Immigration, Immigrants and the Media: Making Sense of Multicultural New Zealand

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NEW SETTLERS PROGRAMME

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a study that examined the way in which the issue of immigration and immigrant settlement has been dealt with by the print media in New Zealand. Carried out as part of the New Settlers Programme at Massey University, the study had two main components: a content analysis of the print media (with particular reference to the New Zealand Herald) for the period 1993-2003; and three focus group interviews which dealt more broadly with the media and the reaction of three communities (Koreans, South Africans and New Zealanders). It examined the way in which the print media help New Zealanders understand who they are, the images which are prevalent in the media and whether they are likely to contribute to negative or positive perceptions and intergroup relations. In this sense, the role that the print media plays is a highly political one that contributes significantly to the quality of public debate and political process.

Findings

- The media are a key point of contact and a source of understanding between immigrant and host communities. The mass media confirms who we are as individuals and as members of various communities, both local and national, and therefore plays a critical role in contributing to perceptions and intergroup relations.

- Despite this key role, there is very little research which analyses the images created by the media concerning immigrants and immigration, how these images reflect organisational and individual values from within the media, what the impact is on various communities, both immigrant and host, and the role of alternative media.

- The content analysis of the print media for the period 1993 to 2003 begins with the “Inv-Asian” articles in the Auckland community newspapers in 1993 which articulated certain stereotypical and negative images about “Asian” immigrants. This approach was compounded by the attention given to the anti-immigrant politics of Winston Peters and New Zealand First, both during 1996 and subsequently. This gave rise to particular issues in terms of the print media’s coverage: the problematisation of immigration, an emphasis on Asian immigrants (Asianisation), and a focus on certain negative aspects, such as Asian driving habits or the pressure placed on infrastructure and services (e.g. education) by immigrants. The print media, in the early and mid-1990s, tended to equate
immigration with the arrival of Asians, and then to employ the label 'Asian' crudely so that substantial differences between groups from various Asian countries or regions have been frequently ignored.

- The attention and coverage given to the views of Winston Peters and New Zealand First dominated the print media between 1995 and 2003. In terms of prominence and extent, no other issue came close. But what is also obvious is that the print media became less sympathetic to political anti-immigration rhetoric. By the 2002 General Election, there was criticism of, and opposition to, this political rhetoric which was apparent in editorials, columns and feature articles.

- The policy concerning refugees and their arrival in New Zealand emerged as a significant focus for the print media by the late 1990s, and there has been periodic attention given to 'bogus refugees'. It is clear that the distinction between officially sanctioned 'refugees' and 'asylum seekers' is misunderstood or not adequately explained in media reports.

- The primary focus in the print media when discussing immigrants is Asian immigrants, although there are two distinct phases. The mid-1990s saw relatively crude, often stereotypical images. By the late 1990s, there was growing interest in the economic impact and benefits of immigration for New Zealand, and the print media provided more detailed positive information on the significance of Asian immigrants. In contrast, other immigrant groups, such as South Africans, received considerably less attention.

- One of the ongoing negative aspects of print media coverage concerns the criminal activities of Asians, especially the crimes of kidnapping, extortion and blackmail.

- There is a distinct contrast between news reporting, which often gives attention to negative and stereotypical reports (Asian crime, the views of Winston Peters), and newspaper columns and features (including feature series), which have provided detailed and largely positive reports on immigration since the late 1990s.

- As far as those immigrants (Korean, South African) who took part in the focus groups were concerned, the media did not understand their culture or experiences particularly well, and they were offended by specific reports or incidents which they felt portrayed them unfairly.

- There is a rapidly expanding alternative media which is accessed by immigrants. This might be locally produced or it might come from a
homeland. This media helps significantly in the settlement process by providing contacts and information, but the presence of this media, combined with the roles performed by the mass media, raises questions about the integrative and adjustment effects of the media generally.

- The report concludes with brief comments concerning the improvement of print media performance; specifically, the need for (a) culturally competent media workers and management, and (b) measures or mechanisms to facilitate compliance and/or encouragement with respect to media responsibilities and performance in keeping with the ethos of cultural diversity and New Zealand’s evolving multicultural identity.
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INTRODUCTION

New Zealand has never been averse to remaking itself in various ways during its relatively short life as a modern state. Whether it was the 1890s, the 1930s or the 1980s, far-reaching reforms have dramatically altered the institutions and policies of this society. The 1980s marked a range of changes – economic, social, cultural – as the country sought to re-align its geo-political connections and the domestic and international competitiveness of its economy. For most of the 1980s, the dominant cultural debates centred around national identity, and what might be labelled ‘post-colonialism’, or in During’s (1985) terms, coming to know New Zealand in our terms, not those which originated with a colonial power. At the core of this re-assessment was an emergent biculturalism which involved placing indigeneity and the effects of colonialism on the Tangata Whenua (the people of the land, i.e. Maori) as a key consideration of political and policy development from the 1970s, and more particularly from 1985. Whether it was the delivery of Maori-sensitive welfare and economic policy, increasing the awareness of the impact of colonialism both in an historical as well as a contemporary sense, or Treaty of Waitangi settlements, there was a significant re-orientation of public perception and practice. It also involved inviting others, notably Pakeha (New Zealand-born people of ‘European’ descent), to explore their own post-colonial identity (Spoonley, 1995). But almost simultaneously, decisions were being made about New Zealand’s immigration policies that were to have far reaching consequences for the cultural politics of New Zealand, although it was to be almost a decade before there was an awareness of what exactly this meant. Those decisions about immigration that saw policy altered from 1986 onwards have remade the cultural mix of New Zealand and have added a new layer to the evolving imagery and policy concerns of this country.

In these circumstances, key questions concern the way in which these changes and their impact have been understood by New Zealanders, both ‘new’ and ‘old’. As with anything as significant as the demographic and cultural changes that have occurred, there are bound to be concerns. If democratic debate and constructive understanding is to emerge, then the quality of information provided in the public domain is an essential pre-condition. As with debates about biculturalism, the media play a critical role in determining the nature of public discussion and private/public understanding. Along with certain institutions, especially the education system, the media provide one of the most important points of contact. The media, in all its diverse forms – print, radio, television, electronic – is a key institution in the creation and distribution of images and messages about our community(ies). Those
significant others in our community, in the absence of in-depth personal contact or experience, will be described and explained to us via the media. It helps confirm who we are as individuals and members of various communities. As the demographic make-up of New Zealand has changed since the late 1980s, the media have played a critical role in exploring what this means for all of us.

The focus here is on the role of the media in this process through the 1990s and up until 2003. The questions which prompted this research include:

- What images have the media constructed and represented concerning immigration and immigrants?
- Are there key images/themes which have predominated?
- Are these images/themes positive/negative/neutral?
- Are these images/themes accurate and balanced or inaccurate and incomplete?

The analysis of the New Zealand print media presented in the present report explores whether these concerns, which have featured in the Canadian and Australian research literatures, are also true locally. Are there moral panics? Is there inaccuracy and sensationalism? Do the media demean or exclude immigrants?

It is taken as axiomatic here that the media select and interpret the social and cultural world for us, the audience. This selection process is governed by a series of imperatives, some of which reflect: the experiences and values of those who work in the media; the values and interests of those who control and own the media; and the nature of the particular media in question. Television plays a particularly important role because of its highly visual nature compared with print or audio media. However, there are three aspects which ought to be acknowledged at the very beginning.

