ repeats the often-heard political rhetoric about a new and inclusive national identity, which 14UU rejects.

Some commenters negatively constructed those who used the ‘New Zealander’ label by emphasising their self-designated superior status based on skin colour. The ‘they group’ or “*the* New Zealanders” were also referred to as “*the* New Zealand white folk” (italics added). The use of the definitive article *the* before the noun accentuates the exclusivity and strategic ‘othering’ that impacted on other groups. Under the *topos of exclusion*, these New Zealanders were portrayed as a people without a culture, struggling to maintain dominance by claiming ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnic classification for themselves at a time of growing diversity in New Zealand. But this sense of exclusion was also intricately woven into the *topos of racism*.

8.3.3 Topos of racism

A discursive strategy used as a key component in the discourse of resistance to ‘New Zealander’ as an inclusive ethnicity involved the *topos of racism*. This section firstly addresses how this topos was used by commenters and is then followed by an examination of the counter-reaction by those who responded with a *topos of denial of*

racism. Rather than seeking to “abstract and measure” racism, the focus is on “the details of what is said and written” as part of this discursive approach (Tuffin, 2008, p. 593).

The *topos of racism*, overlapping particularly with the *topos of exclusion* already discussed, was used to portray the negative effects resulting from claims of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity. As 46PF states:

Saying “I’m a ‘New Zealander’” when the subtext is “I am Caucasian” is racist (I’m not saying you are racist) because the implication is that other New Zealanders (non-white) are somehow less New Zealandish than us.

46PF

46PF who has earlier self-defined as Pakeha, stresses her dislike of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity and is critical of those who use it in this context. Nouns such as “subtext” and “implication” suggest that ‘New Zealander’ is in fact a cover-up for white dominance – something with which 46PF does not wish to be associated even though she is a member of the dominant majority. 46PF highlights the division created between non-white and “Caucasian” through the use of ‘New Zealander’ which she labels as racist – though she is quick to point out that this accusation of racism is not directed to the commenter to whom she is responding. Rather than personally attacking people who advocated the ethnic category of ‘New Zealander’, a number of commenters, like 46PF, use the discussion to voice their concerns that racism in New Zealand is not acknowledged. Their statements are mitigated using various strategies such as:

1. using qualifying sentences – “I’m not saying you are racist” (46PF);
2. showing agreement and using a definitive statement that actions of racism did not necessarily mean a person was racist – “I agree that many/most of the people who tick ‘New Zealander’ are not racist individuals” (46PF);
3. highlighting the lack of dominant majority awareness of modern racism through perspectivisation – “It is not immediately obvious to most people that using the word NZer as short hand for White, English-speaking NZer could be racist” (05UM).

However, this did not stop the negative presentation of ‘the New Zealanders’ by referencing them as the ‘Other’ using descriptors such as “privileged”, “white New Zealanders”, “soft bigots” and “colonisers”. Mitigation in the dismantling of ‘New Zealander’ indicated that commenters were eager to highlight that a more-subtle, often unconscious form of modern racism was involved, rather than the overt kind as the following extract shows:

Ok, so the appropriation of the term used to describe national belonging by (some members of) the dominant ethnic group of this nation for the purposes of naming their fledgling ethnicity is not KKK, lynching, John Howard racism. Its not that serious obviously. But it’s racist nonetheless.

18MM

The extremity of racism is downgraded by this Maori commenter who states that not all dominant majority members supported the renegotiation of New Zealand national identity as their ethnicity. 18MM also stresses that the racism referred to is not the serious kind as followed by white supremists such as the Ku Klux Klan (known for lynching Afro-Americans in the United States up until 1968) or of John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia, who spoke out against illegal refugees and targeted Muslims for criticism post 9/11 (Kuhn, 2009). However, there is no doubt in 18MM’s mind that the appropriation of ‘New Zealander’ is still racist and therefore unacceptable.

Some commenters raised the involvement of the media in supporting the white majority position and contributing to a biased view of multicultural and bicultural relationships:

I think we can lay off those who identify as ethnic "New Zealanders" when the white-dominated media lays off the "Asians".

14UU

being Maori is much more about responsibilities than rights, despite what the MSM [mainstream media] would have us believe - that come with being indigenous.

18MM

14UU justifies any ongoing accusations of racism against ‘New Zealanders’ because the media continues to portray Asians negatively. The media are labelled as “white-dominated” suggesting they act as agents for the dominant majority and its discourse. From a Maori perspective, 18MM also accuses the mainstream media of endorsing a

false representation of indigeneity. Using the combination of the modal verb ‘would’ with the verb ‘believe’ in the phrase “what the MSM would have us believe” negatively represents the media and their power of deception. 18MM also emphasises that the collective group referred to as “us” (that is 18MM and others – presumably minorities) will no longer tolerate these actions. Both extracts highlight interdiscursivity and intertextuality in the media that reinforce, transfer and disseminate discourses of racism.

Accusations of racism, however, offended some commenters who felt such postings were “extremely negative” and “insulting” (34ZM). As a result, they reacted defensively with a *topos of denial of racism*,¹³ seeking to correct any misunderstanding about the ‘New Zealander’ category:

I really have a hard time concluding that I am racist or that it is racist to put "New Zealander" on my census form because I am white. That seems to be the barely veiled accusation.

34ZM

34ZM refutes the inference that he is racist particularly with regard to his white skin colour. He represents himself as a victim of accusation on the basis that his own interpretation of ‘New Zealander’ differs from others. However, other attempts to counter the negative presentation of ‘New Zealanders’ involved some commenters presenting themselves in a more positive light and distancing themselves from supremacist groups.

36ZM forthrightly denies the accusation of racism by writing that: “[I] would like to think that I’m some distance from the right wing”. 30UM also felt that “calling people who tick the ‘New Zealander’ box racist is a debasement of the term” which should be saved for “actual instances of racist attitudes or behavior”. Both 36ZM and 30UM feel they are unjustly tarnished by these accusations when the real threat should be seen to emanate from the overt activities of right-wing, supremacist groups. 36ZM and 30UM distance themselves on a personal level and defend themselves as ‘New Zealanders’ who opposed these other groups that represented the ‘real’ racists.

¹³ Liu and Mills (2006) referred to statements that denied racist intent in response to accusations of racism, as ‘discourses of plausible deniability’.

In a more subtle denial of racism, 34ZM uses personal narrative to exemplify that a person's skin colour has nothing to do with identifying as 'New Zealander' on the census form:

I sure as hell did not tick it because I am white, and when my half Korean daughter gets to fill out a census form on her own behalf I hope she will happily tick the same box without worrying about what she looks like. If I take her to Europe she won't be accepted as a European, if I take her to Korea in it's current state she won't be considered Korean either. And I'm dammed if she has to sit down every 5 years to state that she is a Korean, European 'New Zealander' just to make other people happy.

34ZM

In acknowledging that narrative helps to shape identity (Ricoeur, 1983–85), this extract shows that 34ZM reveals his multiple identities to intensify his argument. While 34ZM acknowledges that he is white, this has little to do with his identification as a 'New Zealander'. In indicating his role as a caring father with a half-Korean daughter, he seeks to negate the generalisation that self-labelling as 'New Zealander' is racist or based on colour. His opening words "I sure as hell did not tick it because I am white" position him defensively. 34ZM's narrative pursues a level of respect through his disclosure of the racist treatment his own daughter would receive outside of New Zealand, because both Europe and Korea would reject her on the basis of her hybridity. The label 'New Zealander', he asserts in this extract, is not based on race or physical appearance ("what a person looks like"). 34ZM, in fact, introduces the concept that as New Zealand becomes more ethnically diverse through globalisation and intermarriage, the meaning of 'New Zealander' also changes. 'New Zealander' as an all-encompassing ethnic category appeals to him.

Denial of racism is a "form of impression management" which van Dijk (1992) says is often used by white speakers to "make sure that they are not misunderstood and that no unwanted inferences are made from what they say" (p. 115). Clearly this was the case in the online discussion as attempts were made to counteract the *topos of racism*. However, Wetherell and Potter's (1992) suggestion that the exhibition of racism is not necessarily intentional or indicative of prejudice raises the issue as to whether claiming 'New Zealander' as an ethnicity was a conscious or unconscious act of racism. They believe that racism can be "any action that serves, even unintentionally, to sustain and reinforce power relations" (p. 70). Certainly commenters espousing a discourse of

resistance regarded the use of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnic category as an act of power and dominance whether unconscious or not.

Both the *topos of racism* and the *topos of denial of racism* as argumentation strategies reveal the power struggles involved in constructing a New Zealand national identity. This section has shown that commenters using the discourse of resistance felt threatened because of their perception that the use of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity, rather than a nationality, was an act of racism that included some, but not others. On the other hand, those commenters applying the discourse of legitimacy resented accusations of racism which they felt falsely represented their intentions and portrayed them negatively. However, it was the debate about which ethnic group could claim the greatest emotional attachment in their sense of belonging to New Zealand that led to an even more intense focus on national identity.

8.3.4 Topos of the right to belong

The *topos of the right to belong* was characterised by the formula that, if a person had a specific connection with the country, whether emotional, political or legal, then they had as much right as any other person to claim a New Zealand national identity. However, the impetus for the *topos of the right to belong* stemmed from disagreement about who had the greatest attachment to the nation and why. Some commenters sought to justify their connection with New Zealand on the basis that they had no sense of belonging to anywhere else and that, regardless of their ethnicity, they could feel as much a ‘New Zealander’ as could anyone else. What was significant in this part of the analysis, however, was the debate over whether some ethnicities had more right to belong than others.

In determining the discursive strategies behind this *topos of the right to belong*, I viewed belonging along the lines of Yuval-Davis’ (2006) definition that it:

can be an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way... is always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity, which is only a naturalized construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations. (p. 199)

Central to this part of the analysis involving the *topos of the right to belong* was the use of “narratives of identity” which often reflect emotional components where identities may be threatened or feel less secure (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). Since narratives can

“reveal footings that in turn reveal orientations to particular constructions of self” (Triandafyllidou & Wodak, 2003, p. 216), the self-reflexiveness of commenters provided insight into how they personalised their national identification using the *topos of the right to belong*. In examining this topos, I treat the three topics associated with belonging – affinity with the land, the right to be indigenous and citizenship – as sub-topoi.

Affinity with the land

The concept of New Zealand as a physical, geographical place was regarded as an “object of attachment” (Yuval-Davis, 2006) in the online discussion. This can be seen in 21UM’s and 22PM’s statements below:

I have a deep, deep attachment to this place. My family has become naturalized ... their identity changes as the national identity has grown.

21UM

As a sixth generation ‘New Zealander’ I have very strong attachments to the parts of the country my family have bonded with over the years.

22PM

A personal identification with New Zealand as a country is emphasised in these narratives particularly through the adjectives of “deep” (repeated twice in succession for emphasis) and “strong”, indicating an intensity of emotion associated with belonging. Both commenters use the abstract noun “attachment” to convey a relationship with the physical aspects of New Zealand either as a whole (“this place”) or as more localised areas (“parts of the country”). Although both 21UM and 22PM use the pronoun “I” to personalise their feelings of attachment, they also refer to their “family” to show that their identity is a shared experience which goes beyond the level of the individual. In particular, 22PM gives a temporal reference to his identity by stating that he is “a sixth generation ‘New Zealander’”. This emphasis on having an association with New Zealand through a generational connection intensifies the reasoning behind his attachment. Both commenters indicate that national identification has been an incremental and naturally occurring process for their families. 22PM refers to a temporal bonding to the country “over the years”, while 21UM uses the metaphor of growth in describing the evolution of national identity that has influenced his family.

Russell Brown, in his facilitating role as moderator, also added this comment about geographical attachment to show that this is an experience commonly referred to by New Zealanders:

So, yeah, an affinity for an attachment to the land, sea and sky seems a core part of what it is to be a 'New Zealander' of whatever heritage. It's the thing we all (or nearly all) answer to.

Brown

Using the inclusive 'we', Brown brings everyone ("of whatever heritage") under the same category of 'New Zealander', identifying attachment to the land as an integral part of identity construction typical for New Zealanders. The bracketed phrase "or nearly all", however, mitigates this generalisation about identity leaving room for acknowledgement that there are some – though not many – who might not feel the same as the majority.

However, some commenters (Pakeha and Maori) felt strongly that Maori as indigenous people had a deeper, more 'spiritual' attachment to the land compared with non-Maori because they were 'tangata whenua' (the people of the land) and had strong ancestral links. Non-Maori or tauiwi¹⁴ were associated with a more material attachment to New Zealand as in the *Brand New Zealand* campaign (Chapter Six). A number of commenters reacted defensively to this, using it to turn the tables and construct Maori as the ones who were exclusionary, as 31PF shows in the following extract:

You are welcome to your sense of spirituality. I just don't see how you can use it to justify excluding me from belonging here in a way that I can belong to no other place on this planet. I may not belong here in the same way that you do, but I really do belong here, and nowhere else.

31PF

This commenter makes a clear demarcation between the Maori and non-Maori world views by repeatedly using the pronouns "you" and "I". She also expresses a dislike that someone else can make a judgment as to whether another person belongs or not and uses the *topos of exclusion* to reinforce this. 31PF characterises 18MM as having a "sense of spirituality" that is specific to his ethnicity – "**your** sense of spirituality" and "I may not belong here in the same way that **you** do". 31PF builds her argument by

¹⁴See glossary.

repeating variations of the verb ‘belong’ to emphasise the importance she places on needing to feel attached to somewhere – in her case, New Zealand. “I can **belong**... I may not **belong**... but I really do **belong**” (bolding added). This emotion tied to the need to belong is intensified by the inclusion of an emphasising statement “I really do” in the last example. The noun “nowhere else” is indicative that her sense of belonging is restricted to one place, with the implication that she would be homeless or at least ‘nationless’ otherwise.

16PZF, on the other hand, who had in an earlier posting self-identified ethnically as “Pakeha of Maori descent” but also as ‘New Zealander’ in the nationality sense, interestingly uses the labels Maori and ‘New Zealander’ (rather than Pakeha) in her narrative to acknowledge her dual identification:

There does seem to be a difference between my attachment to my country as a ‘New Zealander’, and to this very specific slice of my ancestry. Someone earlier took offence at the distinction between "spiritual" & "material" attachment, but that phrase rings true to me, just not with the negative implications of materialism... The ‘New Zealander’ side of me feels strongly "this is where I live, and this is how I live my life", and I can point to immediate family, stories from my upbringing, the places I've lived, even places I've visited where my ancestors lived that have shaped me - in that sense it's material. However, there's an aspect to the Maori side that feels more like a sort of collective memory from a distant past that I never really experienced.

16PZF

16PZF displays some ambiguity in balancing ‘New Zealander’ with Maori. While Maori is an ethnicity, ‘New Zealander’ could be interpreted as being used as either nationality or ethnicity, or both. The fact that she has earlier described her ethnicity as Pakeha highlights the conflation of the two. Regardless of this, 16PZF attempts to reconcile the two sides of her self – the Maori and the ‘New Zealander’ – by describing how the two different perceptions of attachment (“my country”) are part of her identity. The strength of her New Zealand side is emphasised through her narrative – particularly the statements within quotation marks showing she is the one who chooses “where” and “how” she lives. Reference to her family and ancestors are intertwined with New Zealand locations (“places”) and she accentuates her relationship with these by declaring: “I’ve lived...”, “I’ve visited...” – repeating the personal pronoun “I” for emphasis. She relates that it is her long relationship with these places through her ancestors that have “shaped” her identity. Although 16PZF’s Maori side is less tangible for her as a lived experience (she describes it as a “slice of ancestry” because her life

has been dominated by her ‘New Zealand’ side), she relates that a spiritual attachment emanating from within her exists as a “collective memory from a distant past”. This is an example of ‘imagining’ national identity not only through experience as a ‘New Zealander’, but also through a sense of spirituality in her Maori “side”, which she finds difficult to explain.

However, the sub-topos of affinity with the land in the discussion became much more complex when it combined with the sub-topos of indigeneity whereby the claim that non-Maori could also be indigenous and have an affinity with the land was contested.

The right to be indigenous

While the *topos of racism* highlighted the privileged position of white New Zealanders claiming ethnic dominance, the positioning of Maori in constructing their unique relationship with the land as indigenous people also became a focus of tension in the discussion between a small number of commenters. The sub-topoi of *the right to be indigenous* was claimed to be the prerogative of Maori as the first people in New Zealand, though some commenters defended the right of Pakeha to make the same claim based on the longevity of their lived experience in the nation. It is worth noting here the controversial writings of New Zealand historian Michael King (1986, 2004) that Pakeha could also consider themselves as indigenous based on the multiple generations that had lived in New Zealand, their feelings of attachment to the land, and the distinctive culture and values characteristics that had emerged. His views were taken up by a number of Pakeha in the discussion who felt that the view of a known academic entitled them to see themselves as indigenous. However, it should also be noted that the dominant majority perspective in this context was the view of only some commenters and not necessarily representative of all, as is the case with all the topoi in this study.

The opposing viewpoints about who had the right to be indigenous featured a number of times in the discussion. This is demonstrated by two extracts, firstly by Maori commenter 18MM:

Indigeneity is about being able to look up at a mountain and say that mountain is my ancestor, my great-great-great ... great grandfather or mother. Indigeneity is literally being born OF the land, not born ON the land.

18MM

18MM – the only commenter to have a Maori ‘voice’ in the discussion even though he described himself as “a Maori who is also Pakeha”¹⁵ – differentiates between the two ethnicities by using the metaphor of the mountain as his ancestor. The simile of the mountain as his ancestor focuses on a Maori world view of their connection with nature going back many generations indicated by the repetition of ‘great’. Phrases such as “being born OF the land” compared with others who are only “born ON the land” indicates a different cultural assumption about people, land and the relationship between them. By juxtaposing the words ‘of’ and ‘on’ through capitalisation, 18MM points out that non-Maori can have an identity based on attachment to the land, though the implication is that this is superficial because it is ‘on’ rather than ‘of’ and therefore not an indigenous experience.

In comparison, a second commenter who is Pakeha, 15PU, presents the case that indigeneity can also apply to non-Maori:

I agree that Pakeha and their relevant non-Maori fellow travellers [sic] cannot claim pre-historical origins linking us as a social group to the place of Aotearoa – whakapapa. However, we can claim indigeneity in the sense that we are of the space of Aotearoa – this place has formed us in a way that others from outside of this place are not formed.

15PU

15PU uses words such as Aotearoa for New Zealand and whakapapa (genealogy) in his/her posting, indicating knowledge of the familial relationship Maori have with New Zealand. However, the suggestion is that the identity of non-Maori is also shaped by the experience of being in New Zealand. This positioning can be viewed as a discursive strategy that puts 15PU on an equal footing with 18MM in claiming indigenous status and attachment to Aotearoa. 15PU indicates that the only difference between Maori and Pakeha and their sense of belonging is the historical and ancestral connections for Maori. However, 15PU does acknowledge that his definition of indigeneity relates to the influence Aotearoa has had on forming or constructing non-Maori identity, rather than the “pre-historical” connections felt by Maori as a social group.