The first, is that the media do not create prejudice and hostility. Research that is now long-standing indicates that the media reinforces pre-existing views, but those views are inevitably formed in the context of family and community environments. The media might legitimate prejudice but they do not create it. Hartmann and Husband (cited in Verma, 1988: 123) argue that:

...the important effect of the mass media is not that watching television makes us more violent and permissive or racist, but that the media throw some features into sharp relief, obliterate others, select and limit the issues which are worthy of considerations or recall. The mass media do not determine attitudes but they do structure and select information
we may use on which to base decisions about what information is appropriate.

The research by Hartmann and Husband, as well as by other influential media analysts such as Bagley (1973) and Van Dijk (1993), indicates the way in which consistently negative reporting tends to convey an image that intergroup relations are about conflict, and that some groups are racialised and their presence is seen as a problem given the way in which they are portrayed. Cottle (2000: 8) describes the way in which research has demonstrated that in a number of countries throughout the 1970s and 1980s, moral panics have occurred around mugging and inner-city disorder, while the 1990s have tended to focus on refugees and migrants, with the result that there are stock stereotypes of black people as ‘trouble-maker’, ‘entertainer’ and ‘dependent’. But the point is that this confirms or reinforces pre-existing views.

The second issue to recognise is that there is significant variability in the way in which various audiences perceive and use media information and images. An audience is never passive but will actively select and filter media reports. An aspect of the research in this report concerns the way in which different audiences react to the media. Much more could be done. Even items that are presented in an explicit and seemingly unambiguous manner by the media can be filtered and understood in very different ways so that different audiences take quite different meanings from the same item. This constitutes an important qualification in what follows.

The third issue is to acknowledge the unequal relationship that occurs between media and society. To use a Habermasian term, there is no “conversational equality” between different parts of the community in terms of their access to and representation in the media (Barker, 1999: 153). The media, in terms of ownership, management and employees, represent certain parts of the community and not others. This is changing as new technologies provide access to specific community media networks that bypass the mass media or provide access to homeland media. But in the context of the mass media, certain communities are privileged, while others are not, and the latter are denied “participatory parity and space to articulate their own languages, needs and demands” (Barker, 1999: 153). Jordan and Weedon (1995: 13) identify this as being the power to name, to represent common-sense, to create ‘official’ versions and to represent the legitimate social world.

With the above points in mind, the research reported in the following pages contributes to our understanding of the way in which immigration and immigrant settlement has been dealt with by the media in New Zealand. The
study comprises a content analysis of the print media (with particular reference to the *New Zealand Herald*) for the period 1993-2003, and focus group interviews which deal more broadly with the media and the reaction of three communities. It examines the way in which the print media help New Zealanders understand who they are, the images which are prevalent in the media and whether they are likely to contribute to negative or positive perceptions and intergroup relations. In this sense, the role of the print media is a highly political one that contributes significantly to the quality of public debate and political process.
THE MEDIA AND IMMIGRANTS:
A LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature concerning minorities and the media, both indigenous and ethnic communities, is considerable (e.g. Spoonley and Hirsh, 1990; Cottle, 2000; Twitchin, 1988). But there is a much smaller literature which deals specifically with immigrants and the media (Barker, 1999; Wood and King, 2001), especially in a New Zealand context. However, there is some interesting material, from New Zealand and elsewhere, which examines the values of the media, both as particular occupational groups (e.g. journalists, producers, editors), and as media organisations (see Mahtani, 2001; Abel, 1997; McGregor and Comrie, 2002; Barker, 1999; Jakubowicz, 1994).

Van Dijk (1993) has been influential, both in terms of the use of a particular methodology (content analysis) and the advocacy of a particular approach to the media’s role in influencing intergroup relations and imagery. In his use of content analysis, he has been concerned with both surface representation and underlying meanings (Mahtani, 2001: 109). For him, the media have constructed and reproduced racism (Van Dijk, 1993: 279):

\[\text{...the media play a central role in the reproduction of racism both because of their relationship to other elite institutions and because of their structural influence in shaping and changing the social mind...large segments of the white public have little or no alternative information sources on ethnic affairs.}\]

This is best represented for Van Dijk in the emphasis on immigrants as a ‘problem’ or ‘problems’, particularly in terms of the illegality of their presence, the ‘large’ numbers involved, fraud, and as demographic or cultural threats (Van Dijk, 1993: 248). In his approach, the media are a key agent in the reproduction of racism and in maintaining white hegemony (Van Dijk, 1993: 279):

\[\text{It [the media] has its own power domain in the power structure and actively contributes to the legitimacy of white group dominance. Its own hiring and promotion practices, its news making routines, its choice of topics, quotation patterns, semantic and stylistic strategies are an inherent part of its autonomous, symbolic role in the ideological system of social reproduction.}\]
Research has identified the values which media individuals and organisations hold, and which influence their approach and activities. Abel (1997) summarises the particular values, for example, which govern the generation of news, in this case in relation to understanding how the media cover the Treaty of Waitangi and Tangata Whenua issues in New Zealand. She lists them as (Abel, 1997: 202-205; see also Wall, 1997):

- Frequency
- Threshold
- Unamibiguity
- Meaningfulness
- Consonance
- Unexpectedness
- Continuity
- Composition
- Personality
- Negativity

These provide the news values which then help select and construct news stories in the media. A series of questions concerning such issues follows: what issues are deemed to be the primary interest of the audience and what will attract them to a particular item or product (newspaper, radio or television station etc), the extent to which a particular issue or item is known to the media organisation and its workers and how easy it is to capture the event or help frame the issue(s) in relation to the news values identified above (Golding, 1997: 254). As Abel (1997: 15) goes on to note:

*The news that finally gets to air has been filtered through a series of gates as dictated by news selection, gathering and editing routines.*

These gates occur at various stages of the process, including the planning of news, gathering it, and its selection and presentation (c.f. Golding, 1997). However, as Cottle (2000: 16) observes, the media are a reflection of broader societal processes and institutions:

*Studies of media representations often lack a theory of “mediation” and, in consequence, collapse the forces of production into culturally defined “frameworks of knowledge” that are thought to be at work in the production...of media output...As such, they tend to overlook Hall’s recognition of “the relations of production”, the “technical infrastructure” and the “institutional structures” that also condition and shape the practices and output of media workers...“production” is not hermetically sealed behind institutional walls nor confined to
organizational decision making and professional routines, and nor is it simply the (unmediated) expression of market forces.

Research needs to focus on the cultural and organisational dynamics of the mass media, but to do so with due recognition of the connections between the internal dynamics and values of the media and those of the surrounding society.

Turning specifically to issues relating to immigration, the research literature tends to focus on particular themes within the media concerning immigrants. Domke et al. (1999: 570) argue that public discourses concerning immigrants focus on the cost-benefit analysis of immigration which is underpinned by a distinct “racial subtext”. The racial subtext reflects prevailing views about the constituency and desirability of multiculturalism, with views extending from the acceptability of certain forms of multicultural policy, institutional responsiveness and community activity through to portrayals of multiculturalism as a threat to local homogeneity and national unity. The racial subtext, in turn, can vary from relatively innocuous forms of essentialism (the privileging of cultural values on the basis of cultural identity) through to the racialisation of particular immigrant groups as a threat and/or a problem. Public anxiety is reflected and influenced by media images and metaphors which portray immigration in terms of “invasion, waves and flooding” so that it encourages a panic similar to that associated with natural catastrophes (Mahtani and Mountz, 2002: 21). There is little doubt that in countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the media have become more aware of cultural diversity, and have taken a greater interest in what this might mean for communities and nations. Aside from regular moral panics in which one immigrant group or another, or sometimes immigrants in general, are demonised (see “Europe Gripped by Migrant Myths”, www.news.bbc.co.uk, 19 June 2002), mainstream media do offer a range of images and messages about immigrants which include “a superficial focus on cultural festivals, individual success stories and the cultural exotica of ethnic minority cultures” (Cottle, 2000: 11). As Cottle (2000: 24) goes on to suggest, however, there is a growing multicultural sensibility in the media which encompasses immigrants.