Maori were constructed by some commenters as using indigenous status as a marker of privileged belonging, particularly in their self-labelling as tangata whenua (people of the

¹⁵ 18MM indicated a strong identification with Maori and with being indigenous but, at the same time, acknowledged his mother was Pakeha, thus suggesting that he has insight and understanding from both perspectives.

land). In a similar vein to the way white New Zealanders were constructed earlier as seeking to maintain a dominant ethnicity, Maori were now accused of claiming superiority through indigeneity which, given the history of colonisation, appears somewhat ironic. This tactic of turning the accusation of dominance on to Maori was counteracted, however, with the suggestion that Pakeha were colonisers of the indigenous Maori and could not therefore claim indigenous status for themselves.

Contradictions in the interpretation of indigeneity resulted in lengthy postings as commenters sought to express their points of view, substantiating them by referring to academic sources. 18MM quoted a Maori academic Linda Smith as “the world’s foremost scholar on indigeneity”, using her position to support his comments about Maori being the only group worthy of indigenous status leaving “no room for the descendents of settlers to be indigenous”. However, some commenters such as 27ZM cited Michael King’s view that:

Pakeha culture... is indigenous, since it is *not* the same as British culture, it evolved through the experience of living in Aotearoa/NZ (the land, contact with Maori, distance from "home") and it exists nowhere else.

27ZM

The sub-topos of *the right to be indigenous* was highly contested in the discussion as differences of opinion and divergent world views between Maori and Pakeha affected the way they constructed their own identities and those of others. The perspective that only Maori could be indigenous is what Stephen Turner (2007) calls long history because it accounts for Maori as the first people in New Zealand and their spiritual attachment to the land. The opposing viewpoint designating indigenous status to Pakeha/NZ European is based on short history which goes back only as far as colonisation and British settlement in New Zealand. Turner (2007) terms this short history perspective as inclusive-exclusion because while it welcomes the inclusion of all ethnicities as New Zealanders; at the same time, it fails in a “passive aggressive” way to acknowledge Maori’s pre-European connection with New Zealand as being significant (p. 87).

Indigeneity marked an important point of difference between the discourse of resistance and the discourse of legitimisation in the online discussion. Turner (2007) suggests attempts by non-Maori to self-classify as indigenous can be interpreted as nullifying

Maori and their bicultural status, thereby negating the history of colonisation. This inclusive-exclusion, according to Turner, emerged at the time of New Zealand's move to an official bicultural status in the 1980s when some people responded by seeking to erase the difference between Maori and non-Maori and construct a national culture where everyone belonged in the same way, and where multiculturalism replaced biculturalism.¹⁶ Under Turner's interpretation, although Maori were included as part of New Zealand's national identity, they were also excluded because they were denied sole indigenous status.

However, another aspect of belonging also became a part of the discussion which introduced the concept of civic nationalism in the construction of national identity. The meaning of legal citizenship led to further debate amongst commenters in constructing who could belong to New Zealand in a more contemporary, less-historical context.

Citizenship

Although citizenship is a complex and contested term (Chapter Four), several commenters referred to it as a marker of belonging to New Zealand based on legal status – that is, the holding of a New Zealand passport. Some commenters were firm in their ideological thinking about how they should be categorised, as the following extracts show:

[s]ince my passport said I was a 'New Zealander', didn't that make me a New Zealander?

38ZF

My 1966 Passport states that I was a British Subject and New Zealand Citizenmy current Passport simply states that I am a New Zealand Citizen. ergo I am a 'New Zealander'. Q.E.D.

36ZM

Each of these commenters refers specifically to their personal passport as a legal document or a "formal artefact of membership" (Kryzanowski & Wodak, 2007, p. 112) that proves they are a New Zealander. 38ZF uses a rhetorical question at the end of her statement to accentuate that the passport provides the evidence, while 36ZM, through narrative, alludes to the historical context of the removal of "British Subject"

¹⁶ See Bell (1996) for commentary on the forgetting of historical violence and discord between Pakeha and Maori to aid the construction of a fictive, harmonious New Zealand nationstate.

reinforcing his ‘New Zealander’ status.¹⁷ He uses the Latin terms “ergo” (therefore) and “Q.E.D.” (Quod erat demonstrandum translates as ‘which was to be proved’) often given at the completion of mathematical equations, to give formality and authority to his narrative. He has proven his point.

However, this *topos of the right to belong* as a ‘New Zealander’ based on citizenship is counteracted by two other commenters including Mok. In response to 36ZM’s claim that he is a ‘New Zealander’ in his passport, Mok responds:

What a coincidence, so am I! But the Census does not ask you to fill in your citizenship in the ethnicity question.

Mok

Mok’s own narrative demonstrates the differentiation between ‘New Zealander’ as national identity or marker of citizenship and ethnic label. In her exclamation “what a coincidence...”, she asserts that she too is a New Zealand citizen and a New Zealander demonstrating the confusion of people in using ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity.

Another commenter, 21UM, also highlights the difficulty some immigrants have in being accepted as New Zealanders in spite of the legal documentation proving it:

what about a somali refugee, in nzl for less than 10 years (assuming s/he could get a citizenship in that time), and bearing a passport? ‘New Zealander’? many would say that s/he is not, even with that bit of paper.

21UM

Such discussion alludes to the confusion over the rights and responsibilities of a nation’s citizens which is also a major focus in the second case study of the discussion on the *AEN* e-list (Chapter Nine) which was sparked by media use of the label “New Zealand passport holder” when referring to a Kurdish man with a New Zealand passport. Yuval-Davis’ (2006) statement that “there has never been a complete overlap between the boundaries of the national community and the boundaries of the population that lives in a particular state” (p. 207) highlights the potential for such inconsistencies to occur when it comes to the concept of belonging to a nation. Citizenship is one of a

¹⁷The status of ‘British subject’ was removed from New Zealand passports following the replacement of the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act 1948 with the Citizenship Act of 1977 (D. Green, 2009).

“myriad” of ways that link the near four and a half million people living in New Zealand (Morris, 2005, p. 242) but how it is conceived is crucial to the construction of the national identity of those people.

In reviewing these three sub-topoi of belonging – affinity to the land, the right to be indigenous and citizenship – it is easy to see how they were used discursively by commenters to claim ownership of a New Zealand national identity. The sub-topoi involved emotionally laden concepts for commenters to consider when expressing their individual senses of belonging. This included ancestral and family connections and differences in the ways these were conceived, conveyed and interpreted in the discussion. Issues of biculturalism were more prominent here than were issues of multiculturalism. This reflected the constituency of the commenters participating in the online discussion and the long-standing historical impact of the relationship between Maori and Pakeha, rather than the more recent issues surrounding multiculturalism. A common understanding about who belonged, and whether some had a greater entitlement to belong than others, was highly unlikely as the debate developed even though the blog site provided a forum for exactly that purpose.

8.4 Conclusion

This case study used the *Yellow Peril* blog site, “the identity game” blog posting, and its ensuing online discussion to explore people’s discursive construction of New Zealand national identity. The lengthy online discussion in response to New Zealand Chinese blogger Tze Ming Mok’s satirical posting that highlighted the absurdity of StatsNZ’s acceptance of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnic category, was archived within the community of blogs on *publicaddress.net*. Fifty-three commenters participated in the discussion that began with debate about the validity of the ethnicity question in the 2006 census. The inclusion of ‘New Zealander’ as a recognised ethnic identity was regarded by Mok and some commenters as the deliberate merging of ethnicity and nationality by the dominant white majority to maintain their position of superiority. A number of threads in the discussion tackled issues such as diversity, ethnic labels, indigeneity, racism and the census, providing opportunities to look for patterns of language involved in the construction of national identity.

The discussion was dominated mainly by Pakeha commenters arguing both for and against the use of ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnic label indicating that not all had the same

views in spite of having the same ethnicity. Mok (2009, December 18) regarded this as a display of dominant majority insecurity about ethnic and national identity, which she felt would have been better situated on Pakeha blog sites than on *Yellow Peril* where ethnic minorities were the intended audience. However, the predominance of Pakeha did not prevent a vocal minority from other ethnic groups interjecting at times – often at length – with their own perspectives in an attempt to provide some balance to the identity debate. The main finding of the analysis of the blog discussion was that New Zealand national identity was in fact constructed in diverse, and often conflicting, ways involving various discursive strategies.

The two dominant, yet opposing, discourses about national identity identified in the text indicated that a person's background, experience and ideology impact on their particular construction of 'New Zealander'. Given that legitimacy occurs most frequently in contexts of "controversial actions, accusations, doubts, critique or conflicts over group relations, domination and leadership" (Martin-Rojo & van Dijk, 1997, p. 538), it was not surprising that a discourse of legitimacy was used to justify 'New Zealander' as a bona fide ethnic classification that was inclusive of all ethnicities. In an example of interdiscursivity, the discourse of legitimacy was closely linked with the official discourse of StatsNZ that the ethnic category 'New Zealander' in the census could not be ignored and was "increasingly important for those who use ethnic data to understand the ethnic fabric of New Zealand" (Statistics New Zealand, 2007, p. 24).¹⁸

This presented a paradox in suggesting that all ethnicities could be classified under one ethnic label of 'New Zealander' – the same descriptor used to denote nationality. The Government-endorsed new national identity that encouraged the open display of ethnic diversity as part of its global branding agenda (though in effect it was a way to manage diversity) was inconsistent with the idea that everyone in New Zealand could, in fact, belong to one newly created ethnic group. A discourse of resistance was built on this conundrum, rejecting 'New Zealander' as an ethnic group and negatively constructing its use as exclusionary and racist.

In this case study, discourses of both legitimacy and resistance were investigated, firstly, by identifying topoi – the argumentation strategies which worked together in

¹⁸ Interestingly in contrast to New Zealand, *The Economist* states that Germany's first census in 2011 since its reunification planned to avoid questions on race or religion (Census sensitivity. 2007, December 22).

building the lines of reasoning that linked with the conclusion – and, secondly, by examining the linguistic forms such as metaphor that were used to construct ‘New Zealander’ in competing ways. Using the topoi of inclusion, ethnicity, denial of racism and belonging, those who legitimised the use of ‘New Zealander’ constructed it as the most appropriate way to describe their feelings of belonging and attachment to New Zealand particularly if they, or their families, had lived in the country for a number of generations. These commenters justified the right to self-define as ‘New Zealander’ by stating that it was an inclusive category which could apply to anyone who was a New Zealand citizen as stated in their passport, arguing that the term was a way of bringing people from diverse backgrounds together as one nation. Such a view further reinforced the confusion between ethnicity and nationality.

This discourse of legitimacy, on the other hand, was based on a short view of history from the point of British settlement and colonisation rather than on long history which accommodated Maori settlement (S. Turner, 2007). It echoed some of the concepts of the official discourse about national identity – that New Zealanders were tolerant and inclusive of other ethnic groups – and some commenters stressed the mainstream values highlighted by the Government that everyone, regardless of background, should share. Those who pursued a discourse of legitimacy self-presented as individuals with some or all of the following criteria:

1. lack of identification with anywhere else and therefore having no other option than to be ‘New Zealanders’;
2. consideration of themselves as indigenous, based on how long their ancestors had lived in New Zealand and the fact that their culture was unique and no longer ‘European’;
3. acknowledgement of biculturalism and multiculturalism as existing, plausible relationships between minority groups and the dominant majority in New Zealand;
4. acknowledgement of the rights of others to also be included in the category of ‘New Zealander’ for their ethnicity and nationality.

Those who resisted the 'New Zealander' ethnic classification sought to negatively construct supporters of the label, often referring to them as '*the* New Zealanders' to emphasise their attempt at exclusive positioning. The New Zealanders in the online discussion were presented as people abandoning their ancestral European roots in an effort to dictate the nation's identity on their own terms. The topoi of exclusion, nationality, racism and belonging based on a long version of history relating particularly to Maori as the First People in New Zealand prior to European settlement (S. Turner, 2007) reflected the discourse of resistance. These resistant commenters attempted to dismantle what was regarded as the false construction of 'New Zealander' as an ethnicity which threatened the status of ethnic minorities as New Zealanders, negating the history of colonisation and the bicultural status of New Zealand.

The New Zealanders were portrayed as mainly Pakeha or New Zealand Europeans who harboured insecurities about their own identities and sought to maintain positions of superiority. Hage (1998) refers to the dominant majority in both New Zealand and Australia as white multiculturalists who, while superficially embracing diversity, control the nation state from a position of superiority, seeking to construct an inclusive national identity based on the settler society's own terms of social cohesiveness and belonging. Although the use of 'New Zealander' was constructed as a racist act by white people, there was some mitigation of this with commenters suggesting the intent was not on the extreme level of right-wing, white-supremist groups. Rather, advocating 'New Zealander' as ethnicity was portrayed as a more-subtle, yet still concerning, form of racism.

As a result of the dismantling of 'New Zealander' as ethnic identification, those who adopted a discourse of resistance self-presented as individuals possessing one or more of the following positive qualities:

1. acknowledgement of equal rights for all ethnic groups living in New Zealand;
2. concern about the inclusion of minority groups in New Zealand society;
3. pride in their own ethnicities, including Pakeha and New Zealand European;
4. acknowledgement of the rights of Maori to be classified as indigenous;
5. concern about racism and the motives of the dominant white majority.

The positive self-presentation emerging from two different discourses included characteristics of what a 'New Zealander' was or should at least try to become. Even though both advocated inclusivity and an acceptance of other ethnicities, they displayed fragmentation of national sameness through their differing perspectives. This was also evident in a clash of world views, particularly between Maori and Pakeha commenters, that affected the construction of national identity. The collision between two worlds where "tea o pakeha is a thinking world and tea o maori is a feeling world" (Jamieson, 1992, p. 77) was evident in the lengthy debate between commenters about whether Pakeha, as well as Maori, could hold indigenous status. The intensity of the relationship between Maori and their ancestral lands was compared with the attachment shown by Pakeha New Zealanders to the landscape of New Zealand as part of their cultural heritage. Some regarded these feelings as the same, while others regarded them as quite different. As 22ZM interjected in one ongoing debate he observed between a Maori commenter and a Pakeha commenter: "You [23PM) and [18MM] will be arguing past each other for ever on this one".

In reflecting on the official discourse calling for a new national identity, the competing discourses about 'New Zealander' in "the identity game" discussion suggest a blurring of definitions and variance of interpretation in how individuals identified with the nation. This reinforces theories that identities are unstable, multiple and changeable (Hall, 1996; Barker, 1999; Cameron, 1999) and that "identity is heterogenous... bound up with difference" (Medina, 2003, p. 676). While the official discourse objective was to build a socially cohesive society, differentiation in the ways 'New Zealander' was constructed, particularly through discursive strategies such as topoi and metaphors, indicated the working of identity politics within this virtual community. Above all, the discursive analysis of debate as to whether 'New Zealander' was an ethnicity, a nationality or both, reveals a great deal about the power relations that lie behind the construction of 'New Zealander' as a national identity.

Chapter Nine: The discourses of people –part II

Aotearoa Ethnic Network e-list

... language is not innocent.
What one calls oneself and is
called by others *is* seen to matter.

A. Bell (1996, p. 145)

9.1 Introduction

The second case study examines an online discussion from the *Aotearoa Ethnic Network* (AEN) e-list that questioned a news headline using the words “New Zealand passport holder” to describe a New Zealander of Kurdish ethnicity. As with the first case study of “the identity game” blog posting, this discussion proceeded to debate the meaning of ‘New Zealander’ and other labels as markers of national identity in an increasingly diverse society. However, the AEN discussion differed from the first case study because it emerged from another context – a reported murder in Iraq more than 15,000 kilometres from New Zealand. This analysis demonstrates not only how discourse can spread, but also how the construction of national identity in one genre (a news article) can be challenged and reshaped in another (an online discussion).

This chapter is structured differently from that of the *Yellow Peril* and “the identity game” case study because the e-list genre presented an alternate format and method of communication. The first half describes the AEN organisation, its objectives and audience, and then outlines the characteristics of the e-list genre relating how AEN used it to connect its members. Acknowledging the process of registration to this e-list and the reasons why people might want to join, enables an understanding of the posters and their desire to be part of a discussion about the meaning of ‘New Zealander’. I also examine the email message from the AEN member that inspired the online discussion with its query about the news headline and look at how other media dealt with the same story.

The second part of this chapter presents the findings of the analysis of the AEN e-list discussion with its emphasis on how people both self-define and label others on the

basis of ethnicity and nationality. After introducing the constituency of the e-list discussion, I present the analysis of the text using the discourse analytical tools described in Chapter Five. A discourse about definition is shown to dominate the discussion suggesting that how one labels or categorises an identity is dependent on an individual's definition of the terms used. I explore the various discursive strategies used by the posters and in particular the dominant topoi they employed in expressing their views about national identity. I also include an examination of the linguistic features that contributed to the construction of this discourse about definition.

9.2 The Aotearoa Ethnic Network (AEN) and the e-list genre

Two university academics, Ruth DeSouza and Andy Williamson, established *AEN* in 2005 as an organisation that connected people interested in ethnic communities in New Zealand via the Internet. In my interview with DeSouza (2010, 30 August) she said that the *AEN* website was particularly useful in linking new immigrants to the many migrant and refugee networks that actively supported various ethnic groups at a grassroots level. The website not only provided an open-access online journal with articles and commentary on issues relating to ethnic and religious communities but, according to DeSouza, also included an e-list for *AEN* members to network and post messages about “events, meetings, consultations, launches [and] celebrations” relating to ethnic communities in New Zealand.

An e-list, as already described in Chapter Four, is an email service which circulates messages amongst its subscribers. Although emails might consist only of notifications, in some cases, a series of emails responding to one particular subject can transform into an online discussion. Initiating membership to the *AEN* e-list was achieved via what DeSouza called viral networking where she and Williamson used their existing networks to encourage various agencies and ethnic communities to join and to spread the news about their website. DeSouza described the list of more than 500 members as “multi-ethnic, multi-faith, multi-occupational, and multi sectorial”, and she took pride in the fact that it brings together men and women of many different ethnicities and faiths in New Zealand such as Indians, Chinese, Africans, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Jews in a network which has no external funding base.

DeSouza (2010, 30 August) stated that the *AEN* e-list provided an online network opening up channels of communication between people who were passionate about

supporting and promoting diverse groups in New Zealand. It also connected people who were geographically dispersed across New Zealand and Australia. Within two years of operation, the *AEN* e-list was recognised for its outstanding contribution to positive race relations in New Zealand with an award from the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in 2007.

DeSouza related that *AEN* had also been a key resource for professionals, such as journalists, key decision-makers, stakeholders and people in political positions wishing to keep track of activities, attitudes and opinions relating to diversity that could inform policy-making. Since its inception, the *AEN* has grown into a community that has maintained contact online and offline with a number of members meeting at conferences or seminars such as the HRC's annual diversity forum.

The *AEN* e-list is regarded as a semi-public forum because, although large, only those people who subscribed to it received the messages. The emails were distributed either singly as they were posted, or as a collection or digest of messages distributed in one daily email. As these messages were not publicly archived by *AEN*, there was no retrospective access to discussions unless saved by individual subscribers as was the case for this research.¹

Membership was open to anyone who had email access. Although subscribers could elect to use pseudonyms when posting messages, DeSouza (2010, 30 August) said that most people preferred to identify themselves by name. She described the e-list as a vibrant virtual community, networking on ethnicity-related issues. The posters were technologically savvy people who could see the advantage of the e-list in both an information-seeking and information-generating capacity. While she monitored posted messages, DeSouza did not intervene in discussions, preferring members to self-regulate and conform to Internet etiquette by confining messages to topics relating to ethnic communities. A list of guidelines on the *AEN* website specified appropriate behaviour on the e-list, including not sending offensive material or advertisements.²

Messages could be posted at any time on the e-list and were automatically prefaced by the poster's name, email address, date, time, the recipients and subject. Unlike the

¹ As noted in Chapter Five, I was a member of the *AEN* e-list and had saved this particular e-list discussion because of its relevancy to my research interests. It was at a later date that I decided the 'passport holder' discussion would serve as a relevant data source for this study.

² AEN.org.nz/guidelines.html accessed 18 May 2010.

Yellow Peril/publicaddress.net blog sites, there were no icons or distinguishing features that denoted *AEN* on the emails apart from the words *Aotearoa Ethnic Network* appearing in the ‘To’ line of the email to indicate the recipients, and the bracketed [*AEN*] which appeared in the subject line (see Figure 9.1).

Once registered as an *AEN* e-list subscriber the opportunity to participate in, or merely observe discussions, could occur at any time of day. Commenting on something such as an online news article, could be done as soon as it was read often leading to a string of links and references from other posters that demonstrate the intertextual and interdiscursive nature of the Internet as shown in the next section.

9.3 The ‘New Zealander’ discussion

The *AEN* e-list discussion selected for analysis was stimulated through an email sent by an *AEN* member (01F)³ on 6 March 2008, alerting others to what she referred to as an “odd headline” that appeared in an online news article of *The New Zealand Herald*. The text of the email, with the sender’s name and email address altered for confidentiality, is reproduced in Figure 9.1:

From: 01F [mailto:xxx@xtra.co.nz]
 Sent: Thursday, 6 March 2008 9:13 a.m.
 To: *Aotearoa Ethnic Network*
 Subject: [*AEN*] New Zealand passport holder shot dead in Iraq

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10496453>
 A New Zealand passport holder has died after being shot in the disputed northern oil city of Kirkurk yesterday.
 I thought this was an odd headline. Can someone at the Herald please explain what the difference is between a “New Zealander” and a “New Zealand passport holder”?
 Cheers
 01F

Fig 9.1: The initial email that sparked the “passport holder” discussion.

The headline appeared in the subject line of the email announcing: “New Zealand passport holder shot dead in Iraq”. A URL link to the article featured at the beginning of the email so that others could quickly access *The New Zealand Herald* text and this was followed by the reproduction of the first line of the article which repeated the label “New Zealand passport holder”. The poster 01F expresses her surprise at this headline and calls for clarification from *The New Zealand Herald* to explain the inference that a

³ The names of posters have been replaced by codes to maintain confidentiality of their identities. The number relates to the order in which posters’ messages were received and the letter notes gender.

‘New Zealand passport holder’ was not considered a *real* ‘New Zealander’ because of his ethnicity. This request is semi-rhetorical in that 01F’s email is distributed to the e-list community yet, at the same time, she asks *The New Zealand Herald* to account for its actions. A number of journalists were known to be *AEN* e-list members, so the presumption was that this email would certainly come to the attention of *The New Zealand Herald*.

In response to this email, a short, but intense, online discussion ensued over eight days involving 14 *AEN* members posting a total of 24 messages. However, before the findings from the discursive analysis of the email messages are detailed, this chapter firstly provides additional contextual information and brief analysis surrounding *The New Zealand Herald*’s ‘passport holder’ story to situate the discussion within the socio-cultural and political milieu.

9.3.1 Contextualising the discussion – the “passport holder” article

Several hours after 01F’s message was posted on the *AEN* e-list, *The New Zealand Herald* altered the article headline to read “New Zealander shot dead in Iraq”. Although the article with the original headline was removed from the Internet, the revised article was still accessible online at the time of writing and appears as a screenshot in Figure 9.2. No other changes had been made to the text by the news organisation other than the headline.



Fig 9.2: Screenshot of *The New Zealand Herald* online article after the headline was altered from “New Zealand passport holder” to “New Zealander”.⁴

The difference in the alteration from the original headline “New Zealand Passport Holder” to “New Zealander” is that the former identified the murdered person Abdul Sattar Taher Sharif, as merely ‘holding’ or being in possession of a New Zealand passport therefore questioning the legitimacy of his claim to New Zealandness. “New Zealand” was used as an adjective tied to the noun of “passport holder” suggesting any cultural sense of belonging to New Zealand was absent.

It is not possible to know whether 01F’s request, “can someone at the Herald please explain”, led to this alteration. But the fact remains that, several hours later, for whatever reason, *The New Zealand Herald* did change the wording in the headline. It is interesting that the label “New Zealand passport holder” was retained in the body of the article. Was this an act of defiance to show that *The New Zealand Herald* did not really have any qualms about the use of “New Zealand passport holder” – though bowed to pressure to remove it from the headline? Or did *The New Zealand Herald* simply miss the fact that the label appeared within the body of the text? Although *The New Zealand*

⁴*The New Zealand Herald* article used the incorrect spelling of Kirkuk which was subsequently reproduced in 01F’s email in Fig 9.1.

Herald story indicated its source as *Agence France Press*,⁵ the acknowledgement at the bottom of the story to “NZ HERALD STAFF” indicates their involvement in its production. Even if the staff input was only in the capacity of sub-editing the agency report, *The New Zealand Herald* was still responsible for the questionable headline.

An Internet search using the Google news search engine⁶ to see how other local and overseas media reported the ‘passport holder’ story produced several alternative labels in news headlines. Members of Fairfax Media (the organisation responsible for New Zealand publications: *The Timaru Herald*, *Taranaki Daily News*, *Waikato Times*, *The Dominion Post*, *Marlborough Express*, *Manawatu Standard*, *Nelson Mail* and the online news site *stuff.co.nz*) ran identical stories with the headline “Kurdish-NZer killed in Iraq”, Figure 9.3).

The publicly owned radio station *Radio New Zealand* opted to use “Kurdish former minister with NZ connection killed” as the headline on its website, with the lead sentence describing the minister as “... Sharif, 74, who held a New Zealand passport”. All of these descriptions are similar to ‘passport holder’ in their distancing of Sharif from the status of ‘New Zealander’.



Fig 9.3: Screenshot of *stuff.co.nz*’s version of the story with the headline “Kurdish-NZer killed in Iraq”.

⁵ The original *Agence France Presse* story about the New Zealand passport holder could not be located online.

⁶ See glossary.

The Google search also generated links to international media – nine Australian, one American and two British publications – which ran the story. The majority of these international news organisations did not include any reference to New Zealand in their headlines, most likely because of its lack of relevance to their specific audiences. They preferred headlines such as “Kurdish former minister killed”⁷ and referred to Sharif as a “Kurdish academic” in the body of their stories. Only the UK’s *Interactive Investor* highlighted any link between Sharif and New Zealand by stating that he “held a New Zealand passport” – though this was in the body of the story and not the headline. Clearly his Kurdish identity was more newsworthy on the international scene than was his New Zealand identity.

The New Zealand Herald therefore appeared to be the only online news site⁸ to run the ‘passport holder’ headline which attracted the attention of AEN members. Given that headlines can strategically “construct the overall meaning” for the reader even before the rest of the story is read and that this can “bias the understanding process” (van Dijk, 1991, pp. 50–51) the potential for *The New Zealand Herald* story to reinforce an image of immigrants as undeserving of a ‘New Zealander’ label was unmistakable.

The distancing of Sharif from a New Zealand identity was further reinforced in the body of *The New Zealand Herald* story where he was assigned an additional label of “Kurdish academic”. The adjectival label ‘Kurdish’ along with his occupation and distinctive Iraqi name obstructs any connection with a New Zealand identity. In fact, there are no further details in the story that link Sharif to New Zealand. All other information relates to his experience of being caught up in some form of political strife in Kirkuk which is described as a “disputed northern oil city”. The adjective “disputed” not only inferred infighting regarding ownership of Kirkuk, but the fact that it was described as an “oil city” implied that its economic and strategic value was worth defending.

The only reason for the New Zealand media to be interested in this story was that Sharif held a New Zealand passport. It is questionable whether many people in New Zealand

⁷ Nine Australian newspapers, two from the UK and Forbes in the US used this description. The link to these headlines (<http://news.google.co.nz/index.html?ned=nz&ncl=1139667074&hl=en&topic=n&scoring=d>.) no longer exists.

⁸ A search of the microfiche copies of *The New Zealand Herald* archives at the Auckland Public Library found that the story was not published in its hard-copy editions.

(including journalists) even knew who Sharif⁹ was and the first version of the story as it appeared in *The New Zealand Herald* identified him only by his legal status as a “passport holder”. But there were others who were also interested in this situation.

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) became aware of the ‘passport holder’ story through the *AEN* e-list discussion and reported its investigation in its March 2008 newsletter (Figure 9.4).

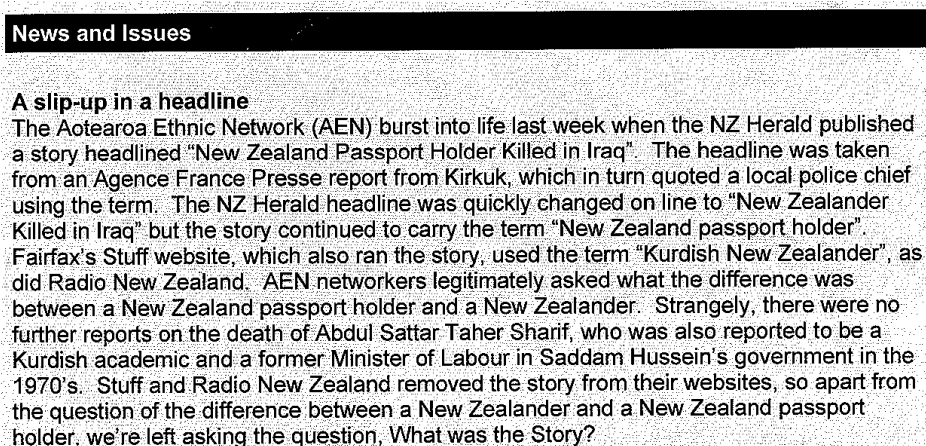


Fig 9.4: The excerpted news item from *Nga Reo Tangata* – the Human Rights Commission’s Media and Diversity Network newsletter (Human Rights Commission, 2008b).

Titled “A slip-up in a headline” (suggesting that *The New Zealand Herald*’s use of ‘passport holder’ was unintentional) and the HRC concluded that *The New Zealand Herald* was not the instigator of the label ‘New Zealand passport holder’ because it had been taken directly from an *Agence France Presse* report from Kirkuk and traced back to a local police chief who used the term.

In spite of *The New Zealand Herald*’s “slip-up”, it was its decision to use the words ‘New Zealand passport holder’ in the first place that sparked the discussion on the *AEN* e-list about the validity of the label. Other posters advised of the change in the headline to ‘New Zealander’ and also the alternative label ‘Kurdish-New Zealander’ as used by other media. Whether Sharif had ever lived in New Zealand remained a mystery. As the HRC noted in its newsletter: “Strangely, there were no further reports on the death of Abdul Sattar Taher Sharif”. But, regardless of this, the e-list discussion that was generated as a result of *The New Zealand Herald* article focused on the rights of people to be labelled in a way that acknowledged their ethnicity as part of their national

⁹ Further investigation by Fairfax Media was unproductive and it reported that there was “no clue” as to why Sharif held a New Zealand passport (March 14, 2008).

identity. There were, however, differing opinions as to the definition of ‘New Zealander’, as the analysis shows.

9.4 Analysis of the ‘passport holder’ discussion

The findings from the analysis of the *AEN* e-list discussion demonstrate how New Zealand national identity was constructed in response to *The New Zealand Herald* using the ‘passport holder’ label in one of its stories. This next section backgrounds the participants in the discussion, followed by the thematic analysis, the identification of the discourse about definition and an examination of the discursive strategies and linguistic means that were used in the email messages.

9.4.1 The posters

The messages of sixteen members of *AEN* (seven females and nine males) appeared on the e-list over a period of eight days (6–13 March 2008) in response to the ‘passport holder’ story. While some messages consisted of only a few lines of comment, others were lengthy paragraphs contained in more than one email. Information contained within the messages indicated that these posters came from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds – some were born in New Zealand and others had emigrated from Asia, Europe and South America.

As noted in Chapter Five, only two of the 13 posters who consented to their emails being used in the analysis declined to be identified.¹⁰ For reasons of consistency across the two case studies, I decided to maintain the anonymity of all the posters in this study. Therefore, the *AEN* e-list posters were coded using a similar process to that used in the “identity game” discussion. The names were replaced first by a number indicating the order in which they joined the discussion, followed by M or F to denote gender. In the final sample there were six women and seven men. Only a limited number of *AEN* posters referenced their ethnicity, so these details were not included in the coding of this case study. However, I include posters’ self-definitions (ethnicity or nationality) in the analysis when they were included in messages and were relevant to the findings. The self-descriptors used included Pakistani-British, Chilean, Greek-Cypriot (descent), Irish-New Zealander and Latino-Kiwi. DeSouza, however, confirmed that *AEN*

¹⁰ The messages of the three posters who were not included in the study were excluded from the sample.

members of Pakeha, Indian and Chinese ethnicities also contributed to this particular discussion.

Although the *AEN* e-list discussion involved people from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds than did that of the Pakeha-dominated *Yellow Peril* discussion, it is worth noting that self-definition or self-categorisation is often context dependent (J. C. Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). That is, posters may have specifically chosen to identify themselves in certain ways in the context of this discussion to illustrate certain points about national identity.

9.4.2 Identifying a dominant discourse about national identity

A close reading of the emails showed, that following 01F's questioning of *The New Zealand Herald's* use of the expression 'New Zealand passport holder', the exchange of messages developed into a discussion about the variation in labelling and the interpretation of hyphenated or combined descriptors such as 'Kurdish-New Zealander', 'Chinese-New Zealander' and 'Irish-New Zealander'. Factors such as where a person was born, a family's experience of coming to New Zealand, how ethnic groups were represented in the media and the influence of the dominant white majority on the construction of identities were raised, with a number of posters providing their own personal narratives to reinforce their views. However, in order to analyse the data systematically to determine discourses about national identity, a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted first.

Although this analysis used the same methodological framework as that of "the identity game" discussion, the inclusion of subject lines in email messages assisted in identifying topics which could then be grouped into themes. Subject lines are used to attract a reader's attention (Crystal 2001) in much the same way that news headlines operate in drawing the reader's attention to a story. The subject lines relating to the 'passport holder' discussion changed during the discussion, indicating a change in topic. Table 9.1 lists the subject lines in the order they appeared but does not include response subject lines which merely repeated the original prefaced by "Re:" – for example, "Re: NZ Passport Holder".¹¹

¹¹ Two subject lines were deleted from the analysis because the messages were from posters who did not respond to a request to have their comments included as part of the analysis. The absence of these subject lines does not detract from the themes identified in the discussion.

Table 9.1: Subject lines from the *AEN* e-list discussion.

1.	New Zealand passport holder shot dead in Iraq
2.	<i>NZ Herald</i> -New Zealand Passport Holder
3.	What we call ourselves Re: <i>NZ Herald</i> -New Zealand Passport Holder
4.	NZ passport holder
5.	White ethnics: a case of racialisation of ethnicity re What we call ourselves Re: <i>NZ Herald</i> -New Zealand Passport Holder
6.	FW: nzherald.co.nz - Khan back in hospital
7.	another interesting article....
8.	NZ Passport Holder – ‘non-hispanic white’

Some subject lines added words to earlier subject lines, or altered them to indicate a topic shift. As can be seen in Table 9.1, the original subject line ‘New Zealand passport holder dies in Iraq’ is shortened to ‘New Zealand Passport Holder’, yet prefaced by ‘*NZ Herald*’ in the second instance to indicate a focus on the publication as the instigator of the label. The third subject line expands the second subject line by prefixing it with “What we call ourselves”. This moves the discussion into questioning the way people self-define and label others. The fifth and eighth subject lines bring up issues of racism, racialisation and the meaning of whiteness, while the sixth and seventh subject lines interject with examples of news stories and their portrayals of ethnic and national identities.

In considering the eight subject lines along with a close reading of the content of the *AEN* emails, nine main topics emerged from the analysis and were grouped under two salient themes of categorisation and dominance in relation to the construction of a New Zealand national identity.¹² These topics and their corresponding themes are displayed in Figure 9.5.

Under the theme of categorisation, posters reflected on New Zealand’s changing demographics and the role of labels in the identification of ethnic minorities as valid and valued members of the nation.

¹² In this case study, the amount of data for analysis was less than that in “the identity game” discussion, so a separate table listing the topics was not required in this chapter.

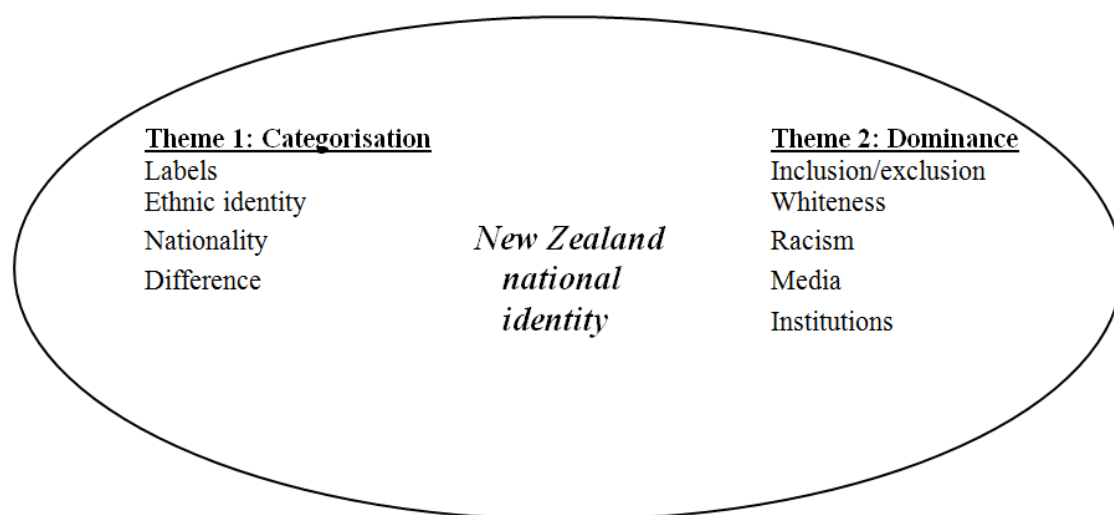


Fig 9.5: Themes and related discourse topics covered by ‘passport holder’ posters.

Posters’ categorisations (or labelling) as “a central discourse process for the construction and negotiation of identities” (De Fina, 2006, p. 354), highlighted the way people self-defined (ethnic/national self-identification) and how they categorised others (ethnic/national ascription). They also signalled that certain labels could both differentiate and discriminate against New Zealanders from different backgrounds.