In a Canadian study, media coverage of immigrants was grouped into the following categories (Mahtani and Mountz, 2002: 17):

- The economic implications of immigration
- Individual human interest stories
- Social and health dimensions of immigration
• Criminal association with immigration
• Factually informational articles.

These provide a useful form of categorisation of the key elements of media coverage and will be used here in the content analysis of the print media. Not all media coverage constitutes alarmist or negative stories – in fact, far from it, as the research described below will demonstrate – and typically there are different constructions and language used in editorials, news reports, features and columns in the print media. The spectrum of media, both in terms of the orientation of particular publications, television channels or radio stations, varies considerably, as does the approach of particular media workers and producers. Research has tended to focus on the negative impacts of media reporting, of the way in which the problematic aspects of immigration and immigrants is fore-grounded by some in the media, or at certain points (see Mahtani, 2001), but there is also an increased media interest in understanding aspects of immigration and immigrants with positive outcomes for intergroup understanding and relations that deserve attention.

Individual understandings and community identities are shaped by media practices and intergroup relations are affected as a result. The relationship between immigrant community and the host society in all its manifestations is mediated by the mass media, especially when there is limited or little contact between immigrant and host communities. Without firsthand experience to contradict what is reported by the media, it becomes difficult to judge what is accurate or inaccurate, fair or unfair, balanced or unbalanced. Equally, it is important not to assume that those in receipt of a particular media image or message react in the same or similar ways. This is equally true for both immigrant and a variety of host groups. Audiences are not simply passive recipients. This research examines the role of the media, especially the print media, in creating and imparting information and images about immigration and immigrants in the 1993 to 2003 period and the reaction and experiences of certain immigrant groups.

Research on Media and Immigrants

Australia and Canada provide relevant studies of media portrayals of immigrants, and how communities have responded to these portrayals (see Bullivant, 1981; Jakubowicz, 1994). The growing cultural diversity of immigrant flows in these countries and the demographics of domestic communities have produced questions such as the following (Jakubowicz, 1994: 4):
• How do the media represent Australia in its cultural diversity and social differences?
• Are these representations as a process of creating meaning, the result of conscious manipulation and active decision-making by individuals or groups within the media?
• Are they the unintended but no less effective consequences of how power is organised in Australian society, a structure of power which in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, race and political priorities is merely replicated in the media as elsewhere.

In responding, both the Australian and Canadian research literature has emphasised the negative images which have predominated, although in both cases the media response has been rather more diverse and detailed than media reporting of indigenous issues (c.f. Jakubowicz, 1994: 41). That said, research has consistently observed that there are significant omissions and distortions (Jakubowicz, 1994: 74):

The absence of non-Anglo Australians is most pernicious in a particular genre of television ads, aimed at prime-time family viewing, that speak “Australia” and “the Australian way of life” as a uniformly Anglo country based on a “typical Aussie family”.

Similar issues prevail in Canada, with a focus on the misrepresentation and under-representation of immigrants, and the intersection of immigration with nation-building imperatives (see Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Mahtani, 2001; Mahtani and Mountz, 2002). The concern for many of these commentators is that the problematising and racialisation of immigrants impacts on their individual and collective well-being, the processes of adjustment and settlement and the process of building an inclusive national community. The media too often “deny, demean and exclude them [minorities and immigrants] in the national discourse” (Fleras and Kunz, 2001, quoted in Mahtani and Mountz, 2002: 5). Mahtani (2001: 100) makes a similar point:

...ethnic minorities do not see themselves accurately reflected in Canadian media, and that marginalisation perpetuates feelings of exclusion – especially when we place value upon those representations as fair and equitable mirrors of our nation.

The more extreme forms of representation accompany the moral panics which occur at regular intervals and often at more or less the same time in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Moral panics identify certain groups (or events) as a threat to social values, and simplistic and stereotypical views about the
threat are communicated by key groups (eg politicians, special interest groups) and the mass media (Macionis and Plummer, 1998: 588). Since the 1980s, these extreme representations have included refugees, asylum seekers (especially so-called ‘boat people’), wealthy Asian immigrants, the criminalisation of immigrants (particularly in the form of triads), and post-arrival concerns surrounding economic participation and access to welfare.

In discussing the performance of the media with immigrant and ethnic groups, there are certain common complaints in the research literature from Canada and Australia, which include (Stannard, 1989: 54):

- Inaccuracy
- Sensationalism
- Invasion of privacy
- Opinionated comments by under-qualified reporters
- The pushing of biases or vendettas
- Colour and gloss instead of facts

Creating Images and Messages

One aspect of the media and immigrants which has drawn attention is the composition of the mass media, both in terms of ownership and workers. The question raised has been how can those who are unaware of and inexperienced in relation to the immigrant groups who are the subject of their stories provide accurate and balanced reports. The competency of those preparing reports and of those deciding what will appear in the media are critical in the portrayal of immigrants, and will reflect the news and production values of the organisation as well as those of the individual and professional groups concerned (see Cottle, 2000: 2; Abel, 1997). Of particular concern is the tabloidisation of the media generally (which has occurred in the last two decades in New Zealand and elsewhere) and of the implications of this for the reporting and representation of groups such as immigrants. As Cottle (2000: 22) has said:

*These processes [tabloidisation] indirectly and directly impact on subject selection and silences within and across the news...and often inform the sensationalist and/or support spin that accompany their presentation.*

Another issue is the under-representation of immigrants in the media or their mis-representation in terms of stereotypical characterisations or their portrayal in a negative light as constituting a threat or a problem (see Cottle,
2000: 8) in what is a complex process of image creation (see Barker, 1999). This can take a variety of forms. At its most extreme, this may entail "an impersonal view, with minorities given an active voice only in the context of violence, comic relief or stereotypes" (Jakubowicz, 1994: 185), and/or immigrants and ethnic minorities are constructed "as a series of problems, objects and victims" (Gilroy quoted in Barker, 1999: 75).

There is also the question as to whether the under-representation of immigrant workers in the media contributes to the ability of the media to understand and reflect on culturally diverse societies. McGregor's (1991) research in New Zealand, for example, points to the under-representation of Maori journalists, and questions are asked about the competency of journalists to report on matters of importance to Maori and the wider community. This undoubtedly constitutes an important issue for the skills and connections available to mainstream mass media in New Zealand, both in relation to Maori and to immigrant and ethnic communities. There is a question as to whether more Maori and immigrant media workers would make a difference, or whether the culture and organisational practices of media organisations would effectively silence them (cf Mahtani, 2001: 123). Equally, as Alibhai-Brown (2001: 143) has noted, it is possible that media workers, not from the immigrant group in question, could provide perfectly adequate reporting and programmes:

...white journalists have shown themselves capable of understanding the deepest impulses of black and Asian communities [in Britain] and communicate these in a way that makes sense to all readers. They have also endeavoured not only to reflect the problems that multiculturalism has brought into a post-imperial society but do now, as a matter of course, celebrate these changes when appropriate.