The second theme of dominance was closely linked to the theme of categorisation and demonstrated posters’ concerns about the dominant white majority maintaining a superior position through the imposition of labels onto ‘others’.¹³ This theme also drew on the topics of the media and of institutions in reinforcing certain labels and stereotypes about minority groups that they regarded as discriminatory. The impact of the media in particular in reinforcing the dominant white majority discourse about New Zealand national identity was prominent in posters’ messages. While the ‘passport holder’ story was seen as an example of this, some posters highlighted similar situations in other countries such as the United States where the media used the census labelling of ‘non-hispanic white’ to differentiate between people of European descent and those who were Latino or Hispanic.¹⁴

¹³ The management of minority groups through categorisation is also noted in an Australian context by Elder, Ellis, & Pratt (2004), who believed that white Australians “narrow[ed] the spaces available to non-White people, by compartmentalizing and prioritizing the attention given to them” (p. 220).

¹⁴ The United States census asks people to note both their race (such as white, black/African American, Asian, or American Indian) and their ethnicity based on whether they are Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/non-Latino.

The tone of the messages in the e-list discussion was cordial and non-threatening, though still authoritative at times as posters sought to express their points of view. Although they did not always agree with each other's interpretations of labels, they still held similar views about inclusivity in New Zealand, mainly from a multicultural perspective rather than a bicultural one because there was no one person who represented or spoke for Maori. It should be noted, however, that, although there were only 13 *AEN* members who participated in the discussion, the emails were circulated to everyone on the e-list which totalled several hundred, indicating a much more expansive audience. Clearly, only those who felt strongly enough about labelling were motivated to post messages relevant to this discussion. But with the focus on the meaning of labels, it was therefore not surprising that one particular discourse about national identity dominated the *AEN* e-list discussion – a discourse about definition.

9.4.3 A discourse about definition¹⁵

Differing definitions and interpretations of labels identifying New Zealanders resulted in conflicting approaches as to how national identity was constructed in the *AEN* e-list discussion. The posters all agreed that New Zealand should be more inclusive of minority groups. But it was how that inclusion was expressed or defined by labelling that drove the discussion.

Following 01F's highlighting of *The New Zealand Herald*'s 'passport holder' story, the initial responding messages offered alternatives for how Sharif might have been better defined in the news. Some posters saw the label 'New Zealander' along similar lines to the official discourse as a way of building a socially cohesive and inclusive society. Others interpreted labels that drew attention to a person's ethnic background – such as Kurdish-New Zealander or Chinese-New Zealander – either as important acknowledgement of difference or as exclusionary in marking them as different from a 'New Zealander'. Although the discussion was less confrontational and the posters less polarised when compared with the *Yellow Peril* commenters, *topoi* were still instrumental in supporting *AEN* posters' arguments where definition was a core issue.

¹⁵ The 'discourse about definition' as applied here should not be confused with 'topos of definition' as used by Wodak and Meyer (2009b) in the sense of name interpretation (*locus a nominis interpretatione*). Their explanation of a *topos* of definition is where a name carries with it certain qualities/traits or attributes in its meaning. Discourse about definition relates rather to the premise that people may interpret the meaning or use the same word differently and this impacts on qualities/traits or attributes. There is, of course, some overlap between the discourse about definition and the *topos* of definition in this study.

9.4.4 Argumentation strategies and linguistic means

While a discourse about definition was central to the discussion, the posters used argumentation strategies to put forward their views, illustrating how a person's national identity could be constructed and interpreted differently through labelling. Two dominant topoi were identified – the *topos of right* and the *topos of white dominance*.

Topos of right

The *topos of right* was used to argue that if people living in New Zealand felt strongly about how they were represented, then they had the democratic right to self-label or self-define on their own terms. This meant that labels such as 'New Zealander', 'Kurdish-New Zealander' or 'New Zealand passport holder', for example, should all be accepted as possible descriptors – if that is what a person wanted. As 06F comments:

I understand people feeling that if they are defined by their ethnicity it keeps them separate, however sometimes people want their difference noted as they do feel different or want to be different.

... If we are encouraging diversity in NZ then surely acknowledging this diversity is part of the package.

06F

06F notes that ethnic difference could be a marker of identity to be used in certain situations which, she implies, should be respected. The verbs 'feeling' and 'want' denote a desire, a need and a right for people to express difference, suggesting resistance to any homogenous label that might imply assimilation. This extract echoed the official discourse about "encouraging diversity" in New Zealand, but 06F puts a greater emphasis on acknowledging the differences between people.

Some posters criticised the use of labels such as 'Kurdish-New Zealander', as it appeared in *stuff.co.nz*'s article (Figure 9.3 above), for being exclusionary because they distinguish 'other' New Zealanders from 'real' New Zealanders. Being a New Zealander, they argued, should not be based only on criteria such as ancestry and length of time spent in New Zealand. However, 03F saw this differently:

I don't think calling this man a Kurdish New Zealander implies he was less of a New Zealander - rather that he had this other strand as well.

03F

Using the metaphor of strands in the sense of parts that make a whole to indicate the diversity within New Zealand national identity, 03F points out that multiple identities (ethnic or national in this case) could be combined into one descriptive label which did not lessen a person's bond with New Zealand. 03F implicitly suggests that hybrid labelling was acceptable for people wishing to acknowledge their cultural or ethnic background, but at the same time this practice maintained their identity within the space of New Zealand. In the case of 'Kurdish-New Zealander', for example, the tying of 'Kurdish' as the adjective with the proper noun 'New Zealander' enabled a person to define more precisely their identification as a New Zealander. 03F, however, mitigates her opinion with the hedging phrase "I don't think..." to show that she was bringing her personal opinion to the debate to correct others' misconceptions about the combined label.

A number of posters reinforced their opinions through self-narrative to explain their own self-labelling within a New Zealand context. Self-narrative is a reflexive way of constructing self-identity (Giddens, 1991). But it is used as a persuasive strategy to help others understand the way people make sense of who they are within "changing sociohistorical context[s]" that might otherwise be difficult to evaluate on a group level (Phinney, 2000, p. 28). At the same time, self-narrative within the *AEN* e-list discussion enabled posters to validate their opinions based on experience. 07F, for example, explains the construction of her identity using a combination of labels:

I dont see calling myself a NZ Greek and Cypriot is a negative thing. It says who I am: a New Zealand National (i.e. NZ born) of Greek and Cypriot ethnicity/culture. It is something I am proud of [...] that I have these two cultures as a part of my identity.

07F

07F's phrase "It says who I am" stresses the role of labels in creating and acknowledging those aspects of identity that an individual regards as being important. Her lengthy self-definition proceeds to announce firstly where she was born through the description "New Zealand National", using the country as the adjective and "National" as the noun. This reinforces her citizenship and her collective identity with the nation by pointing out New Zealand as her country of birth. However, 06F then adds further parameters in the construction of her identity by including a reference to being "of Greek and Cypriot ethnicity/culture". The combination of the words "ethnicity/culture" enabled 06F to incorporate aspects from her familial experience of Greek and Cypriot

identity with New Zealand, suggesting that these were essential components of her overall identity. She uses the emotionally laden verb ‘to be proud of’ to intensify her feelings about the hybrid make-up of her New Zealand identity.

Another poster, however, offers a different view about labels based on her personal experience. 03F sees hybrid labels as less relevant to both her and to others who were New Zealand born compared with how they may be perceived by a recent immigrant:

Calling me an Irish New Zealander is silly, because the "Irish" has got only limited relevance to my life. But calling an Irish migrant to NZ an Irish New Zealander makes sense to me... In the same vein, I would suggest, a young man of Kurdish heritage who grew up here would be called a New Zealander.

03F

07F and 03F differ in how they approached self-definition based on their individual experiences, even though neither of them is an immigrant. 03F relates that a hybrid term is irrelevant for her preferring the descriptor Irish-New Zealander to be used for an Irish immigrant rather than for a person with Irish ancestry. Although 03F combines the adjective ‘Irish’ in conjunction with the noun ‘New Zealander’, 07F on the other hand uses ‘New Zealand’ first as an adjective followed by the nouns ‘Greek’ and ‘Cypriot’ to self-define. This emphasises 07F’s feelings of connectedness to the culture of these Mediterranean countries.

In a further posting from 07F, she contrasts the ease she has in self-defining as a “New Zealand National of Greek and Cypriot ethnicity/culture” with the experience of her immigrant parents. She relates how her mother and father who arrived independently in New Zealand – one in 1923, the other in 1961 – both encountered discrimination and were called “bloody foreigners”. This experience, 07F claims, made her parents keen to assimilate and blend in as ‘New Zealanders’ because of the “zero tolerance” of immigrants. The different experiences of daughter and parents reflect the historical and social changes over time in people’s attitudes to diversity and the desire for ethnic revival by the younger generation.

Such self-narrative raises interesting considerations about different generations of migrants and the way they have self-identified. Investigating a range of surveys of Latino/a Americans, Golash-Boza (2006) suggested that those who had experienced

discrimination were more likely to self-identify with pan-ethnic or hyphenated American labels, as opposed to calling themselves Americans. It is also perceivable that experiences of discrimination might also have flow-on effects on other generations and their perceptions of self. In spite of being born in New Zealand, 07F describes herself as “living as a person from non dominant cultures in NZ” who had “learn[ed] how to negotiate the different worlds you live in and experience”. While 07F’s parents might have sought inclusion into New Zealand society through assimilation, her desire for her Greek/Cypriot background to be discernible particularly through the label “New Zealand Greek and Cypriot” indicated a shift in attitude. Her perceptions of inclusion and exclusion were influenced by her world view and informed by the discrimination experienced by her family in New Zealand – something she felt strongly about and responded to through her own self-labelling.

Another poster, 12M, self-defines with a hybrid label of Latino-Kiwi. 12M states “I am a Latino-Kiwi (or whatever) myself”. The bracketed aside “(or whatever)” indicates that he could be identified in other ways, though he appears to prefer this descriptor in the context of this discussion.¹⁶ 12M’s Latino-Kiwi label is interesting because, while it introduces Latino to denote Latin American ties,¹⁷ it combines this with the colloquial identifying word of ‘Kiwi’ in place of ‘New Zealander’. This is not the only time that a hybrid label using the word ‘Kiwi’ is mentioned in the discussion. Reference is also made by 07M to “born-and-bred Kiwi Indians” who “don’t consider themselves ‘Asian’”.¹⁸ While 07M highlights the fact that these Kiwi Indians did not wish to be included in a pan-ethnic category that combined diverse cultures, their adoption of the word ‘Kiwi’ in their self-labelling gave greater emphasis on being ‘Indian’ or having an Indian culture as part of their New Zealand identity.

These actions to combine an ethnicity with a ‘Kiwi’ identity through either the ‘Latino-Kiwi’ or the ‘Kiwi-Indian’ descriptors are also evidenced elsewhere by Koreans and Pakistanis living in New Zealand who have taken on the labels ‘Kowi’ (Korean-Kiwi)¹⁹

¹⁶ In a later email, 12M relates that he would be categorised as Hispanic in the United States and enters into discussion with other posters about the meaning of labels Hispanic whites and Hispanic non-whites though further examination of this extends beyond the scope of this research.

¹⁷ A 2010 United States census report defines Hispanic or Latino as referring to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011).

¹⁸ This offers a similar perspective to that of commenters in the *Yellow Peril* discussion who refused to be categorised as New Zealand Europeans based on the fact they had no feelings of connection to Europe in spite of their ancestry.

¹⁹ See Kowiana Association of New Zealand website www.kowiana.org.nz

and ‘Pakiwi’ (Pakistani-Kiwi).²⁰ These labels convey the desire to integrate into New Zealand society while maintaining cultural aspects from a different background. As one Kowi stated in a news article on the subject: “[we need to] understand how our two cultures interrelate to create a new combined Kowi culture” (Tan, 2008, June 24). Interestingly, it was those posters from European backgrounds who were more likely to use the label ‘New Zealander’ than the label ‘Kiwi’ when it came to using combinations of ethnicity and nationality to describe themselves.

The analysis of both “the identity game” and the *AEN* e-list discussions indicated flexibility in the use and definition of the word ‘Kiwi’ as a descriptor. However, I contend that ‘Kiwi’ is a term that people of different backgrounds felt comfortable in using because it stood for a culture that could be shared or combined with their own, and that this was not necessarily conveyed by ‘New Zealander’. The desire of minority groups to integrate was demonstrated in Robertson’s (2006) study of the views of new immigrants titled “When do I become a ‘Kiwi’?”. Respondents believed they needed to adapt to and respect New Zealand culture while still maintaining involvement in their own ethnic communities, to have ‘Kiwi’ friends and to understand ‘Kiwi’ English and ‘Kiwi’ behaviour. But Robertson also found that some participants preferred to identify as ‘Kiwi’, or use a hyphenated label rather than ‘New Zealander’ because they were not born in New Zealand, or because other people perceived them as being different based on their accent and their looks.

However, an examination of the evolution of the word ‘kiwi’ as a national symbol indicates that it has become ingrained as part of the official discourse to promote a distinctive national identity. The origin of the word ‘kiwi’ described in Chapter Four related the earliest origins of the use of the name of the mysterious flightless kiwi bird, found only in New Zealand, as an emblem or a trademark in the second half of the 19th century on a university coat of arms, on banknotes, on a stamp and for veterinary medicines, for example (J. Phillips, 2011). But ‘Kiwi’ became more closely associated as a symbol of New Zealand and its people in the 20th century particularly in the First and Second World Wars when it was used with a capital ‘K to describe New Zealand soldiers (Cryer, 2002) from a unique nation.

²⁰ See Facebook group for Pakiwis – www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=141475881778

Although it was recognised as a national symbol in the early 20th century for New Zealand rugby players and soldiers, from the 1940s to the 1980s ‘Kiwi’ was widely used symbolically for New Zealand on local products such as bacon, as the name of a lottery ticket and for a rugby league team, as well as for New Zealand currency on the share market (J. Phillips, 2009). More recently, ‘Kiwi’ has been used to denote an all-New Zealand-owned bank (Kiwibank), has become the name of a fruit (kiwifruit), and has been considered as an “identity-component salience strategy to achieve financial well-being for New Zealanders” (Dupuis, 2009) that was incorporated into the Government’s retirement savings scheme ‘KiwiSaver’ introduced in 2007. In essence, ‘Kiwi’ has become an essential part of the rebranding of New Zealand identity.

Whether people today choose to use ‘Kiwi’ or ‘New Zealander’ either as nouns or adjectives to describe themselves, both are instrumental, according to Stephen Turner (2008), in the dominant majority’s construction of a “compulsory” national identity (p. 14) as highlighted in Chapter Four. Turner suggests that the Kiwi identity relates to being a “contemporary New Zealander” distancing itself from the British settler society and the negative connotations of colonisation. He also argues that in today’s society “[b]eing Kiwi designates a popular national conception of New Zealand identity that is increasingly corporatised, media driven and Government-sponsored” (S. Turner, 2008, p. 14). In other words, whether a ‘Kiwi’ or a ‘New Zealand’ identity is adopted, and regardless of the intention in which they are used, both reflect an essential part of the official discourse about a new and unique national identity that gives people a “greater sense of social capital in a settler society” where they can contribute to its success in the global market place (S. Turner, 2008, p. 14).

The hybrid labels put forward by the *AEN* e-list posters using the *topos of right* suggest a negotiation of identity whereby people have the freedom to express their ethnicity as part of their national identity. However, ambiguity and contradiction still existed. While combined or hyphenated labelling could be seen as a way to maintain an ethnic identity within the context of New Zealand, their use by the dominant majority also threatened to marginalise minority groups. This highlights the second *topos* to be identified – the *topos of white dominance* – which focused on the interpretation of labels when they are ascribed by the dominant culture.

Topos of white dominance

The *topos of white dominance* was used by *AEN* e-list members to argue that the white dominant majority (present in the media and institutions as well as in individuals), ascribed certain labels to minority groups to maintain a position of superiority. In this sense, the discussion turned to the subject of whiteness as an element of power in the construction of national identity. The posters were not as emotional as were “the identity game” commenters when it came to discussing racism, mainly because they were not as polarised in their views. The group of *AEN* members participating in the online discussion was made up of a smaller number of constituents who talked about the dominant white majority as the “Other”.

Posters referred to them through synecdochal referencing using labels such as “the white Pakeha group”, “the Pakeha majority”, “white settlers”, “the white/English-speaking majority” and “the dominant powerful group”. Most of these labels stated or inferred whiteness as an integral identifying feature of the dominant majority. The *topos of white dominance* was therefore used to associate the dominant white majority’s ability to dictate the terms on which minority groups, who were mostly non-white, could be regarded as New Zealanders. As a result, the dominant majority was negatively constructed as wielding the power to maintain their dominant position and this was reflected in comments such as the following by 04M:

The issue is not how people self-identify, but how white NZers name view and label non-white 'other' NZers. The issue is that even in a so-called multicultural society the dominant culture (in NZ that means white) reserves the right to call the shots. The whole discourse on 'core values' and migrants needing to integrate is part of this.

04M

04M characterises the dominance of “white New Zealanders” over “non-white ‘other’ NZers” by using a variety of active verbs – “name”, “view”, “label” – and the of “call[ing] the shots” based on their ‘whiteness’. The expression to “call the shots” denotes a person who exercises authority and tells others what to do thereby creating a strong image of the power of the majority. The designation of New Zealand’s multicultural society as being artificial (“so-called”) suggests that multiculturalism is a term used to appease minority groups as a way of including them in New Zealand society while, in reality, the white majority maintained a superior position. 04M further portrays white New Zealanders as the disseminators of the official discourse promoting

‘core values’ as a unifying factor for a multicultural New Zealand. This, he proposes, was constructed from a ‘white’ perspective rather than on genuine ‘multicultural’ terms.

Some posters had reservations about this viewpoint because it implied that they, because of their white skin, might also be classified as part of the dominant white majority. In an attempt to clarify who was included and excluded in this negative representation, 08F comments:

can I suggest that we also take care with the 'them' in reference to 'whiteness'. While white racism has been central to NZ society since British colonisation, who counts as 'white' has historically been a shifting thing, and some of us who look 'white' have trans-national loyalties and families who are not just 'white'. Naming and exposing the unspoken, invisible dominance of 'whiteness' is important, but it is also important I think to recognise that like all categories, 'whiteness' has its limits.

08F

08F clearly positions the dominant white majority as an oppositional ‘them’ with colonial connections, compared with ‘us’ – that is, those who were ‘white’ only in appearance. 08F was eager to point out that whiteness was an unreliable descriptor given that some people who looked white in fact came from different ancestral origins than British settler/colonial origins or who had “trans-national loyalties” – that is, connections with other nations or ethnicities. 08F demonstrates the shifting of whiteness by distancing herself from the dominant white group and assigning herself to a group that was “not just ‘white’”, thereby denying any association with racism.

07F also seeks to demonstrate why the dominant white majority was relatively invisible by listing a range of ethnicities and nationalities that might be mistaken as ‘white’:

there are many people and cultures who may pass for being white who are not of UK/British ethnicity including some Maori, Greeks, Cypriots, Turks, Irish and people from the European continent including Balkans and Eastern Europe, even some Middle Eastern groups... not to mention Australians, Americans. They become disadvantaged because they “look” like they are in the dominant group and their sometimes “very” different needs are ignored or assumed as unimportant.

07F

07F defines the dominant majority as being white people with “UK/British” ethnicity who conveniently “ignored” the needs of other groups because they looked white. In highlighting the different groups who might look white but were not, 07F absolves them

from any connection with dominant white members, further reinforcing the dichotomy of ‘us’ and ‘them’ – that is, the dominant and the dominated. 07F’s example shows that people who looked white were disadvantaged by their presupposed association with the dominant majority.

Metaphors of blurred boundaries indicate the complexity with which the term ‘white’ was applied in the discussion. 08M, for example, describes whiteness as a “slippery” ethnic category, while 06F referred to the “shifting ideas of whiteness”. Such concerns exemplify the confusion surrounding the ambiguity of whiteness and how different groups could move, or be moved, in and out of the dominant white group depending on a person’s interpretation. Some posters indicated that the issue about whiteness is not solely a New Zealand problem and presented examples of their experiences of travelling to or living overseas. 08M, for example, who self-defined as a Pakistani Brit, said that in the United Kingdom, Asians (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) were considered ‘black’ in the 1970s while, in the United States, officials designated him as ‘white’ because the only official three racial categories that existed were white, black and Hispanic.

10M, on the other hand, who was born in Chile, stressed that although he looked white in the United States he was officially classified under two categories – Hispanic for ethnicity and white for race. However, he also demonstrated, by way of example, further complications with ethnic classifications. He related that, following the birth of one of his children, the midwife was unsure how to classify the newborn because she said the mother was a white American and the father Chilean. “What’s so different about white of Spanish descent than whites of Anglo descent?” 10M asked, indicating his dislike for being stereotyped and treated differently because of his cultural roots. He also suggested that it was more a denial of his own European history from Spain and Germany than a demonstration of power.

Such narratives indicated the confusion in talking about whiteness particularly when it came to constructing members of the dominant group as being separate from all other ‘whites’. But it was clear that posters felt that the structures and systems inherent in institutions such as the media, government departments and political elites were responsible for reinforcing and disseminating dominant white majority constructions of ‘New Zealanders’. The concept of institutional racism in New Zealand was raised by a

number of posters who regarded some official ethnic labels as discriminatory. 07F, for example, describes StatsNZ's use of the 'European' category as not being about ethnicity, but rather "it was a subtle way of describing white, decided by the New Zealand Government and not the Europeans themselves to suit government agendas". 08M also relates that institutional labels as "unchosen identity tags" manipulate for advantage. 08M extends his argument with another example of governmental control of immigrants whereby:

a 'desirable' immigrant with skills... becomes an undesirable immigrant without skills when the government decides to change the number of points you need to get into this place and changes the preferred points of origin.

08M

The representation of the New Zealand Government as a manipulator of statistics through ethnic labelling created a suspicion about the treatment of ethnic minorities. While 07F alludes to the control of the Government, its ulterior motives and its power in achieving specific exclusionary agendas, 08M demonstrates the power of the Government to alter the discursive construction of an immigrant from desirable to undesirable with the following comment:

Minorities do have some measure of agency in 'naming' their own categories. But white power structures and systems have more force in defining identities.

08M

These two sentences juxtapose the lack of power of minorities with the power of the white-dominated system. Minorities are portrayed as lacking power and having only a degree of agency (designated by the words "some measure") in being able to self-define, while the dominant majority, represented in less-human terms in the descriptor "white power structures and systems", are characterised through the combining of the adjectives of "white" and "power" and the capability of "force" (a noun of threat) in defining identities.

But the media too were not immune from criticism as has already been demonstrated by the 'passport holder' story. As Reisigl and Wodak (2001) state, the media are selective in what they choose to communicate and "strongly influence the perception and activities of all social actors" (p. 232).

04M, in fact, in the early stages of the *AEN* discussion, raises the point that it was more than just the label that was at issue:

This [is] not saying that people can't self-define as Chinese NZer Indian NZer Kurdish NZer etc. Is just when this distinction is made in the media and WHY the distinction is made.

04M

As 04M stresses with his capitalisation of 'WHY', that it is the motivation behind the instigation of certain labels that is more significant than the actual label itself. Self-definition is not necessarily the same as assigned definitions by the media, for example – and 04M indicates some mistrust of the media in their choice of labelling.

Although the HRC, as discussed earlier, had concluded that “passport holder” was a “slip-up” by *The New Zealand Herald* in reporting verbatim from another news source, 11F provides a URL link to a story which shows a previous use of the label in a lead sentence²¹ which reads:

“Injured New Zealand passport-holder Ballu Khan is back in hospital in Fiji”
(Khan Khan back in hospital, November 17, 2007)

In responding to this example, 04M alludes to racism in the media by stating:

If anyone can find an instance where a white person (of whatever variety or origin) is referred to as a “New Zealand passport holder” please let me know, :-)

04M

Incorporating a ‘smiley’ emoticon as a suffix to his comment, 04M conveys a sense of irony about his query about the media’s bias in favour of white New Zealanders. His inclusion of the bracketed phrase “of whatever variety or origin” suggests that this media bias applies to all white New Zealanders and not just to those of British extraction.

04M further reinforces the extent of media influence by citing an example from a Maori lawyer in the following extract:

²¹ However, 11F pointed out that *The New Zealand Herald* had in fact used the label previously when reporting: “Injured New Zealand passport-holder Ballu Khan is back in hospital in Fiji” following attempts to kill military appointed leaders during a coup in Fiji at the time.

As Moana Jackson has pointed out, when Michael Campbell wins the US Masters he's a 'NZer', when he loses or slips up in some other way he becomes 'Maori NZer', if he was convicted of a crime he'd be Maori.

04M

These examples, referring to a well-known sportsman, demonstrate media 'race-tagging' – a “well-established practice in New Zealand” (Kernot, 1990, p. 53) whereby the labels describing golfer Michael Campbell increasingly blamed any degeneration in his behaviour on his Maori ethnicity. As 04M concludes, “terms and terminology are political” while 12M, who found that the media's use of certain labels was racist, adds that this “disempower[ment] [of] some sections of society” is “disappointing”.

Through the *topos of dominance*, the 'white' New Zealanders, their systems and structures (including institutions such as the media and StatsNZ) were constructed in this discussion as willing contributors to a New Zealand identity that oscillated between inclusivity and exclusivity depending on the Government's needs.

9.5 Conclusion

The findings from this second case study have indicated the instability and the inconsistency of certain discursive constructions of New Zealand identity brought about through labelling and categorisation. In particular, they illustrate how the discourse in a news headline about a New Zealander being defined only through his holding of a passport, was contested and reshaped in an online discussion. The contributing AEN posters – who themselves derived from a range of ethnicities – presented varying opinions about labels and their correct usage. This highlighted a number of contradictions regarding labelling because of the subjectivity in the construction of New Zealand identity dependent upon individual experience and collective ideologies, as well as the dissemination of official discourse through institutions such as the media and StatsNZ.

A discourse about defining New Zealand identity in the discussion that focused on the different interpretations assigned to certain labels, was supported by the interaction of two salient *topoi*. The *topos of right* was used to argue that people could and should choose how they self-defined. There was endorsement for the right to acknowledge difference by using combined/hyphenated labels of ethnic and national identification

such as Kurdish-New Zealander or Irish-New Zealander when this suited the individual. While it could be argued that these labels were used to maintain ethnic distinctiveness at the risk of assimilation, at the same time, hyphenated labels could be regarded as an acculturation strategy (Phinney, 2003) whereby acceptance as a New Zealander in some form is sought even if that requires clarification with an adjective. A minority group member might feel compelled to use a hyphenated label because the ‘true’ New Zealanders (that is, the dominant majority), refused to recognise ethnic minority groups as real or ‘unhyphenated’ New Zealanders, or at least made minority groups feel that way.

The *topos of white dominance* claimed that if the dominant white majority wanted to maintain its superior status, then this could be achieved by purposely marginalising the minority through the use of certain labels. Attention was also drawn to the role of the media and institutions in reinforcing and preserving the superior status of the white majority in the construction of New Zealand identity thereby creating a subtle wall of discrimination. To distance themselves from the negatively represented white majority, a number of the *AEN* posters constructed themselves in the following ways:

1. they were more-recent migrants compared with the British settlers and had no historic colonising connections;
2. they belonged to other ethnic groups even though they looked white;
3. they were not racist and had no allegiance to the white majority and what it stood for.

Ethnic identity is often referred to as a complex “multidimensional construct” (Bhowon & Ng Tseung-Wong, 2004; Phinney, 1996; S. Song, 2010) that “differs amongst various ethnic members, and is subject to social, cultural and developmental changes” (S. Song, 2010, p. 1009). But I would argue that the same can also be said of national identity as demonstrated in the *AEN* e-list discussion. Certainly, the understanding that national identity constructs are variable and dependent on different interpretations supports my identification of a discourse about definition as being a key issue. Whether such constructions impeded the position of Maori as indigenous New Zealanders in a bicultural framework was alluded to only through one or two anecdotal references in the

AEN e-list discussion. Unlike in “the identity game” discussion, Maori were not visible in the e-list discussion, though the use of active verbs and metaphors of power to emphasise the negative representation of the white majority as dominating all other groups implied the inclusion of Maori as part of New Zealand’s diverse society, particularly with reference to colonisation.

The *AEN* e-list posters’ comments aligned with the official discourse about a new national identity emerging to the extent that most people agreed that the acknowledgement of diverse groups was integral to the construction of a new national identity. This demonstrates the nature of discourse to pervade different texts and genres, and to also be interpreted and recontextualised in different ways (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak et al, 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2009b). It can be seen that the ascription of labels and how the motivation of their application was perceived were central to the posters’ constructions of national identity. Even though StatsNZ had designated ‘New Zealander’ the status of a shared ethnicity, the ideal New Zealand national identity constructed by posters sought to afford minority groups some control over how they were regarded as New Zealanders which, it was inferred, went beyond labelling. This further reinforces the concept within discourse theory that “the importance of the linguistic battle in questions of power and resistance cannot be over-emphasised” (Sutherland, 2005, p. 190).

Chapter Ten: Conclusion –A critical view

[t]he effectiveness of resistance and the realization of change depend on people developing a critical consciousness of domination and its modalities, rather than just experiencing them.

Fairclough (2001, p. 3)

10.1 Diverse discourses about national identity

This thesis has investigated discourses about national identity in New Zealand during the years 2005–2008 when the Government intensified its rhetoric about the emergence of one new and inclusive national identity. Concerns at the beginning of the 21st century about a number of racist incidents occurring locally and ethnic riots breaking out in multicultural countries such as France, Britain and Australia, had shaken New Zealand's confidence about its own future as a diverse nation. But it was precisely this angst, I have argued, which led to the “considerable emphasis” the Government had applied since 1999 on the “rhetorical figure of the nation” (Skilling, 2008, p. 53) – part of a nation branding project that was occurring simultaneously in many countries in response to globalisation. The Government's objective was not only to pursue the building of a socially cohesive society with a shared national identity to maintain stability but, in doing so, to position New Zealand as a competitive player in the global market place. A nation with the shared purpose of working together for a better economic and social future was the Government's ultimate goal.

In this study, I have sought to identify how New Zealanders saw themselves amidst an official discourse that heavily emphasised tolerance and acceptance of minority groups as characteristics of this new national identity. I was particularly interested in this given my own family history where my mother, her brother and parents struggled to gain permanent residency in New Zealand in spite of their traumatic flight from Nazi-occupied Austria in 1938 (Chapter One). Three guiding research questions for my study were:

- (i) What was the character of the official discourse that supported a new and unique national identity in New Zealand?

- (ii) In comparison to the official discourse what discourses about national identities existed amongst the populace?
- (iii) What was the interaction among these various discourses?

I addressed these questions through a critical analysis of the discourse about national identity in the everyday talk of two discussion groups on the Internet. My research also enabled me to consider how the medium of the Internet provided a space and a place for the interaction of the various discourses about national identity at this time.

Building on the theoretical writings of Benedict Anderson and others, whose work reveals how national identity is socially constructed through discourse, this thesis took a 'post-classical approach' (Chapter Three) in assuming the active role people played in processes of identification. This involved a key principle of post-structuralism that different interpretations and competing discourses about any given event were possible. I extended the discourse-historical approach (DHA) of critical discourse analysis, with its emphasis on power, ideology and critique, to the examination of two different discussion genres on the Internet for my case studies. The DHA focus on context as an essential component of the analysis, and its application of the principle of triangulation using various theoretical tools and theories in the examination of a range of texts as a way to minimise bias (Chapter Five), were important considerations for my research which required a review of historical, cultural, social and political change in New Zealand. Taking an interpretative approach also required reflexivity to make my research and my position as a researcher transparent.

The first stage of analysis was conducted to locate further evidence of the official discourse about a new national identity and to see how it was constructed. An examination of a variety of official texts from political speeches, government news releases, two Race Relations Day posters and the Office of Ethnic Affairs website (Chapter Six) indicated that the nation's fast-growing diversity was, in fact, promoted as just one of several positive components of its changing identity. Other characteristics included the peacekeeping activities of New Zealand's defence forces overseas, the nation's concern with environmental conservation, encouragement of the development of arts and culture, and economic sustainability. In concentrating on the topic of diversity in my examination of official texts, I found there to be discursive shifts

dependent on the different genres, the various social actors or agencies that delivered the texts, the targeted audience and the occasion or context within which the text occurred. That is, political speeches addressing a wide national audience emphasised tolerance as one of many positive aspects of this new national identity, while other genres such as the Race Relations Day posters – directed more specifically to minority groups – offered reassurance about the inclusivity of the nation. The OEA’s website’s home page (Office for Ethnic Affairs, n.d.), while attempting to portray New Zealand’s “ethnic people” as valued members of society, ironically in fact further reinforced minority groups as the ‘Other’ within the nation by distancing them from the “majority group”.

Overall, the analysis showed that the Government’s management of diversity and construction of an all-inclusive national identity was imagined in terms of “the New Zealand Way” (Clark, 2006a, February 14) – clearly borrowed and adapted from Britain’s Third Way politics that emerged in the 1990s through the New Labour Party. Parallels could be seen with other Western countries with concerns about multiculturalism who used their nation branding projects to manage diversity. Built around the theme of a common political present and future, the official discourse in New Zealand and in other countries represented what Foucault (1991) referred to as governmentality, whereby the state pursued a nation-building strategy to produce citizens best suited to fulfil its policies. Influential in my assessment were Skilling’s (2008, 2010) argument about the specific rebranding of New Zealand in a globally competitive environment and Turner’s (2008) view that a compulsory national identity that claimed inclusivity, in fact, marginalised minority groups, including Maori. Both suggested that a carefully focused government strategy, with a particular emphasis on economic success, had been implemented to pursue what political elites declared was best for the national interest.

From my review of the New Zealand European’s dominant ‘colony-to-nation’ narrative involving historical stages of colonisation, recolonisation and decolonisation (Chapter Four), I concluded that this latest example of official discourse about a new national identity was the most recent response to a series of changes and challenges that had occurred at different times. While the national identity that had emerged during the 20th century was based on a predominantly white political system where British culture remained at the core of New Zealand European/Pakeha identity (Chapter Four),

challenges in the latter half of that century required a renegotiation of how this was conceptualised. The breaking of links with Britain when it joined the European Economic Community in 1973, a rise in Maori nationalism and increased immigration led to feelings of insecurity amongst New Zealand Europeans about the future of their dominant majority status. As a result, attempts to reorientate New Zealand from a British Dominion to a Pacific nation, to address past injustices to Maori through compensation and Treaty negotiations, and to make the immigrant settlement experience more positive (though with the expectation that migrants would fit in with New Zealand society) were early steps towards a more inclusive society on the state's terms.

The official discourse identified in this study about building a socially cohesive society at the turn of the new millennium can therefore be regarded as another stage in the dominant majority view of national identity. New Zealand was responding to the same powerful globalising tendencies that were affecting other countries in the 2000s and that shaped the national and the local within an international frame (Fairclough, 2001). Certainly the use of the new political language of integration in New Zealand that embraced concepts such as social cohesion, diversity and inclusion was also prevalent in other countries concerned about diversity such as Canada, Australia and Britain. Part of the discourse of globalisation had been to cite the economic benefits to be gained from multiculturalism and the positioning of nations within the global economy, achieved through the notion of a shared national identity. In effect, national identity had become the subject of renegotiation on a much broader scale where people were encouraged to see themselves not only as national citizens, but also as global citizens.

While the Government was intent on securing a prominent presence for New Zealand in the global company of other important and powerful nation states, the construction of a distinctive national identity was very much influenced by local issues, particularly the balancing of biculturalism and multiculturalism within a society dominated by New Zealand Europeans. As a result, the tension between the global and the local meant that a new national identity was pitched to shift from one grounded in ethnic – that is, New Zealand European – nationalism, to one more aligned with civic nationalism and its sense of greater equality and shared purpose.

It was clear from my examination of the official texts, however, that a dominant majority narrative that positioned the Government as taking a leading role in the management of diversity for the long term benefit of the country was a strategic and powerful component of the discourse. This represented an ongoing process of state control of the nation's identity that maintained its white majority dominance and its mainstream values similar to that occurring within other post-colonial nations such as Australia. The notion of an inclusive identity veiled the deeper meaning of a shared nationhood that was exclusive in many respects and, in fact, could be seen as harbouring a racist post-colonial identity. An investigation of the everyday talk of New Zealanders was therefore conducted to understand how people reacted, either consciously or subconsciously, to the official discourse through their own constructions of national identity.

10.2 The people's voice

In the original data collection aspect of my study (Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine), I was curious to see whether people had the capability and the will to express their own interpretations about what it meant to be a New Zealander in the 2000s and whether this either aligned with the official discourse about national identity or resisted it. I could also investigate how well the Internet worked as a democratic public sphere (Dahlberg, 2001) not only in disseminating discourse about national identity in the information age, but also in recontextualising it through differing online genres.

Two case studies of archived online discussions were selected to identify and analyse relevant discourses about national identity. The *Yellow Peril* blog of New Zealand Chinese writer Tze Ming Mok was established with the intention of providing a space for minority groups to air their views. However, Mok's posting on 7 December 2006, titled "the identity game", in which she highlighted the absurdity of 'New Zealander' as an ethnic category in the census data, drew a variety of responses resulting in a lengthy and lively debate online about the conflation of ethnic and national identities. The *AEN* e-list discussion, although provoked by a news headline labelling a man of Kurdish ethnicity a "New Zealand passport holder" rather than a 'New Zealander', invoked similar discussion about categorising New Zealanders from different ethnic backgrounds. Although "the identity game" commenters and the *AEN* e-list posters did not represent the nation in terms of its demographic make-up, and the numbers involved in the discussions were relatively small, the findings still provided insight into the

construction of contemporary discourses about national identity from people of New Zealand/Pakeha European, Maori and Asian ethnicities, and from those who self-defined (at least in their web personae) with hybrid ethnicities.

My assumption that this study would not reveal one comprehensive list of national characteristics that neatly defined a typical New Zealander in the 21st century was confirmed by the analysis. As with de Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999) in their study of Austrians, I found that the discursive construction of national identities was in fact a “multidimensional phenomenon” (p. 170), which led to a diversity of imaginings about what a ‘New Zealander’ should be. While the official discourse had repeatedly reinforced an optimistic message about a socially cohesive nation built on the notion of a new national identity, it had suppressed any sense of conflict, contestation or tension that was evident in the discourse of people. The online discussions however showed a real concern amongst some of the participants about how diversity was being defined and managed in New Zealand.