This observation is endorsed by others, and there is some evidence of a degree of contestation and challenge to negative reporting, both across the mass media and within immigrant media (see Cottle, 2000: 9). This is true, at least in part, because it is as difficult to homogenise the media and/or the dominant group, as it is to homogenise immigrant communities, neither of which necessarily have common values and ideas (Abel, 1997).

Ultimately, the media help determine the way in which agendas are constructed and understood, the way in which dominant images and the language of public and private debates are formed or influenced, and provide a characterisation of the various players. Research by Ross (2000: 145) indicates that the media define the parameters and content of what multiculturalism and a multicultural society look like:
For so many people in this study, “multiculturalism” has come to mean cultural homogeneity, a proliferation of unicultures into which all their disparate and diverse voices, interests, views, identification and practices dissolve into a formless mass of stereotyped essences.

This finding gives rise to research questions concerning the way in which those in the media understand the culturally diverse society in which they operate, and the way in which the media organisations in which they work influence or determine practice and outputs. There will be limited material to indicate how this operates in New Zealand in what follows, but these are important questions that deserve much more attention. Mahtani (2001: 121) summarises these questions as follows:

How do the mainstream media think about their audiences?
Who do they think are watching and consuming their media?
What do they see as the impact of their perceptions of their audiences versus their actual demographics?
What are the steps being taken to address their diverse audience?

The media, according to Jakubowicz (1994: 192), are “conscious actors working in organisations, constantly making choices, and very often those choices are directly concerned with cultural representation...”. It would be helpful to have more detailed research on the culture and activities of media organisations and workers with regard to immigration and immigrants, and to help answer the questions posed by Mahtani above. While these issues are important, unfortunately they will not be addressed in any detail here. However, the reaction of audiences is researched.

Audiences

One aspect explored in the present research is the reaction of audiences to the way in which the media constructs immigrants generally, and their group in particular. Critical to this approach is the now widely accepted assumption that audiences are not passive, but react in quite different ways to media images and texts. In other words, audiences: select the media they want to engage with, and are then selective in terms of which bits they want to read, watch or listen to; reconstruct media messages and images; and piece together what they get from the media with what they know and understand already.

In this regard, even those who see the media as an active agent in the production and reconstruction of racism, regard audiences as active in their own right. For example, Van Dijk (1993: 242) observes that:
...our conception of media influences goes beyond that of immediate effects and agenda-setting functions of specific media messages or specific readers. Our discourse-processing theory of social communication and cognition defines media recipients as active and to a point independent information users, whose beliefs are strategically shaped and changed because of many cognitive, social, and community processes, and on the basis of many different discursive and other social influences.

As Jakubowicz (1994: 42) observes, "complexity rather than simplicity typifies the working environment, and multiple audiences relate to and use the media in their own patterns of social interaction". To over-generalise or assume that responses are uniform is to misunderstand the complex and active relationship between the media and audiences.

Barker (1999: 110), following on from this point, observes that audiences are governed by contextual and cultural issues:

- Meanings are bounded by the way the text is structured and by the domestic and cultural context of viewing [in relation to television];
- Audiences need to be understood in the contexts in which they watch television both in terms of meaning construction and the routines of daily life;
- Audiences are easily able to distinguish between fiction and reality....
- The processes of meaning construction and the place of television in the routines of daily life alter from culture to culture and in terms of gender and class within the same cultural community.

These issues will be explored – in a limited way – below, and they certainly deserve further attention, especially given the growing presence of alternative media that speak directly to the immigrant community.

**Alternative Media**

The discussion to this point has focussed on the mass media, on the way in which mass forms of the print, audio and visual media provide particular images and information concerning immigrants. But there are also important alternative media sources, particularly from within the immigrant communities and from countries of origin, which often use new forms of technology and which are accessed and supported by immigrant communities. Cottle (2000: 3) lists these as:
...international communications, audio and visual cassettes, mobile phones, mobile music systems, the Internet and email, digital cameras, photoc copiers and fax machines, camcorders, and home-based computerized music recording and production systems.

They provide an important and increasingly diverse set of alternatives which speak directly to the experiences of being an immigrant and provide (largely) a series of supportive and/or positive messages.

There are two fundamental types of media: those which operate locally to meet immigrant community needs in their country of destination, and those which connect the community back to their country of origin. Often, the media are a mixture of these two as homeland media products are interspersed with a local immigrant focus. New technologies such as global satellite broadcasting systems, the circulation of videos and the internet have greatly enhanced the ability of communities to maintain transnational connections (see Spoonley, 2001), to sustain transnational communities (see Aksoy and Robins, 2002), and to provide audiences with the “ordered, orderly, familiar [and], knowable” (Scannell, 1996: 153).

There is an interesting tension in immigrant media activities. The question is one of integration and intergroup activity. Do the immigrant media constitute an important factor in maintaining the cultural well-being of the community in question, or do the media act as an impediment to successful settlement? Or do immigrant media contribute equally to well-being and facilitate settlement? In asking these questions, it is also important to acknowledge the roles that such media play in providing a “safe place for ethnic cultures to thrive, whilst... providing an entrée for newly arrived immigrants who wish to adapt to their new environment” (Mahtani, 2001: 114). The function of easing their arrival and post-arrival process, and of contributing to cultural and language maintenance, must be balanced by broader questions of societal integration and under-standing. The same questions can be asked of the mass media as of those alternative media that are focused on immigrant communities.

Concluding Comments

In an Information Age in which the creation, circulation and use of information plays an ever greater role, the mass media continue to perform a critical gatekeeping role in the public domain, and by virtue of this role, influence the robustness of public processes and institutions. That said, it must also be acknowledged that various audiences are hardly passive
partners and the ability of (in this case) immigrant communities to sift and react in different and sometimes unanticipated ways should not be underestimated. With this qualification in mind, it is the tendency of the media to present, at best, a partial picture and, at worst, a distorted one, and to do so for those who have no immediate knowledge or contact with the issues and groups being discussed that invites scrutiny.
RESEARCH FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY

As part of the New Settlers Programme, which examines the settlement of immigrants in contemporary New Zealand, this project is concerned with relations between the host community (specifically the print media) and immigrant groups. In defining and portraying immigrants, the key question is what has been the contribution of the print media.

To answer the above question, the project was designed and developed with two data collection components. The first of these is a content analysis of the print media in the last decade (1993-2003). The print media was chosen for its accessibility and the ease with which a content analysis can proceed. The ephemeral nature of radio, the difficulty of getting transcripts and the impossibility of obtaining original broadcast material made this form of the media unsuitable. Television programmes were accessed and some comment is provided below. But again, the coverage was patchy and often very costly. The print media could be accessed much more easily and hard text provides a record of public debate and views, as well as an indication of the approach and activities of media organisations.

Any reports which focused on immigrants for the years 1993 to 2003 were identified, and then a copy obtained for analysis. The key paper surveyed was the New Zealand Herald, but other papers were also included as they provided key articles of one sort or another. For example, the Auckland community newspapers publication of Pat Booth and Yvonne Martin's "Inv-Asian" articles were a key moment in media reporting. On the other side of the ledger, there have been a series of articles, both short and more substantial, in publications such as North and South and Metro, which have also been included because of what they have contributed to public understanding. These items were then classified into areas according to their prime focus (e.g. political debate, economic aspects of migration etc), and an analysis conducted of the key imagery, the pre-eminent labels/words, the juxtaposition of words/images, and the tone of the particular article.

The second data collection component consisted of focus group interviews conducted separately with two groups of immigrants (Koreans, South Africans) and with a group of New Zealanders. Some key questions were asked about their experiences and views of the media. The Korean and South African focus groups were also asked about accessing alternative media. The questions asked followed the issues raised by Mahtani (2001: 119):
What do ethnic minorities expect of the media?
How do they perceive their treatment?
What mechanisms of media scrutiny have ethnic minorities developed, and what has been their impact?
What are racialised minorities as a group (not only the elites) saying?

If communal identities are imagined political communities which are produced, reproduced and modified largely through discursive and symbolic means, then these imagined communities will be reflected in the discursive practices and symbols used by the media, as well as the way in which the different communities understand and interact with media images. This is particularly important in the context of a constructed national (or sub-national) community which is perceived in some way as ‘normal’ or ‘acceptable’, while others are defined by their difference and excluded from these privileged identities.

New Zealand Research: Immigrants and the Media

The New Zealand media have played a variety of roles and presented a variety of images concerning immigrants and their settlement since the early 1990s. There are previous periods and incidents which provide an historical context to the present discussion, including the arrival of Asian immigrants from the 1860s (see Leckie, 1985), the concern with various ‘alien’ groups in the geo-political concerns and conflicts of the first half of the twentieth century - for example, the ‘Austrians’ from the Dalmatian coast of Croatia (Tlin, 1979) and settlers from Germany (Bade, 1993; 1998) - and the arrival of Pacific peoples from the 1960s (see Spoonley and Hirsh, 1990). But the prime focus here is the diversification of immigration flows in the wake of a reassessment of selection and approval procedures in 1986, and particularly in the decade 1993 to 2003.

In this time, distinctive periods and some considerable variability can be discerned in media coverage. This will be discussed in the next section. However, existing research, limited though it is, reflects this variability in approach. Some of the research points to the growing recognition within the media that diversity has positive benefits for New Zealand, although this tends to be qualified. Roscoe (2000) identified the television programme Immigrant Nation shown on TV One in January 1995, as providing an image of a rich and diverse cultural heritage framed as a positive aspect of contemporary New Zealand. The four groups chosen were Italian, Dalmatian,
Irish and Chinese. But Roscoe (2000: 257) then goes on to note:

...,communities [are] being presented as having assimilated and made a positive (and acceptable) contribution to New Zealand society, while also maintaining their "difference" and hence "exoticness" for the mainstream New Zealand audience.

The politicisation of immigration since the 1996 election has attracted a growing interest, largely focussed around the activities of New Zealand First and Winston Peters. In the content analysis presented in this report, print media coverage of New Zealand First and Winston Peters, or issues generated or associated with them, have provided one of the most consistent themes in the 1996 to 2003 period. Studies by Munshi (1998) and Spoonley and Berg (1997) have examined or commented on the role of newspaper coverage in the emergence of these politics, especially with the focus on Asian immigration and the imagery of 'invasion', although not all media reports deploy negative imagery (see Heeringa, 1996). Indeed, while such politics have continued to occupy considerable media attention, the media themselves have often been critical of anti-immigrant politics as the content analysis will confirm. In addition to these studies, there are sections of other articles which deal with immigrants and the media but there is surprisingly little.

**Race Relations Office and the Media**

An important source of information and research on immigrants and the media in New Zealand is provided by the annual reports of the Race Relations Office. In reviewing these reports, concern with the performance of the media on a range of issues to do with indigenous, immigrant and ethnic communities is an enduring theme. Issues relating to Maori-Pakeha relations have often dominated, but issues to do with media coverage of Pacific peoples, and more recently with Asian immigrants and refugees, have been a regular feature. Conciliators have worked to address the problems identified, sometimes with mixed success. For example, a *hui* (meeting) at Te Herenga Waka marae, Victoria University of Wellington, in 1988 brought together the media, Maori and others concerned, and led to some very passionate observations about the media. This subsequently led to a book (Spoony and Hirsh, 1990) which attracted some very negative responses from media around the country, notably as book reviews written by media workers themselves. On a television programme concerned with Maori and the media, the late Ernie Leonard observed that the media response emphasised the reason for the book in the first place: the media did not understand the
strength of the feeling in Maori – and other communities – on what was seen as inappropriate media coverage.

More recently, an annual report from the Office of the Race Relations Conciliator (1997: 11) included the following statement:

It seems editors have not always accepted the responsibility that lies with them generally not to stray outside the confines of the Human Rights Act 1993. The usual response is one that refers to the freedom of speech some editors consider applies to them even if in the exercise of such freedom, comments are published that have a clear racial flavour and are not only in bad taste but also entirely avoidable.

We take the view that freedom of speech is a very important freedom, which, properly applied, is an integral part of our democracy. Freedom of speech should never be used as an excuse, let alone a justification, for racially derogatory comment. Plainly editors of newspapers and magazines have a discretion that should be exercised with prudence when deciding, for example, whether or not to publish a letter that a member of the public has sent them.

The material from the Office of the Race Relations Conciliator, and what little prior research there has been in New Zealand, provided some guidance for the content analysis and the focus groups employed for this study.

Content Analysis

The content analysis is focused on the print media for the period 1993 to 2003. The New Zealand Herald is a prime focus with supplementary content analysis of other key publications (community newspapers in Auckland, plus the Dominion and the Evening Post in Wellington, the Christchurch Press, and magazines such as North and South, Metro and the Listener). A comprehensive search was made for articles in the New Zealand Herald dealing in some way with immigrants. These articles were classified into primary focus and type of reporting (editorial, feature, news) and an analysis was then undertaken of the key words used, their nature and juxtaposition, sources for the item, and an assessment made as to whether it was positive or negative.

A particular strength of content analysis is that it is an open, easily replicated and low cost process of investigation. Nevertheless, there are limitations to content analysis as a methodology. Mahtani (2001: 109-110) lists these as: it can be over-emphasised; it can be divorced from a context; it does not deal
with the process of construction nor the complex and varied decision-making processes; and there is a degree of subjectivity to its use. These are important limitations to recognise. Therefore, while the review of media coverage provided here attempts to be as encompassing as possible, the assessment of whether that analysis is adequate or appropriate is something that might be contested. If so, all the material used here relates to particular articles which can be accessed by other researchers who can offer their own assessment, and explain why they agree or disagree with the analysis offered in the following pages.

A number of issues guided the assessment of the media coverage of immigration and immigrants. In part, these concern the degree to which the media may misrepresent immigrants and immigration, but there is also the matter raised by Alibhai-Brown (2001) concerning the ability of media workers to reflect on a culturally diverse country and to respond appropriately and positively to such developments. While the following list focuses on a number of negative aspects, all derived from the available research literature, there is no preconception that, for example, reporting will rely on stereotypes. But each of these issues has been canvassed in the literature and they provide a litmus test of media performance.

- **Stereotypes.** What stereotypes are present in media reports of immigrants? The literature, particularly from Canada and Australia, suggests that there are some common stereotypical images in the most recent period of immigration, many involving Asians. They could include: unsafe driving, limited English language facility, ‘monster’ houses, ‘sticking to themselves’, and above average academic performance.

- **Threat images.** This issue concerns the degree to which immigrants are seen as a threat to an existing or host community, although there is a sub-theme about the degree of hostility between immigrant groups. Images of a threat, particularly couched in terms of ‘invasion’, ‘flooding’ or ‘criminality’ (e.g. Triad gangs), all create a sense that immigrants are undermining those things deemed important by some imagined host community.