The online discussions offered an opportunity to uncover alternate discourses about national identity where people actively responded to the nation branding project. While the official discourse could be seen to pervade through the comments of some commenters/posters, the Internet also facilitated an opportunity for opposing discourses to be heard. Although these online discussants were not a representative sample of the New Zealand population and details about the location, age, gender or ethnic background of each was restricted to what could be gleaned from their messages, the findings from this research still reflected important issues emanating from a range of voices. In particular, it demonstrated a diversity of opinion reflecting people’s heightened emotions and sensitivities in seeking recognition as ‘New Zealanders’ which were rarely debated so intensely in the public arena, particularly through the mainstream media. A duelling of discourses (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999; Fozdar, 2008) ensued as the commenters/posters shaped their own identities as well as those of others using discursive strategies such as argumentation, nomination and perspectivisation. Persuasive and manipulative strategies were employed forcibly at times, as debate ensued based on various definitions of labels, world views and opinions. The strategic use of positive self-presentation and negative other-representation was particularly noticeable as people intensified their arguments to prove their points. Some commenters/posters found themselves questioning their own identities, while others

spoke out on behalf of minority groups that were under-represented in the discussion. The online discussions were a place where people issued challenges, inserted hyperlinks and emoticons, quoted academics, related history, included self-narratives, injected humour and made accusations – all of which contributed to arguments that blurred the boundaries of national identity.

Feelings of belonging, whether through an attachment to the land, indigenous status or the justification of citizenship through the holding of a symbolic artefact of membership such as a New Zealand passport, were some of the arguments used to frame national identity. A strong belief that people had the democratic right to be recognised as ‘New Zealanders’ regardless of whether they were Pakeha, were from an ethnic minority or had a hybrid identity was a point of complete agreement. However, there was often confusion when it came to interpreting the meaning of certain labels, particularly those that sought to convey both an ethnic identity and a national identity. If, for example, a Kurdish-New Zealander chose to self-define that way, it was seen as enabling that person to freely express his or her ethnicity. However, if the media used the term, it was seen to highlight that person’s difference in an exclusionary way.

While a new national identity may well have been emerging as the New Zealand Government suggested it would be, this study showed that the official discourse had overstated its inclusiveness. Although the analysis highlighted that the Government ‘spoke’ the new political language of integration with a particular emphasis on diversity, its justification for immigrants based on economic advantage dominated any meaningful engagement with minority groups. My analysis did not indicate any sense of a divided nation in lived reality; however, it clearly showed there to be a divided image of the nation. Differing interpretations of national identity as people perceived it to be, and as the Government projected it to be, led to a clash of imaginings. Anderson’s concept of each individual having to imagine their community because it was impossible to know everyone (Chapter Three) meant that New Zealand was now imagined in increasingly diverse ways. Language as discourse, I found, was a powerful tool when it came to the construction of these diverse national imaginings whether used by politicians or by the populace.

10.3 The pervasive power of discourse

This study enabled an understanding of how various discourses intersect, change and impact on each other on many different levels. The official discourse of a new national identity during the years 2005 to 2008, for example, was in response to New Zealanders' concerns about ethnic conflict as well as to the desire for the country to become part of the globalised economy. The StatsNZ decision to accept 'New Zealander' as an ethnic category (as it appeared in a graph on its website) had in fact been prompted by earlier public debate, through an anonymous email campaign, by the involvement of an opposition politician, and by the fact that there was an "unprecedented increase" (Statistics New Zealand, 2009b, p. 4) in the number of people who wrote in 'New Zealander' as their ethnic group in the census. But while the argument for this relied on a discourse of inclusion, this did not prevent a discourse of resistance igniting in "the identity game" posting, which, in turn, prompted online debate presenting alternate discourses about national identity.

In the case of the *AEN* e-list, the reported words of an Iraqi policeman about a "New Zealand passport holder" were restated in the headline of a news story in the online version of *The New Zealand Herald*. The criticism by *AEN* e-list posters who interpreted this headline as exclusionary led to *The New Zealand Herald's* alteration of the label to 'New Zealander', prompting further discussion relating to a discourse about definition. Both of these case study examples demonstrate the intertextual and interdiscursive power of discourse to weave itself into different areas of society with the potential to invoke change.

Both case study discussions emerged from discursive events involving the dominant articulation of national identity. Both instances were indicative of the power inherent within systems and structures to disseminate dominant discourse about national identity that fired debate amongst people about what it meant to be a 'New Zealander'. Resisting, challenging or appropriating the dominant narrative as it appeared in either the official census graph about New Zealand's ethnic groups, or in a news headline about a "New Zealand passport holder", in fact highlighted the difficulties people faced in determining a common and substantive national identity. Yet, at the same time, this demonstrated that people also had the power to express alternate discourses based on their own experiences and world views.

My study's focus on computer-mediated communication (CMC) as a disseminator of discourse indicated that the Internet provided a forum for the expression of populace views that challenged the official discourse. The discourses identified in the case studies showed that unity through diversity was not a foregone conclusion. Although some people indicated that 'New Zealander' as both an ethnic and a national identity was inclusive, others regarded its ambiguous usage as simply an attempt to renegotiate the continued dominance of the white majority under the pretence of a new identity. Even the lengthy argument in "the identity game" about Pakeha claims to indigeneity indicated the desire of people of European descent to claim a unique national identity based on the length of time their ancestors had lived in New Zealand. Also evident was the frustration by minority voices struggling to be heard whether Maori, Asian, Pakistani-British, or Greek-Cypriot New Zealander. Ongoing tension between dominant majority perspectives, biculturalism and multiculturalism that existed in society transferred to the online discussions but this became more blatant with accusations that a modern, subtle form of racism lay deep within the dominant majority discourse about national identity. The fact that some commenters were surprised by these accusations was indicative of how such discourse was unconsciously delivered, or at least interpreted differently from what the speaker intended.

In effect, the analysis of the online discussions showed that New Zealand national identity was marked by enduring processes of domination, struggles over the right to speak, and the power to act to frame identity in such a way as to construct 'legitimate' citizens of 'the nation'. Yet at the same time, it was clear that people had no hesitation in using CMC to resist, justify or renegotiate the dominant discourses that pervaded the discussion whether through posted messages, news articles or hyperlinked texts.

10.4 Debating national identity online

My study advances the idea that the Internet provides a place to explore the exchange of ideas about national identity where multiple voices can be heard and issues identified. While Habermas (1989) positioned the emergence of the public sphere within 18th-century European bourgeois salons and coffee houses, this study demonstrated that the talk of the online discussions more closely resembled dinner-time or pub conversations in a more modern era, indicative of a new form of public sphere for democratic debate. Voices could be heard responding and reacting to one another using conversational language unlikely to have been replicated in political speeches, news reports, letters to

the editor, novels, letters or private diaries. Even surveys of New Zealanders limited the expression of opinion and the construction of national identity, through their use of specific questions about immigration or through asking for responses to a supplied listing of what people regarded as unique features of the nation such as rugby, the landscape or the pavlova dessert.

The closest genre that might align with the online discussions would be talkback radio or television – though the conventions of these broadcast media meant that comments were conveyed via a conversation with a host. People could be interrupted, cut off at will and restricted in the number of times they might ring in one day. In comparison, the genre of the blog-site discussion and the e-list enabled its users to post messages as many times as they liked, with no restriction on length, at any time of day and from anywhere in the world where the Internet was accessible. A degree of netiquette was assumed on both the *Yellow Peril* blog site and the *AEN* e-list and, in the case of the former, two moderators monitored the content of postings. Certainly the analysis showed that the Internet provided access to a virtual public sphere that sat between the private sphere and the sphere of public authority and was devoid of state interference or excessive gatekeeping.

Therefore, the medium of the Internet can be seen to contribute to the shaping of the debates about national identity in the online discussions I analysed. With national identity being a sensitive issue at times when it comes to inclusion and exclusion, the freedom to speak one's mind in an open forum where any comeback was by way of other people's online messages would have been an attractive feature. The blog and e-list offered little restriction on content and participants could maintain anonymity if they wished; thereby, greater disclosure of feelings and opinion was encouraged. While the lack of face-to-face contact meant it was difficult to convey emotion and sometimes meaning in messages, other methods such as bolding, italics, capitalisation and emoticons were used to compensate for this. The easy insertion of hyperlinks meant that participants could direct readers to other texts to support their arguments. To a large extent, the conversational style of language was performative in its use of humour and argumentation strategies.

Goffman (1971) suggests that the presentation of self is managed by individuals through performance, in much the same way as it is in a theatrical production. Although

Goffman was not applying his theory to the Internet, this new form of electronic communication can still be considered as a stage for presentation where the individual can perform to a virtual audience (ranging from one to many) by the management or framing of self through the expressive resources available in electronic communication (Miller, 1995). Commenters and posters were aware they had an audience, even though it was not always possible to define exactly who was reading the posted comments. We know from DeSouza, Mok and Brown – the administrators and moderators of the respective *AEN* and *Yellow Peril* sites – that the audience often included people from government agencies, journalists, political figures and special-interest groups, which suggests that comments on the e-list might find their way into other spheres of influence.

Accessing a window on the talk of the nation through online discussions, however, realised my aim to provide others with a gateway to a “critical consciousness” of language, dominance and power (Fairclough, 2001, p. 3) as it occurred in a New Zealand setting. This study illustrated the value of my methodological approach in using the Internet as an ethnographic field to locate and analyse discourse through messages that were unedited and spontaneous. While I contend that the Internet as a virtual public sphere does in fact widen the opportunity for democratic discussion about national identity to occur, I do this with a cautionary note as this study also showed the potential for the Internet to exclude or polarise groups. My view is based on *Yellow Peril* blogger Mok’s comment in her interview about “the identity game” discussion becoming dominated by the same group of Pakeha commenters who were really interested only in talking about their own identities. The power of the Internet to attract like-minded people or even polarise groups which, in effect, excludes others from participating in online discussions is worthy of further investigation. This has particular relevance if we are to accept that the discourse on the Internet has the power to influence public debate on national identity, or any subject for that matter.

10.5 New directions

A basic democratic principle in the critical analysis of discourse is that, by observing change, researchers can “make social interaction transparent and understandable” (Wodak, 1999, p. 190). The discussions on the *Yellow Peril* blog site and the *AEN* e-list demonstrated how much ethnicity had become enmeshed with the concept of national identity and how much feelings of exclusion still existed in spite of the official

discourse about a new and inclusive national identity. But in taking a broader view of my findings I believe that the people's reaction to New Zealand's global branding exercise to construct a shared national identity made visible those issues which the official discourse had glossed over. As stated in Chapter One I intended that my research should have a critical function in making people more aware of the power of elites in influencing the construction of the nation's identity. Therefore in critiquing my own study, I advance two points of departure for further research and action – the first issue being national labelling and how the nation refers to itself both inclusively and exclusively, and the second perhaps more important concern, is that of white racism.

10.5.1 What's in a name?

Defining 'New Zealander' was identified as a contested area in the discourses of people in this study. While a celebration of diversity supported the official discourse, the categorisation of people through labels was shown to be ambiguous and contradictory. For example, discourses of legitimisation or of resistance to the use of 'New Zealander' divided "the identity game" commenters as some claimed its inclusiveness, while others felt it exclusively favoured New Zealand Europeans. A discourse about definition in the *AEN* e-list discussion also indicated that the interpretation of a label whether that of 'New Zealander', 'Kurdish-New Zealander' or 'New Zealand passport holder', was dependent on who was using it, how and why. Some believed a person had the right to declare their ethnicity as part of a label, while others felt doing so demonstrated demarcation and exclusion. Clearly, the combination of uncertainty and inconsistency in the use of labels was troublesome and at times upsetting for people, particularly when it came to situations requiring categorisation such as in the census, the allocation of government funds based on ethnicity or the reporting about those in news events.

Song (2010) recommends that care should be taken in understanding that people (particularly immigrants) might choose certain labels because they are imposed on or ascribed to them by others. However, Pasifika academic Melanie Anae – quoted by Ward and Lin (2005, p. 167) – suggests that New Zealanders of European descent feel comfortable with their New Zealand identity, while other groups use hyphenated/combined labels such as Korean-New Zealander or New Zealand-born Samoan to give greater emphasis to both ethnic and national affiliations. Labelling is, therefore, a key issue in national identity construction where concerns need to be made

visible and suggestions sought as to how this might be dealt with more sensitively and equably.

With the next collection of census data due in 2013,¹ it is highly likely that public debate about categories under the ethnicity question, particularly ‘New Zealander’, will resurface. This presents an opportunity for my findings about ethnic labelling to be utilised and become part of the discussion when it occurs. At the same time further research can be conducted as the debate unfolds through the gathering of texts for analysis to gauge any mitigation or intensification in the discourse and to examine to what extent racism is brought to the fore. Whether ‘New Zealander’ becomes more acceptable as an ethnicity, or whether it fuels further outrage, will be telling of the progress made in the building of a socially cohesive society that can inform politicians and agencies such as StatsNZ, the Human Rights Commission and the Office of Ethnic Affairs.

10.5.2 The colour of racism

A second area identified in the study that I contend is the most significant and deserving of action and ongoing examination is the negative representation of the dominant white majority, its systems and structures, as racist. The emphasis by some commenters and posters on the existence of modern, or subtle, white racism, rather than just overt racism, in New Zealand highlighted a taboo subject often ignored or downplayed in the mainstream media. Although concerns about racism have been raised publicly, the pairing of the word ‘white’ with racism is rarely seen, possibly because of the furore that might result in a country that regards itself as having a high standard of race relations. Yet those posters/commenters who challenged the notion of New Zealander as an ethnic category used post-colonial forms of resistance in constructing ‘the New Zealanders’ (that is, those people who accepted this label) as racist. Opposition to “colonialism’s after effects and its constructions of knowledge” (Radcliffe, 1997, p. 1331) were implicit in the comments of those critical of the power elites. Their suggestion that white racism was inherent in the nation’s political structures and institutions suggested a rejection of the Government’s national branding project that ignored minority concerns and that broadly endorsed ‘New Zealander’ as an ethnicity.

¹ Originally, the next New Zealand census was due in 2011 but was delayed because of the Canterbury earthquakes in that year which disrupted the data-collection process.

Although identification of racist talk in New Zealand has been the focus of a number of studies (McCreanor, 2005; Nairn & McCreanor, 1991; Tauroa, 1982; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), the findings of these pieces of research offered a different perspective. They emphasised the Internet as offering a forum where commenters/posters felt comfortable in highlighting and speaking out against the white racism exhibited by individuals, official institutions and structures, and the mainstream media. While Wetherell and Potter (1992) regard racism as “rooted in the social and structural rather than in the personal and psychological” (p. 217), the negative representation of ‘white’ New Zealanders in the discussion was shown to be inflammatory as some commenters were personally offended by accusations of white racism. The implications of this, I postulate, are in urgent need of address particularly when viewed in the context of situations regarding racism that occurred during this study and which suggest the existence of an underlying racist post-colonial identity in New Zealand. These include: a New Zealand European television presenter questioning the status of Governor-General Anand Satyanand as a ‘real’ New Zealander (TVNZ, October 5, 2010); the racist comments on talkback radio and on the Internet about a Pasifika rugby coach because of the constant losses of his provincial team (D. Johnstone, 2012, 12 April); and the xenophobic comments on radio talkback stations and on the Internet in 2012 following news that a Chinese company was wishing to buy a number of New Zealand farms.

The emergence of concerns in the online discussions about subtle white racism in New Zealand and in other countries signals the need for greater education amongst the populace concerning ethnic diversity, as well as further research that goes beyond diversity not only to examine the shifting meaning of whiteness, but also to identify the extent of its existence. Academic commentary on whiteness is varied, yet the debate about white dominance indicates that it is a global issue and not present just in New Zealand. Hage (1998) – a Lebanese-born Australian – regards the dominant majority’s attempt in Australia to control multiculturalism as part of a white nation fantasy, although he admits that this is often an unconscious act. This view was very much reflected by a number of *AEN* e-list posters with one referencing Hage as being influential on his thinking. Kaufmann (2006), however, worries about the semantic conflation of two very different uses of the term white – racial and ethnic. He prefers to focus on dominant ethnicity rather than bring colour into the equation, precisely for the reasons evident in the e-list discussion where the boundaries of whiteness slip and slide,

altering meaning “according to the disparate ideas expressed by the various historical actors who utter this colloquialism” (p. 237).

10.6 Future implications

This study has shown that New Zealand, regardless of its geographic isolation, has not been immune to globalisation and its effects on national identity experienced by many Western nations. Ideological dilemmas, fragmentation and multiple identities – proven to be common responses to the “challenges of globalization and neo-liberalist economies and ideologies” (Wodak, 2001, p. 63) are mirrored in the experiences of New Zealanders identified in this research. But, in spite of these commonalities, each country has had its own particular histories and experiences that have contributed to ongoing individual debates about national identity. In New Zealand’s case, its unique situation lies in its history as a British-settler state, the issues relating to biculturalism and immigration, and the importance the New Zealand Government places on following other nations in a competitive global branding exercise.

This study has identified the latest transformation of New Zealand’s national identity, though it will not be the last as further challenges and changes arise in the future. While it is difficult to predict exactly what social, economic, political or cultural pressures might occur both locally and internationally, there is little doubt that New Zealand will continue to diversify. But official management of the New Zealand brand is also likely to continue. StatNZ’s projections for 2026 (Ministry of Social Development, 2007) indicate a faster rate of growth of minority group numbers compared with that of New Zealand Europeans, guaranteeing that the heterogeneity of the nation and the hybridity of identities will intensify. The face of New Zealand will continue to change but the question remains: how will the state and the nation respond? Or, as Day and Thompson view it, from a slightly different perspective: “How far can such differences be taken, while remaining within the limits of the ‘same’ national consciousness?” (2004, p. 112).

As I have reflected on this research and the historical context in which is embedded, it is certain that the debate about national identity will persist. Even though the current National-led Government, in power since late 2008, has not specified national identity as one of its priorities or major strategies, there is still plenty of opportunity for a dominant narrative to be implicitly or explicitly expressed as part of a nationalist

chauvinism. But equally, as shown in this study, there are opportunities for people to resist or to challenge that type of discourse.

This study has shown the value to be gained in adopting a CDA approach in bringing together the discursive analysis of both official texts and the texts of people in understanding the various ideological forces at work in the construction of national identity. I have demonstrated how the analytical tools of the DHA can provide insight into some of the arguments and emotions surrounding national identity in New Zealand as well as highlighting particular concerns raised about exclusionary practices. My use of the DHA has also shown particular patterns of language that convey inclusivity and exclusivity within a New Zealand context whether self-labelling, the referencing to indigeneity, or the use of 'us' and 'them' in reinforcing positive self-presentation and negative 'Other' presentation. This research, I believe, reinforces the fact that the value of understanding how others construct national identity within the same nation cannot be underestimated, and that developing sensitivities to other points of view is perhaps the first step to learning to live with difference.