- **Homogenisation of immigrants.** There are a number of aspects to the use of labels such as ‘Asian’ and ‘Pacific Islanders’ that assume or imply homogenisation and which become racialised boxes on occasions and do not reflect the significant diversity within and between immigrant groups. There is also the issue of ‘immigrant’ as a code which is understood to refer to particular immigrants and not all such persons. In the rhetoric of New Zealand First, for example, ‘immigrants’ almost inevitably means Asian immigrants, not South African, Australian, British or North American immigrants (see Munshi, 1998).
• *Immigrants and nation-building.* The move from the relatively homogeneous immigrant flows from mid-twentieth century New Zealand to the diversification of flows, first with Pacific peoples from the 1960s through to a growing Asian presence in the 1990s, has raised some interesting issues with regard to nation-building. In essence, these issues concern the degree to which the diversification of flows (specifically involving various Asian groups in the period covered by this report) is constructed as being antithetical to the endorsement of a common set of values and institutions which are defined as central to the nation-building project that imagines ‘New Zealand’.

• *Trivialisation or the misunderstanding of immigrants and their experiences.* This might be reflected in the misrepresentation of issues, values and institutions which are important to immigrants, or it might be that the media simply do not cover or represent immigrants. Advertisements are an important barometer of such issues as they may or do invoke stereotypical images, homogenisation and a feeling of unacceptable difference.

To explore the degree to which these issues might be present in media reporting, the articles collected for the content analysis were classified into a number of topic areas.

**Immigrant Focus Groups**

Three focus groups, all of which involved Auckland-based people, were organised and conducted in July-August 2002 for their perceptions of the media’s role and performance with regard to immigration. The groups involved Koreans, South Africans and the host New Zealand community. The number of participants involved were small (5, 4 and 3, respectively), nevertheless their answers to the questions discussed (see Appendix 1) provide some interesting material, and an indication of what could and should be researched more thoroughly. This pilot research highlighted the need for more extensive research on the impact of media reporting on various immigrant groups and on the reactions and use of the media by these groups, including the use of alternative media.
This section of the report deals with the analysis of the print media, and the nature of the images and coverage which occurred. It is grouped in sub-sections (Politicisation of Immigration; Refugees; Asians; South Africans; Economic Growth, Employment and Welfare; Crime and Immigrants) and is followed by a separate section on Columns and Features. Within each of these sections, there are key themes or issues identified and described.

Before beginning, it is important to acknowledge that there are distinct periods and developments which help frame and focus the attention of the print media. The choice of 1993 as the start point reflected two considerations: first, it provided the opportunity to examine print media coverage in a decade which profoundly altered the nature and significance of immigration in New Zealand; and second, because 1993 saw the publication of the “The Inv-Asian” articles which marked the first stage of a moral panic about Asian immigration. Subsequently, this panic led to the politicisation of immigration in the 1996 General Election, with particular concerns raised about Asian immigration, and became a major focus in the 2002 General Election, thereby consolidating anti-immigrant politics as a factor, and sometimes a feature, in New Zealand politics. Politicisation, in turn, gave rise to a tendency to associate immigration with Asians, to perceive them as problem (racialised) immigrants, to obscure the significant differences that exist amongst Asian immigrant communities, and to focus attention on them largely to the exclusion of immigrants from other origins. For these reasons, immigration policy and the role of immigration in transforming New Zealand has meant considerable attention in the public domain (including the mass media) on immigration in a way that has defined the last decade. However, it is also noticeable that the approach of the print media has recently changed, and while some politicians may continue to racialise immigrants, there are those in the print media who have provided a counter or positive construction, through columns, feature articles and series on immigration.

What follows is an outline of the key themes and images that have been apparent in the media in relation to particular issues. Literally thousands of specific items were read and categorised and the analysis attempts to capture the predominant images and contributions as a way of mapping the last decade, as it has appeared in the print media.
Politicisation of Immigration

If a single instance of a print media contribution is to be selected in relation to how some New Zealanders understand the issues of immigration and the problematisation of Asian immigrants, then two articles published in Auckland community newspapers that are part of the Suburban Newspapers Group deserve that recognition. They appeared in April 1993, covered two pages in subsequent editions (see Eastern Courier, 16 April 1993, pp. 6-7 and 23 April 1993, pp. 6-7) and were written by Pat Booth and Yvonne Martin. The first article was followed by this description: “Big business straight out of the mould; Disoriented drivers a new threat on Kiwi roads; Where the bid bids come from”. In the second article, the description of the key themes included: “Pupils show their class; A new life at the top Downunder; Wins and losses in the immigration lotto; The new numbers game”. The “Inv-Asian” focus articles were not all negative, but there was an emphasis on the “problems” that Asian migration was causing, and would continue to cause: “Whichever way you look at it, New Zealand has had/has got/will have problems over Asian migration” (Eastern Courier, 23 April 1993). The text went on to say:

What lies behind the image of crowds of Asian children coming out of the best schools, the buy-up of expensive homes, slow, erratic drivers in big Mercedes and migration figures which suggest Auckland is becoming the Taipei/Hong Kong/Seoul of the South Pacific?

There was a negative response from a number of groups to these articles, including the government, and a complaint was laid with the Press Council. Pat Booth continues to write a column for the same newspapers, and has referred back to the original articles and the response that they produced, including a column titled “Racist or realists” (North Shore Times Advertiser, 25 July 1995), in which he claimed that what he and Martin wrote simply reflected an assessment of the reality of the situation, and was not a racist contribution. More recently, he wrote (North Shore Times Advertiser, 26 November 2002):

It was as if the roof fell in on me and the other Suburban investigator, Yvonne Martin, when people who were my fellow liberals on other issues reared up, plus vocal academics and twitchy politicians who slated the analysis as wrong and racist.

The original articles in 1993 are significant in a number of ways. They mark an explicit acknowledgement and concern at the arrival of Asian migrants as a negative development in New Zealand’s immigration policy in the wake of
the changes after 1986. But the content of the articles also articulates the negative images and stereotypes that have continued since: the driving of Asians, the buying of expensive homes, the pressure put on schools, the numbers suggesting that Auckland will become the “Taipei/Hong Kong/Seoul of the South Pacific”. Here were themes that were to be repeated by certain politicians in the 1996 General Election, and then again in various ways in 2002. The stereotypes are explicit, along with the threat that Asian immigration poses to Auckland and Aucklanders. It is not the hard racism of earlier periods of anti-Asian sentiment from the late 1800s through to the 1930s, but the problematising of Asians and the over-generalising of behaviour justifies classifying these articles as an example of the media racialising a particular group of immigrants. The articles are cited amongst immigrants as an example of New Zealand’s hostility towards them, and they have gained notoriety more widely as signalling a change in the public debates about immigration. For this reason, the April 1993 publication of the “Inv-Asian” articles marks both the beginning of the politicisation of Asian immigration and the approach adopted by some in the media in framing debates about the topic.

Winston Peters and New Zealand First

In reviewing the decade, and the coverage of immigration issues in the print media, it is the dominant role played by Winston Peters in defining and generating debate which stands out. It is particularly noticeable during the 1996 and 2002 election campaigns. There are some aspects which characterise both Winston Peters’ contribution and the relationship of many in the media to him.

The first aspect is the politicisation of immigration. This is hardly new, both in terms of a distant past (the anti-Asian politics of the 1890s through to the 1920s) or a more recent past. There have been periodic attempts to characterise and criticise immigrants, including those most culturally like Pakeha, such as the ‘bash a Pom’ campaigns of the mid-1970s. In the post-war period, however, the pre-eminent and most sustained campaign involved the immigration and settlement of Pacific peoples, often indiscriminately without regard to differences in the status of Cook Islanders, Niueans and Tokelauans as New Zealand citizens (often ignored or not understood) as compared with Tongans and Samoans. In the wake of growing economic problems after the 1973 oil crises, Pacific peoples were defined as being a threat to law and order, as competing for various resources such as jobs, education and health services, and as ‘overstayers’ (see Spoonley and Hirsh, 1990). The intensity of the concern, voiced by politicians (both Labour and National), representatives of government agencies such as the police and immigration, and the public,
combined with the racialisation of Pacific peoples (i.e. defining them as problems in terms of the ‘normal’ functioning of New Zealand society) justifies labelling the response to their immigration and settlement as a moral panic. A similar moral panic occurred in the mid-1990s.

Changes to immigration policy from 1986 facilitated the immigration of increasing numbers of Asians, specifically Hong Kong Chinese, Taiwanese and Koreans in the early 1990s. As indicated above, the “Inv-Asian” articles in Auckland community newspapers in 1993 are an important marker in the racialisation of Asian immigrants. Winston Peters began to contribute to this debate in February 1996, when he expressed concern that 55,000 applicants had been granted permanent residence in New Zealand during 1995, with 60 percent of those coming from Asia. This was endorsed by public opinion polls which reflected concerns about the levels of immigration and the number of Asian arrivals (see Trlin et al., 1998: 228-235). Peters argued for 10,000 applicants to be approved for permanent residence and during the 1996 election campaign, he and his party, New Zealand First, made immigration a major election issue. Since then, Peters has continued to attack the government of the day for its immigration policies, made immigration an issue in the 2002 election campaign and has consistently expressed opposition to the levels of immigration and to who is selected.

As a by-product of the politicisation of immigration, the label ‘immigrant’ has become associated with Asians - what Munshi (1998) terms the “Asianisation” of immigration - with a number of effects. One is that a survey of letters to the editor makes it clear that for many people, ‘immigrant’ and opposition to current ‘immigrants’ is a code for concern about Asian immigrants. Peters has been criticised for contributing to this association but has regularly denied it and asserted that he is concerned about all immigrants. Nevertheless, the continued immigration of Europeans, especially British immigrants, or those from North America, is not seen as an issue by the media, the politicians or by the public in periodic opinion polls (see Trlin et al., 1998). A side effect has been for other groups to define themselves in contrast to this association. Some South Africans, for example, decline to see themselves as ‘immigrants’, despite the fact that they have settled in New Zealand in the last decade. When their self-perception is questioned, it is clear that the politicisation of immigration, and the understanding that the issue is a concern about Asian immigration, encourages them to decline to identify themselves as contributing to problematic immigration.

Turning to the print media coverage, it is clear that while Peters provides good copy, the media have an interesting relationship with him. New Zealand First announced its immigration policy in March 1996, and this was covered
in the *New Zealand Herald* (30 March 1996) under a headline "Shape up or ship out". It was described as a policy "which had been worked out in consultation with business and community interests, which will serve the country's needs and what it can afford". By the time of the campaign itself, Peters' strategy of taking his concerns into areas that were immigrant destinations gave him further publicity. The benefits were obvious. New Zealand First had 6 percent support in January 1996 but this had risen to 30 percent by May. However, the media itself, in the form of editorials, began to express concern at Peters' approach, as well as reporting opposition from other political parties and from the Asian communities (see "Migrant loyalty should be rewarded with tolerance", Tjoa Soei Hock, *National Business Review*, 22 March 1996; "Asian arrivals are uniting against racism", *Sunday Star-Times*, 6 October 1996). The *Sunday Star-Times* (7 April 1996) ran an editorial arguing that political games concerning immigrants must stop, while the *Listener* (16 March 1996) compared Peters to American neo-conservatives such as Pat Buchanan, and argued that New Zealand First's populist immigration politics were unfair on all immigrants. The *Evening Post* (21 March 1997) said that Peters "whipped up overt racism" and his anti-immigrant politics were a "cynical" election strategy. This concern from the media, especially via editorials, was to become very obvious by the 2002 election.

New Zealand First's anti-immigration politics were much less effective in the 1999 election, and attracted relatively little coverage. However, this changed again by 2002. Peters and New Zealand First ran a campaign which centred on three things: law and order, ending Treaty of Waitangi settlements, and immigration. Throughout 2002, a vigorous campaign provided the party and Peters with considerable opportunities to attack immigration policy. What was interesting this time around, however, was the extensive opposition to Peters and New Zealand First from the media.

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1 See coverage of his campaign in southeast Auckland, *New Zealand Herald*, 8 October 1996. There was also extensive television coverage throughout 1996 (see *One Network News*, 1 February 1996; 13 February 1996; *Holmes* 14 February 1996; *One Network News*, 15 February 1996) all focused on Peters and New Zealand First's immigration policy, including political meetings in Howick.
The following list indicates something of the nature of this opposition:

- *New Zealand Herald*, Editorial (13 August 2002) “Migrants always welcome” and “No other party [apart from New Zealand First] tried to make political mileage at the expense of migrants...we need people who have a positive attitude to the increasingly borderless world in which business and nations will have to earn their way”.


- *Sunday Star-Times*, Editorial (17 November 2002) “Peters’ stirring disgraceful” and “Winston Peters’ prophecy about an immigrant holocaust is disgraceful and absurd...Peters’ own recommendation – 10,000 immigrants a year – is grotesque and shows how frivolous and opportunistic his argument really is”.

- *Listener* (21-27 November 2002) “So, is Winston Peters a racist?” and Jane Clifton’s column, “Fear and loathing on the immigration trail”.

Columnists tended to endorse editorial opposition with some, such as Tapu Misa (*New Zealand Herald*, 17 July 2002, “Don’t fret: Our xenophobia goes back a long way”) and Raybon Kan (*Sunday Star-Times*, 21 July 2002, “When ethnicity becomes a state of mind”), being very critical of Peters. There were also a number of features which sought to put the issues into a broader context (see material later in this report). The *New Zealand Herald* (8 July 2002) ran a major article titled “Race questions open up minefield” followed by another feature, “Welcome to our world” (*New Zealand Herald*, 13-14 July 2002), which examined the impact of immigrants on Auckland in areas such as population growth, house prices, jobs, education, health, traffic and welfare. The *Sunday Star-Times* (17 November 2002) ran an article by A. Hubbard, “The race-caller”, accompanied by an article on “The fourth great immigration wave” which profiled articulate, well-educated Sri Lankan immigrant brothers, one the CEO of Southland District Health Board and the other the CEO of Otago Museum, as a contrast to some of the comments offered by Peters.

There were exceptions, such as the *National Business Review* (22 November 2002) report of a poll under the headline “New Zealand First’s immigration trump card wins the day”, although others were less complimentary. For example, a *One Network News/Colmar Brunton* poll released on 18 November 2002, noted that while there was support for Peters and opposition to Asian immigration, 71 percent of those polled said that Peters was causing racial divisions.
What attracted significant attention was a speech at a New Zealand First party conference in 2002 by Peter Brown in which he mentioned Enoch Powell who, it was claimed, was “subsequently proved to be largely correct” in his opposition to non-white immigration to the United Kingdom. Initial responses came from individuals such as the Race Relations Commissioner (“Enoch talk racist cant – Fortuin”, New Zealand Herald, 13 August 2002), but the print media also expressed its opposition (see New Zealand Herald, Editorial, 13 August 2002, “History proved Powell wrong”).