Personally speaking, although I believed I had a good sense of what it felt like to be a hybrid New Zealander – part minority (Jewish) and part majority (Pakeha) – I was oblivious to the concerns of others, such as 'white racism' in today's society. In analysing online comments, I have become more critically conscious and more acutely aware of the way people around me speak, the language used in official texts and how the media construct stories about diversity in New Zealand. I have no hesitation in pointing out these observations to my own children and to other adults, to make them better informed about the unequal power relationships that exist, and the stereotypes that are disseminated through discourse.

As one of the first DHA studies to extend an analysis of discourses about New Zealand's national identities to the ethnographic fields of a blog site and to an e-list, this research may well provide an impetus for other researchers to venture into cyberspace where an extensive range of genres as data sources can be located. There is much to be gained from accessing a space and a place of user-generated texts, not only where democratic debate is conducted, but also where discourses can be identified, analysed and acted upon.

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Glossary

New Zealand/Maori terms

Aotearoa	the Maori word for New Zealand
Hapu	the traditional family grouping (clan or subtribe) based on genealogy
Iwi	a tribe or tribal grouping based on hapu
Kiwi	a colloquialism used to describe a New Zealander based on a Pakeha culture
Kiwiana	symbols of a Kiwi identity
Mana	prestige, influence, authority
Moko	a Maori facial tattoo
Pakeha	New Zealanders of a European background
Powhiri	a ritual of welcome
Tangata whenua	indigenous people (literally ‘people of the land’)
Tauiwi	literally the people who landed in New Zealand at any time after the Maori (tangata whenua) arrived
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Tino rangatiratanga	absolute sovereignty (self-determination – the right of people to determine their own cultural, economic and social development)
Turangawaewae	a place to stand, authority to belong
Waitangi Tribunal	a permanent commission of inquiry established in 1975 to make recommendations on claims brought by Maori relating to actions or omissions of the Crown that breach the promises made in The Treaty of Waitangi
Whakapapa	genealogy

Internet terms

Back channel	communication by users of forums or e-lists who elect to communicate by private email
Blog	a shortened form of weblog – a site on the World Wide Web that contains dated text entries in reverse chronological order
Blogger	a person who writes a blog
Blog posting	a single message entered into a network communications system
Blog roll	a blog roll is a list of links to other blogs or websites selected by the blogger
Commenter/Poster	a person who posts a message on a CMC site; ‘commenter’ has been used in this study to denote a participant on the <i>Yellow Peril</i> discussion, while ‘poster’ has been used to describe an <i>AEN</i> member who has posted (emailed) messages on their group’s e-list
Computer-mediated Communication (CMC)	the exchange of information between people (one-to-one or one-to-many) through the direct use of computers
Cyberspace	the non-physical terrain created by computer systems
e-list	a group of people, often with a common interest, each of whom has subscribed to receive an automatic distribution of emails from other group members; they are also able to send messages to e-list members (also known as ‘email list’, ‘automatic mailing list server’, ‘listserver’ or ‘listserv’)
Google search engine	a programme owned by the Google Inc multinational corporation that searches for information on the World Wide Web relating to key words provided by a user
Hacker	a person who accesses a computer system by bypassing its security system
Html	The hypertext markup language that tells a web browser how to display a web page’s words or images
Hyperlink/hypertext link	an electronic link in the form of text that transfers a viewer of one web page to another text
Lurker	a person who reads website discussions and forums but does not acknowledge their presence because they do not contribute to the discussion
Netiquette	the social conventions of Internet behaviour
Netspeak	A style of language and new vocabulary that has resulted from computer-mediated communication
Post	to place an entry on a blog or social networking site or to place a new or revised page on a website

Poster	see 'commenter' above
Search engine	a computer programme that provides a list of documents found from a search of the Internet relating to key words
Thread	a sequence of messages on the same topic in an Internet newsgroup, forum, blog or groupware program
Traffic	the registered number of hits that a website receives – a hit being the actual navigation of an individual to a website
URL	URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator which is the actual Internet address of the document or resource (see hyperlink)
World Wide Web (www)	a subset of the Internet which is used to link web pages to computers using a hypertext transfer protocol (http) and written in hypertext markup language (html)

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Appendix 1: Ethics approval form for *AEN* e-list analysis.



M E M O R A N D U M

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To: AllanBell
 From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC
 Date: 21 October 2009
 Subject: Ethics Application Number 08/213 **New Zealanders on the net: discourses of national identity in cyberspace.**

Dear Allan

I am pleased to advise that I have approved minor amendments to your ethics application, allowing analysis of the listserv discussion of 6-13 March 2008. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 9 November 2009.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 9 December 2011;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 9 December 2011 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this. Also, if your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply within that jurisdiction.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at ethics@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the AUTECH and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely



Madeline Banda

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Philippa Smith philippa.smith@aut.ac.nz

Appendix 2: Information and consent form for *AEN* e-list posters

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form



Information Sheet

23 November 2009

Title of the research:

New Zealanders on the Net: Discourses about national identity in cyberspace.

Dear

I am a PhD student at AUT University investigating how New Zealand identity is constructed on the Internet. I will be seeking to identify discourses about national identity through patterns of language used in discussions on Internet forums and chatrooms. All the 'talk' to be analysed will be through pre-existing/archived computer mediated communication sites (CMC) between 2005 and 2008 and I would like to include an *Aotearoa Ethnic Network* listserv discussion which you participated in that ran from 6–13 March 2008. A copy of this discussion as a saved word document is available to you at your request.

In an interview with *AEN* administrator Ruth DeSouza about the operation of the listserv she suggested that the analysis of this discussion would add depth and enrich my research and the understandings of constructions of national identity from a usually more marginal position. Therefore I am contacting you to ask for your permission to analyse your comments. The focus of the analysis will be on patterns of language used in the construction of national identity and not on the individual posters. You will be anonymous in the research unless you choose otherwise. These national identity discourses will also be compared with discourses expressed in official documents such as political speeches, census reports and media reports published within the same time frame.

Your approval to have your listserv correspondence analysed is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, should you feel uncomfortable about it, without any adverse consequences.

Purpose of the research:

The purpose of the research is to identify discourses about New Zealand national identity to see how New Zealanders are adapting to a more diverse society. In addition the research will enable an understanding of how the Internet may contribute to a democratic public sphere and how this contributes to identity formation.

There are no foreseen discomforts or risks anticipated with this research. The complete *AEN* listserv discussion will not be published as an appendix to the thesis and will not be made publicly available. All that is required is your permission to have your language in the discussion analysed and you need to advise me whether you are over 20 years of age (a statement to validate this is included on the attached consent form.)

What are the benefits?

The benefits of this research will be that it provides a greater understanding of how New Zealanders use the Internet to construct their national identity at a time of increased diversity in the population.

There is no cost to you regarding this research as I am purely seeking your permission to analyse a discussion on the listserv which already occurred in 2008 and has been saved as a word document.

Your approval for this research would be appreciated by 1st December, 2009 and I would be grateful if you would complete the consent form attached to this information sheet and mail it to me at the address below. If you have any questions regarding this research you can contact Philippa Smith at the email address below.

If you are interested in the completed research you will be able to access the finished PhD electronically through the AUT library and I will forward to you details of how and when this can be accessed once the thesis has been examined.

If, at any time, you have concerns regarding the nature of this research you can contact the PhD supervisor Professor Allan Bell, allan.bell@aut.ac.nz, or phone (09) 9219683.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, phone (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

For further information about this research please contact

Researcher:

Philippa Smith, philippa.smith@aut.ac.nz, Tel: (09) 921 9999 ext 8276,
Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication,
AUT University,
Private Bag 92006,
Auckland 1142.

Project Supervisor:

Professor Allan Bell, allan.bell@aut.ac.nz, or phone (09) 9219683

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 9 November 2009,
AUTEK Reference number 08/213.

Consent Form



Project title: *New Zealanders on the Net: discourses of national identity in cyberspace.*

Project Supervisor: *Professor Allan Bell*

Researcher: *Philippa Karen Smith*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23/11/09.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that my contribution to an *AEN* listserv discussion will be analysed.
- ☐ I confirm that I am over 20 years of age.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I do/do not (delete one) wish you to send a copy of the *AEN* listserv discussion to me or a nominated person such as my employer. (Please provide details below)
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I do/do not (delete one) wish my identity to be anonymous in this research.
- ☐ I wish to be advised of when an electronic copy of the thesis is publicly available through the AUT library research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):.....

Date:

Appendix 3: AUTEK ethics approval to interview moderators of *Yellow Peril* blog discussion and the *AEN* e-list



MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK)

To: AllanBell
 From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEK
 Date: 9 December 2008
 Subject: Ethics Application Number 08/213 **New Zealanders on the net: discourses of national identity in cyberspace.**

Dear Allan

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) at their meeting on 10 November 2008 and that I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEK's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEK's meeting on 19 January 2009.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 9 December 2011. This approval is for your original ethics application only. The additional alterations to your ethics application that you submitted were considered by AUTEK at its meeting of 8 December 2008 and the finalised decision regarding these will be conveyed in due course.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEK:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 9 December 2011;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 9 December 2011 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEK is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEK approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTEK grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this. Also, if your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply within that jurisdiction.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the AUTEK and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Banda', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Madeline Banda
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Philippa Smith philippa.smith@aut.ac.nz

Appendix 4: Consent form, information sheet and indicative question sheet for *Yellow Peril* and *AEN* e-list moderators interviews.



Information Sheet

Title of the research:

New Zealanders on the Net: Discourses of national identity in cyberspace.

Dear

As the administrator of (blog site/e-list) I am inviting you to participate in an interview to provide information on how this computer mediated communication site operates and how it enables identity construction.

I am a PhD student at AUT University investigating how New Zealand identity is constructed on the Internet. I will be seeking to identify discourses of national identity through patterns of language use on publicly archived discussions on Internet forums and chat rooms. All the “talk” to be analysed will be through pre-existing/archived computer mediated communication (CMC) between 2005 and 2008 but the focus will be on patterns of language and not individual posters who will remain anonymous. These national identity discourses will also be compared with discourses expressed in official/quasi official documents such as political speeches, census reports and media reports published within the same time frame.

Your role in the research:

While the overall purpose of the research is to identify discourses of New Zealand national identity to see how New Zealanders are adapting to a more diverse society, I also want to examine how the Internet enables construction of this identity.

I therefore wish to interview you to understand how the *AEN* listserv operates. Your interview will provide important background knowledge about the processes involved in posting messages, how these are moderated and what rules apply to their participation in your blog/forum. I will also be seeking any statistical and/or demographic information you can give me about *AEN*. The interview will also enable an understanding of how the Internet may contribute to a democratic public sphere and how this contributes to identity formation.

As a participant in this research you will be interviewed in person or by telephone/Skype which may take up to approximately one hour. A transcript will be made of this interview which will be available to you if you request it. In some instances you may be emailed with follow-up questions or requests for clarification on information you have already given. I will give you the

opportunity to see the findings of my research and you will have the opportunity to provide feedback on this.

There are no foreseen discomforts or risks anticipated with this research. To participate you need to advise me whether you are over 20 years of age (a statement to validate this is included on the attached consent form). Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, should you feel uncomfortable about it, without any adverse consequences. You also have the right to request that your identity be confidential in this research if you prefer. A list of indicative questions for the interview are included with the consent form.

Who will benefit from this research?

This research, which aims to achieve a better understanding about how New Zealanders use the Internet to construct their national identity, will be of benefit to a number of different people such as policymakers, business people, various ethnic groups and academics. In addition you as an administrator of the *AEN* website will be able to see how your listserv contributes to national identity construction and how it compares with other computer mediated communication sites involved in this research.

The only cost to you for participating in this research is in terms of your time. As stated above interviews will be limited to one hour, but may take less time.

It is intended that the interview will take place in April/May 2009 after preliminary analysis of the CMC texts have begun. Your approval for this research would be appreciated by February 1, 2009 and I would be grateful if you would complete a consent form attached to this information sheet and return it to me at the address below.

If you are interested in the completed research you will be able to access the finished PhD electronically through the AUT library and I will forward to you details of how and when this can be accessed once the thesis has been examined.

If, at any time, you have concerns regarding the nature of this research you can contact the PhD supervisor Professor Allan Bell, allan.bell@aut.ac.nz, or phone (09) 9219683.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, phone (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

For further information about this research please contact

Researcher: Philippa Smith, philippa.smith@aut.ac.nz, Tel: (09) 921 9999 ext 8276,
Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication, AUT University, Private
Bag

Project Supervisor: Professor Allan Bell, allan.bell@aut.ac.nz, or phone (09) 9219683

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 27 April 2009
AUTEC Reference number 08/213 *Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.



Project title: New Zealanders on the Net: discourses of national identity in cyberspace.

Project Supervisor: Professor Allan Bell

Researcher: Philippa Karen Smith

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that the interview will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that the researcher will discuss her research findings with me and allow me to give her feedback.
- ☐ I confirm that I am over 20 years of age.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I do/do not (delete one) want my identity to be confidential in this research.
- ☐ I wish to be advised of when an electronic copy of the thesis is publicly available through the AUT library research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 27 April 2009
AUTEC Reference number 08/213

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.



Title of the Research: **New Zealanders on the Net: Discourses of national identity in cyberspace.**

Indicative questions for CMC moderator interviews:

1. Please give me some history of the *AEN* listserv such as when it first started operating, whether it was publicised at all to attract an audience, and how it has developed over time. Is there any connection with an offline publication, radio or television show, or other communications outlet?
2. How do the online discussions on *AEN* originate – as the result of a blog (commentary provided online), a question posted by the moderator, or is *AEN* an open discussion forum where posters can nominate topics to discuss? Does *AEN* have any specific theme, eg politics, current events?
3. Is it common for discussions to result from a media report either online or offline?
4. What is your role as a moderator? Does you direct discussions such as when they move off topic, or even contributing to the discussion?
5. Do you halt discussions after a certain time or can these be ongoing? Do discussions ever stop and start over and period of time and if so is this in relation to an offline event that might reactivate discussion?
6. How long do you archive discussions online? Is there any time limit for when messages can be posted?
7. What are the demographics of *AEN*, such as do you have details of how it rates amongst other CMCs as far as the number of daily hits it gets, what is the spectrum of age, gender, profession, etc of posters, do you have details of the geographic spread of posters (eg within New Zealand, international)? Is your CMC restricted at all as to who can post messages?
8. Do you have a privacy policy regarding posters? What is the process involved if somebody wants to post a comment? Do they have to provide you with details about themselves before they are able to participate in *AEN*?
9. Do you archive all discussions? How long are discussions kept online for?

10. How do you moderate posters? Do you vet/select comments before they are posted publicly on the Internet or are comments posted directly and then checked on a regular basis by the moderator?
11. How much control do you have over comments? ie are you able to delete inappropriate comments or give warnings to posters who have a tendency to use inappropriate language or abuse another poster?
12. What is your impression as a moderator about how identities are constructed via CMC discussions?
13. Do you have any ethical concerns regarding research of the *AEN* listserv?
14. What do you see as the advantages and/or disadvantages of discursive analysis of the *AEN* listserv?
15. Is there anything else in relation to the moderation of *AEN* that you think should be noted for this research?

Appendix 5: Table showing the data set of official texts used in the analysis of New Zealand identity.

Genre/title/date	Delivered by	Occasion	Audience	Purpose
Government speeches Text 1: 8 November 2005 (second sitting day of the new parliamentary term)	Dame Silvia Cartwright (New Zealand Governor-General 2001–2006), but prepared by the Prime Minister and government officials	Speech from the Throne As part of the State Opening of Parliament	Members of the New Zealand House of Representatives The New Zealand public (indirectly through media coverage)	To announce government policy and legislation for the forthcoming term of office
Text 2: 27 February 2006	Prime Minister Helen Clark	The 3 rd New Zealand National Interfaith Forum at Parliament Theme: ‘Strengthening spirituality – a shared path to peace’	Delegates at the forum, mainly representatives of different faiths	Displaying government support for the forum and outlining Government efforts to promote interfaith and intercultural awareness and understanding
Text 3: 14 February 2006	Prime Minister Helen Clark	Prime Minister’s statement to Parliament	Parliament, news media and the public (indirectly)	Annual statement to Parliament setting out the Government’s priorities for 2006
Text 4: 13 February 2007 (speech notes)	Prime Minister Helen Clark	Prime Minister’s Statement to Parliament	Parliament, news media and the public (indirectly)	Annual statement to Parliament setting out the Government’s priorities for 2007
Text 5: 21 August 2006 Introduction to the Nation: developing a statement on religious diversity	Winnie Laban , Minister for the Community Voluntary Sector	Interfaith forum on Government and Faith Communities (organised by the Human Rights Commission’s Diversity Forum)	Delegates at the forum, mainly representatives of different faith communities	To introduce the speaker and panel of the Interfaith Forum with emphasis on the draft National Statement of Religious Diversity
Text 6: 15 October 2007	Chris Carter , Minister for Ethnic Affairs	12 th International MetropolisPlus: Perspectives From New Zealand Forum, Wellington	Conference delegates academics and representatives from NGOs and government organisations	Welcome to conference, promoting the New Zealand Government’s initiatives to support the nation’s diversity
Text 7: 6 February 2007	The Governor-General (2006–2011), Sir Anand Satyanand	Waitangi Day address from Government House, Wellington	To invited guests at Government House Waitangi Day celebrations	To celebrate the anniversary of the Treaty of Waitangi as the Queen’s representative
Media releases Text 8: 18 May 2006 Budget 2006: Theme 3: ‘National Identity’	The New Zealand Government	Release of the 2006 Budget	The media and the public	Promote the Government’s budget theme of national identity

Genre/title/date	Delivered by	Occasion	Audience	Purpose
Text 9: 17 May 2007 Budget 2007: National Identity Government Release	The New Zealand Government	Release of the 2007 Budget	The media and the public	Promote the Government's budget theme of national identity
Posters Texts 10 and 11: Race Relations Day posters 21 March 2006 and 21 March 2008	Human Rights Commission (formerly the Race Relations Office)	Race Relations Day	Schools, ethnic networks, stakeholders interested in race relations; free distribution	Promote cultural diversity and positive race relations in New Zealand
Website Text 12: Home page of The Office of Ethnic Affairs website	The Office of Ethnic Affairs		Minority groups in New Zealand	An information resource for New Zealanders from diverse backgrounds, particularly new immigrants

Appendix 6: Abridged versions of the Speech from the Throne (2005) and the speeches of Prime Minister Helen Clark (2006, 2007).

TEXT 1:

Speech from the Throne, delivered by Governor General Dame Silvia Cartwright, 8 November 2005

It is a privilege for me to exercise the prerogative of Her Majesty the Queen and open the 48th Parliament. On 17 September the people of New Zealand voted for the fourth time under the MMP electoral system. Negotiations since then have resulted in the formation of a third term Labour-led government with a majority in the House on confidence and supply [...]. My government's overall objective for the next three years is to continue New Zealand's transformation to a dynamic, knowledge-based economy and society, underpinned by the values of fairness, opportunity and security. In the last six years my government has sought to lay the foundations for this transformation. A great deal has been achieved. My government has implemented a framework for growing a higher value economy. It has invested heavily in education and skills development. It has refocused our system of social assistance. It has supported creative New Zealanders. Ours is now a country more confident of its economic future and more secure in its sense of identity [...].

Over recent years, my government has set about developing a distinctive New Zealand way of responding to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. This is an approach founded on New Zealanders' creativity and innovation, on valuing both inspiration and aspiration, and on seeing our size and place in the world not as a limitation, but as offering opportunities to succeed. The New Zealand way is much more than the clichés of 'number eight wire' or 'punching above our weight'. It is based on the belief that as a confident, diverse, inclusive Pacific nation, we can work together to find new opportunities and market our best ideas profitably to the world. This approach will continue to be applied to a range of policies and programmes aimed at lifting the quality of life and standard of living for all New Zealanders. My government believes that the talents of all must be deployed in the drive to transform our nation. It is important to build a broad consensus about the way ahead. Divisions within the community, perceived or otherwise, must not be allowed to get in the way of the transformation of New Zealand, to a prosperous, confident 21st century nation. My government intends to work - as it has over the last six years - in partnership with people from across sectors and communities to advance New Zealand's interests. *[paragraphs outlining the government's priorities of economic growth, education, healthcare, and social services excerpted.]*

I have outlined so far the government's priorities across the economy, education, healthcare, and social services. Underpinning each of these priorities is an approach founded on a distinctly New Zealand way of working. This approach aims to be inclusive, forward looking, and focused on lifting the aspirations and developing the abilities of all New Zealanders. This is critical to our nation's success. Honourable Members, one of the most distinctive features of the emerging New Zealand way is our sense of national identity, confidence, and creativity. New Zealanders are holding their own alongside the best writers, musicians, and artists anywhere in the world. Our communities now fully embrace and support their creative members. We New Zealanders expect to see our stories and perspectives reflected on our airwaves, on film screens, in our literature, and throughout the creative spectrum. My government will continue to support the creative sectors, knowing that they are helping to profile New Zealand very positively in the wider world, and that they play a critical role in nation building. New Zealand has also gained enormous benefit from the many achievements of our sportsmen and women. My government will continue to work with the sports sector to build on its achievements and to increase participation of New Zealanders in physical activity. In this regard my government will support the Department of Conservation putting increased emphasis on opportunities for physical recreation in the outdoors.

New Zealand's sense of national identity is also underpinned by our position as an independent and principled player on the world stage. My government will continue to ensure that New Zealand contributes positively to the resolution of the many challenges our world faces. Resourcing for our diplomatic, aid, and defence infrastructure is being significantly increased to that end. My government is also committed to maintaining the quality of our environment and the preservation of New Zealand's unique biodiversity. Clean air, open space, and good water quality are seen as part of our birthright. Yet our reality does not always conform to this ideal. *[paragraphs on water quality management, climate change]*

One of the most distinctive features of contemporary New Zealand is our increasingly diverse population. As New Zealand moves forward, we must address needs across a range of communities and ethnicities. Social solidarity will be critical to our country's success. My government will continue to promote tolerance and understanding between all those who make up our nation. The New Zealand way has always been to move forward together, recognising the independence of individuals, while pooling our collective talent for the good of our economy and society.

The place of Maori in contemporary New Zealand has been a matter of much controversy in recent times. My government seeks to encourage rational and informed dialogue on the role of the Treaty of Waitangi, and on the rights and responsibilities of the Crown and Maori, and, indeed, of all New Zealanders. It is time to recognise the emergence of a new, dynamic, confident Maoridom. It is time to lift aspirations, celebrate and encourage success, and not dwell on past failure. Pride in the achievements of all New Zealand communities and peoples must be seen as a cornerstone of the New Zealand way. *[paragraphs on accommodation of Maori concerns.]* The election result has given my government the opportunity to build on the New Zealand way of working that has emerged over the last six years. *[paragraphs on role of minority coalition parties.]*

Honourable Members,

My government is deeply conscious of the honour bestowed on it in taking office again. Its mission is to lead the economic and social development of our proud, independent South Pacific nation. It seeks to work alongside a broad cross section of New Zealanders to achieve the best results for New Zealand. I wish you well in your deliberations. You have been charged by your fellow New Zealanders with great responsibilities. I am sure you will do your best to fulfil them.

Text 2:

Helen Clark, Speech to the Third National Interfaith Forum, Parliament, 27 February 2006

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Third National Interfaith Forum. The theme for this year's event is 'strengthening spirituality - a shared path to peace'. Greetings to distinguished guests, Interfaith Council members from around the country, ladies and gentlemen. I begin by congratulating the New Zealand Interfaith Group and the Wellington Interfaith Council for bringing together this event, and the organisers of yesterday's First Convention of Interfaith Women. Thank you for your leadership in supporting the formation and strengthening of interfaith networks and councils around the country, and in liaising with government on interfaith and ethnic community issues. I know that the New Zealand Interfaith Group has developed a useful website for increasing our awareness about faith activities, which includes among other things a multi-faith calendar. Those who visit the website will learn that events in March include the beginning of the fast for Baha'is in preparation for Nawruz or Iranian New Year, Lent begins as the fasting period for Christians and the Sikh New Year will commence. You can all check this and other information out on www.interfaith.org.nz. This year's Interfaith Forum is being held at a critical time in our history at a local, national and international level.

The gratuitous publication internationally and by some local media of cartoons depicting Mohammed, and the recent broadcast of a controversial episode of the South Park cartoon, have meant that religious and interfaith issues have been the focus of a great deal of discussion in the media and in our communities. A recent headline in the Dominion Post read "Catholic School's Muslim Head Girl". It is unusual to have the media pay such attention to issues of religion in New Zealand. We had a number of incidents of religious and ethnic intolerance in New Zealand in 2004 that have focused our attention on faith groups and relationships with wider society: the desecration of Jewish grave sites; the attack on a group of young Somali men in Newtown; and hate mail sent to members of the Muslim community in Wellington. These were all the actions of a small number of people, but nonetheless have caused concern. All of the events have led to increased debate about the relationships between faith and ethnic communities in our society. It behoves us in these circumstances to step up our efforts to promote interfaith and intercultural awareness and understanding.

It is encouraging to see the constructive interest and support among faith groups in New Zealand in response to these issues. Interfaith networks are key to promoting this discussion among faith groups and also to forming links with wider society. For example, the Muslim community organised a very successful series of outreach events for Islamic Awareness week last year. These initiatives are fundamental to building an inclusive and diverse society. I have signalled in my opening speech to our new Parliament last November, and again three weeks ago when this year's session began, that an ability to reconcile our past and adjust to the diversity of our present times is critical to building New Zealand's nationhood. We need more than ever before a commitment to social cohesion, inclusion, tolerance, and

acceptance. In government we are committed to a society where all peoples are seen, heard, included and accepted [...].*[paragraphs acknowledging work of Dr Ashraf Choudhary New Zealand's first Muslim Member of Parliament, the Human Rights Commission, and the Office of Ethnic Affairs.]*

I encourage everyone attending today to share the outcome of this dialogue with members of your communities, your colleagues, and your families. That way we help make New Zealand a place where diversity is valued and reflected in our national identity. I wish you well for today, focusing on the theme of 'Strengthening spirituality – a shared path to peace' and look forward to the outcomes of this Third National Interfaith Forum. I'd like to also take the chance to send best wishes to the Progressive Jewish Congregation of Auckland, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary next month, and to encourage you all to take part in Race Relations Day events around the country. Thank you.

Text 3:

Helen Clark's Statement to Parliament, 14 February, 2006

Three months ago the government's agenda for this three year parliamentary term was set out in the Speech from the Throne delivered by the Governor-General. That speech and that agenda were optimistic and realistic, and visionary and practical. Labour and the Progressive Party are not in government to manage the status quo – it's never good enough. We are in government to make a difference for the better. We want our country to be more affluent and dynamic. We want all our families, young and old, to enjoy more opportunity and security, and to share in the progress the country makes. And we want to build pride in the unique national identity of New Zealanders, and to celebrate the achievements and successes of our people, past and present, who have brought great credit to our country.

Last year, New Zealanders didn't elect to government those parties which ran New Zealand down and predicted a grim and dreary future – and those in opposition are still at it. New Zealanders didn't vote for a government which threatened to put the achievements of the last six years at risk. On balance, New Zealanders voted for those who would keep building on the solid progress our country's been making over the last six years:

- growing the economy;
- dropping the level of unemployment to the lowest level in the western world;
- investing heavily in the critical services of health, and education, and policing;
- promoting our rich culture and unique identity;
- protecting our environment; and
- maintaining our nation's reputation as principled, independent, and nuclear free.

[...]While it's important for individual parties to maintain their own distinctive brands and perspectives, it's also possible for those with goodwill to work together in the interests of New Zealand. That's the approach Labour has followed with diverse parties over the past six years, and that's the way we will work this term as we build on what we have in common with others to take New Zealand ahead.

Our policy programme balances **economic and social policy**. We need a strong economy to deliver the living standards, the services, and the quality of life which the citizens of our first world country expect, deserve, and are prepared to work for. A **strong economy** in turn needs healthy, well educated, highly motivated, and confident people to drive it to ever greater achievements. That's why the deregulated labour market and underinvestment in health and education of the 1990s could only ever deliver a low wage, low skill, low value economy. Our job in government has been to stop New Zealand running the race to the bottom, and to aim for the top. Labour takes the high road to growth and development based on skills and opportunity.

There's a world of difference between Labour's 'New Zealand way' of promoting higher wages based on higher skills, innovation, productivity, and sustainability – and the right wing parties' standard prescriptions of slashing the tax base and public spending, cutting back on employees' rights and protections, sacrificing the environment, and deregulating and privatising. That was the agenda New Zealanders revolted against in 1999, and have rejected ever since. The last six years have seen good economic growth averaging close to 3.8 per cent per annum. That's better not only than OECD averages, but also better than the growth rates in our top three trading partners – Australia, the United States, and Japan – over the same period.*[paragraphs criticising National Party policies.]*

[...]We are passionate about New Zealand and its potential – and we'll do whatever we can to see this country succeed. Now it's time to move to the next level in the economic transformation agenda. Our country needs more globally competitive firms. We need higher productivity, business investment, and skills levels, and more innovation in the economy. We need to remove the infrastructure constraints which hold back world class performance in Auckland, our only city of international scale, while ensuring our regions continue to thrive. And we need to work closely with business, workers' representatives, educators, scientists, regions, and communities to lift our level of ambition about what can be achieved for our country, and lift our nation's economic performance further. In Maoridom, the HuiTaumata has pointed the way ahead. This year the government will be working to advance all these objectives.*[paragraphs on government priorities for the year regarding the economy, climate change, education, trade, health, and social benefits.]* The economic and social policy successes of the past six years have been a source of pride to many New Zealanders. Indeed it's hard to build a strong, proud nation without having economic and social success. But there's much **more New Zealanders take pride in about our country.**

We celebrate our sporting and cultural successes, our creativity and unique heritage, our cosmopolitan lifestyles and great outdoors, and our ability to live largely at peace with each other in our multicultural society. There is an evolving New Zealand way of doing things, and a stronger New Zealand identity is emerging. It's important to develop that distinctive New Zealand style, identity, and set of community values. As a government we will continue to prioritise policies which contribute to a strong sense of national identity.*[paragraphs on the nation's sporting and cultural creative achievements in the global environment.]*

Critical to our nation building is our ability to reconcile our past and adjust to the diversity of our present times. Both can be uncomfortable. But the efforts New Zealand is making are pioneering – both through the Treaty settlement process and through the efforts we make to build social cohesion and tolerance. More Treaty settlement legislation will be before Parliament this year. Part of the emerging Kiwi identity is the extension of our support for reconciliation and respect for each other at home to the international arena. Kiwi peacekeepers are respected wherever they are deployed. We are perceived to be a voice for dialogue and moderation across civilisations and faiths. Next month we will be a co-sponsor of the Asia-Pacific Inter Faith Dialogue in the Philippines. Peace and tolerance in our region and the world matters to us[...]

A strong national identity is also founded on an understanding of the forces and events which have shaped our nation. Our government has worked to boost recognition of our history and heritage in many ways. This year, a New Zealand Memorial will be dedicated in London in recognition of our huge efforts and sacrifices in support of the defence of the United Kingdom in the past century. Work and planning continues on the New Zealand Memorial Park and precinct adjacent to the National War Memorial. As well, the travelling exhibition created by Te Papa on the Treaty of Waitangi is travelling through the country, and community dialogue on issues arising from the Treaty is being developed by the State Services Commission.

New Zealand in 2006 is in many ways a work in progress. Our country is on a journey – away from the old economy to a new one; improving the health, education levels, and living standards of all our people – and the services which support our needs; and building a nation from an increasingly diverse population. Our government's task is to provide leadership and sound policy to support that journey. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities 2006 will bring, and to working with all parties supporting or involved with the government in some way to take New Zealand ahead

Text 4:

Helen Clark's Statement to Parliament (speech notes), 13 February, 2007

It's my privilege to present this annual statement to Parliament setting out the government's priorities for the year ahead. [Last year's statement](#) set out an ambitious programme, and a great deal has been achieved [...]. There's no question that New Zealand today is a stronger, fairer, and more confident nation than it was seven years ago. Many more [people are in work](#), incomes are higher, educational achievement is up, and crime rates are lower. These results have been achieved across the society, lifting Maori and Pakeha, along with Pasifika, Asian and other New Zealanders

But substantial as the gains have been, the government believes New Zealand can do even better. As we reach each goal and target we set in economic and social policy, new ones must be identified and met. Meeting the challenges our country faces in the 21st century requires substance, not slogans. New Zealand's future is dependent on long term sustainable strategies for our economy, society, environment, culture and way of life. Those strategies have to be driven by strong leadership and sound policies.

- Our challenge is to build a **sustainable economy** based on innovation and quality in a world where high volume, low quality goods and services will always undercut us on price.
- Our challenge is to sustain **family and community living standards** in our open, competitive economy.
- Our challenge is to sustain our unique **culture, values, and national identity** in a world of globalised media and culture.

[paragraphs on economic sustainability] I believe New Zealand can aim to be the first nation to be truly sustainable - across the four pillars of the economy, society, the environment, and nationhood. I believe we can aspire to be carbon neutral in our economy and way of life. I believe that in the years to come, the pride we take in our quest for sustainability and carbon neutrality will define our nation, just as our quest for a nuclear free world has over the past twenty three years. [paragraphs on climate change and energy conservation, business exports, digitisation, healthcare, education, the criminal justice system.]

Reinforcing and celebrating New Zealand's unique national identity is very important to my government. As I said in my Prime Minister's Statement to Parliament last year, there is an evolving New Zealand way of doing things and a stronger New Zealand identity is emerging. We pride ourselves on being a nation with a sense of fair play, on being clean and green, and on being nuclear free. We stand for decent values at home and abroad. We take pride in all those who've put our nation on the map, like Sir Edmund Hillary whose exploits were celebrated in Antarctica last month, and like Professor Alan McDiarmid, one of three New Zealanders to win the Nobel Prize who passed away last week. Our sports people, our artists and performers, and our leaders across the community provide inspiration at many levels.

In government we seek to support and strengthen what is fundamentally good and unique about New Zealand. In a globalised world we can't take the preservation of our unique culture and our values for granted. In this globalised world, we are determined that there will be a place for a small, smart, inclusive, creative, and sustainable nation like ours. *[paragraphs on defence and peacekeeping activities internationally.]*

I do want to emphasise the very high value the government places on its relationship with other Western nations. We are part of a community of shared values, which makes us feel at home in dealing with Australia, the United States and Canada, and the nations of Europe. These bedrock relationships must be continually nourished and refreshed [...]. Our international work on dialogue across civilisations and faiths is highly relevant to the nation we are building at home. New Zealand's growing **diversity** is recorded in last year's census. A commitment to social cohesion and the willingness to be inclusive across ethnicity, culture, and faith is more important than ever before. It's critical that all New Zealand's peoples benefit from the progress our country makes and have a stake in our society. The Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Social Development, the Office of Ethnic Affairs, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and other agencies are all contributing to work in this area. Reconciliation at home between Maori and Crown matters too. The historical Treaty settlement process has considerable momentum. This year the government will be working with over twenty claimant groups, each with a number of claims. Major developments in culture and heritage this year will include the commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, government funded road works to safeguard the Kerikeri Mission Station, and development of plans for the New Zealand Memorial Park in Wellington.

Government support for **culture**, in partnership with local government, corporate sponsors, and philanthropy will continue to play an important part in the development of many new productions across theatre, music, and dance. There continue to be exciting developments in film and contemporary music which attract considerable international attention [...]. I do believe New Zealanders value our country's clean and green, fair and inclusive status, and our first world living standards. But none of that is a god-given right - only strong leadership driving farsighted, sustainable strategies can lock that in for future generations. And only this Labour-led Government offers the leadership, the vision, and the substance to do that. We look forward to 2007 and progressing our work with and for New Zealanders.

Appendix 7: Table showing codes for *Yellow Peril/publicaddress.net* commenters. Only the moderators Tze Ming Mok and Russell Brown are identified by name.

Code	Definition	No. posts
01UM		1
02EU	European foreigner	1
03UM		3
04UM		1
05UM		7
06UU		1
07XM	Wellingtonian, South Islander living abroad	1
08M		1
09AM	Australian immigrant	2
10UM		2
11UM		2
12UU		3
13UF		1
14UU		4
15PU	Pakeha	3
16PF	Pakeha of Maori descent, New Zealander	8
17UM		1
18MAM	Maori with Pakeha mother	32
19AF	Tze Ming Mok – NZ Chinese	7
20UU		6
21UM		24
22ZM	New Zealander	11
23PM	Pakeha New Zealander	8
24AM	Asian immigrant (Indian)	1
25XM	Expat	1
26ZM	New Zealander	2
27EPM	European Pakeha	9
28UU		2
29ZM	Scottish heritage	4
30UM		9

Code	Definition	No. posts
31PF	Pakeha	10
32RBM	Russell Brown	2
33ZM	New Zealander	1
34ZM	New Zealander	21
35UM		1
36ZM	New Zealander	3
37UM		1
38ZF	New Zealander	1
39UU		2
40ZM	New Zealander	5
41ZM	New Zealander, Pakeha	5
42UM		2
43XM	Expat	1
44UM		2
45ZU	New Zealander	1
46PF	Pakeha	2
47TU	Antipodean	10
48UM		1
49UM		1
50UU		1
51UU		18
52UM		3
53XU	Expat	1

Legend:

Z = New Zealander

P= Pakeha

E= European/New Zealand European

M= Maori

M= Male

F= Female

A= Asian (includes Chinese and Indian)

T= Antipodean

X= Expat-New Zealander

AS= Australian

U= Unidentified gender/ethnicity

Appendix 8: List of topics identified and their frequency in the online discussion relating to the *Yellow Peril* blog posting of “The Identity Game”

	Topic	Frequency
1	Census/StatsNZ/ classification/ ‘New Zealander’	253
2	White majority/dominance Superiority	17
3	ethnicity	44
4	indigeneity	51
5	nationality	9
6	National identity	12
7	media	13
8	Racism/ stereotyping	13
9	Citizenship	15
10	Maori	47
11	Pakeha /NZ European	59
12	Inclusion/exclusion	4
13	Asian identity	17
14	Attachment to land/ Belonging	33
15	colonisation	23
16	Multiple identities/hybridity	10
17	Non-Maori/Tauiwi	13
18	multiculturalism	7
19	Treaty Waitangi	5
20	Politics	6