To sum up, it must be acknowledged that Peters’ frequent direct attacks on immigration policy and the presence and behaviour of immigrants, was a major theme of media coverage in the period from 1996 to 2003. It constituted a key element in the politicisation of immigration and contributed to the association of concerns about immigration with Asian immigrants (see Munshi, 1998). There is a strong threat image running through much of the New Zealand First commentary reported in the print media. Immigrants are homogenised, especially Asians, so that stereotypes about issues such as driving habits, English language competency, and the use of wealth to dominate housing markets and facilities such as education are readily apparent. Whether intentional or not, immigration was racialised with Asian immigrants being seen as ‘problem’ immigrants, as a threat to common New Zealand values and institutions.

What is equally interesting, however, is the way in which the print media, with very few exceptions, have become increasingly critical of the racialisation of immigration. It was evident in the 1996 election campaign, but it was much more obvious by the 2002 campaign. Editors and columnists voiced their opposition to anti-immigration politics, and were openly and explicitly critical of Peters and New Zealand First. Features were provided which put the immigration issues into context, with the regular use of immigrant profiles to demonstrate their success and contribution, the use of statistics to undermine New Zealand First’s claims, a nuanced understanding of both immigration policy and the process of settlement, human interest stories and generally positive reporting of the contribution of immigrants to cultural diversity. Inevitably, there were news stories which reported on comments from Peters and New Zealand First, but print media coverage was now more critical of his and his party’s position on immigration, ranging from dismissal to scepticism.
Refugees

Refugees emerged as one of the touchstone issues in relation to New Zealand immigration policy in the decade 1993 to 2003. The print media coverage and discussion is mixed in relation to the nature of the issues, the impact on New Zealand and what ought to be (or is) the appropriate policy. A number of themes are apparent.

Refugees did not attract much coverage until 1997 and thereafter. Prior to this, much of the public concern and political attention related to the arrival of Asian immigrants. But internationally and domestically there was growing concern over 'bogus' refugees, and confusion about the difference between refugees and asylum seekers. In the media reports and comments, the UNHCR-mandated refugees, selected as part of New Zealand’s annual quota of 750, were confused with asylum seekers who sought to enter New Zealand at the border for a variety of reasons, but primarily because of persecution in their country of origin. The number of asylum seekers escalated through the 1990s, presenting significant problems in assessing their claims and what should be done while their cases were being considered.

In 1997, the then Minister of Immigration, Max Bradford, announced that the government was to set tighter rules on refugees to exclude “non-genuine asylum seekers” (Evening Post, 26 April 1997). Patricia Schnauer, an ACT MP, contributed to this debate by arguing that refugees cost the taxpayer millions, especially when the government failed to deal with “bogus claimants” and to send refugees back to their homelands (New Zealand Herald, 7 August 1997). William Smith, the refugee coordinator for Amnesty International, argued against this position on the same page and talked about the “risk of ugly xenophobia” (New Zealand Herald, 7 August 1997). This was followed up the next year when it was announced that the Department of Immigration would “crack down on ‘bogus’ asylum seekers” (Dominion, 3 June 1998), and that documentation would be checked in Asia. In the same article, it was pointed out by Amnesty International and the UNHCR that there was often a need for false papers to escape a country. But the Minister, Bradford, noted that 70 percent of the 2,000 asylum seekers were bogus, and that new and tougher policy measures were called for (Dominion, 3 June 1998). This view gained media support, such as a Dominion (11 May 1998) editorial titled “Keep bogus refugees out”, although it was asylum seekers and not refugees that were being referred to.

This issue of ‘genuine’ refugees versus ‘fraudulent’ asylum seekers continued as a theme in the print media into the new millennium. The Sunday Star Times
(28 October 2001), for example, argued that New Zealand must secure its borders, especially as there was concern about people smuggling activity. The following year, the debate on ‘bogus refugees’ was fuelled by reports of inaction over the case of two Afghans and a scam involving conference attendance in New Zealand. In the latter case, the National Business Review (13 September 2002) ran a story by a travel writer who claimed that conferences were providing a cover for “African refugee scams”, and that the industry body involved (Convention and Incentives New Zealand) was concerned about fraudulent refugees attending local conferences in order to gain access to the country. As for the two Afghans, it appeared that they had stayed in New Zealand for eighteen months, even though their applications seemed to be false, and politicians argued over which political party was to blame for a situation in which “bogus” claims were being made and not addressed (New Zealand Herald, 18 October 2002). The fact that there might be terrorists amongst those seeking to enter New Zealand was another issue of international anxiety.

Sometimes, the commentary on refugees and asylum seekers has clearly bordered on racism. For example, a public opinion poll (NBR-Compaq, National Business Review, 5 October 2001) found that 37 percent of New Zealanders (typically blue collar workers, students, the self-employed and unemployed) thought the annual refugee quota of 750 was too high. While the National Business Review gave prominence to this opposition, noting that “more than one-third of Kiwis think the refugee intake too high”, it must be pointed out that 48 percent of those polled thought the quota was about right and 10 percent thought it was too low. In another case, the Evening Post (11 April 2002) talked about the Government’s obligations as not simply being confined to refugees, especially “given New Zealanders’ ambivalence towards refugees and immigrants of other-than-European extraction”, and argued that there should be a stern line taken with “would-be immigrants”.

With this background, there are some interesting distinctions and debates in the media which concerned refugees. In the mid- and late-1990s, there was considerable coverage of refugees from the former Yugoslavia, especially groups such as those from Kosovo (see de Graaf, 2001). Generally, the media coverage was sympathetic but there was concern that while many of these refugees were highly qualified, they were finding it difficult to settle and gain appropriate employment. For example, a New Zealand Herald (2-3 October, 1999) feature discussed how “highly qualified refugees” from Kosovo had difficulty getting jobs. Issues which needed to be addressed for successful resettlement included language training, trauma counselling and skills training. In contrast, Somali refugees have had a mixed press. In the late 1990s, some print media stories portrayed them in a negative light. This
negative portrayal continued into the new millennium, in part because of certain incidents such as the murder of a Tongan in the Auckland suburb of Owairaka by a group of Somalis. The *New Zealand Herald* (2-3 March 2002) talked of a “Somali mob rampaging through the streets...of Owairaka”, although it then went on to indicate that the issues were complex. However, the use of descriptors such as ‘mob’ and ‘rampaging’ do tend to establish a particular orientation. Somali refugees have received more sympathetic coverage in recent years, but there have been concerns expressed at their dress, the occurrence of female genital mutilation, their lack of English language competence and their tendency to cluster together. Their distinctive appearance, especially given the dress style of some Somali women, makes them ‘racially’ visible.

Despite the distinctions made between different groups, what is interesting is the number of articles since 1999 which have expressed sympathetic concern for the plight of refugees. This sympathetic stance appears to have stemmed from disquiet over the resources provided for refugees. For example: the refugee centre at Mangere was described as an embarrassment (*New Zealand Herald*, 6 October 1999); concern was expressed at the possible closure of a Sandringham hostel for refugees (*New Zealand Herald*, 19 August 1999); the *Listener* (Philp, 1999) provided details of how refugees were processed and what happened after their arrival; and in 2000, it was noted that refugees' needs were not being met (*Evening Standard*, 9 March 2000; *North Harbour News*, 17 March 2000). A human-interest dimension or perspective was added in 2000 when *Metro* (see Naden, 2000) provided details of the personal stories of refugees. During the next two years this dimension was augmented by the appearance of a number of stories which provided details of refugee life prior to and after arrival in New Zealand. They included “Alone in a strange country” (*Dominion*, 20 June 2001), “Surviving a strange new land” (*Dominion*, 6 July 2001) and “Refugees face harsh realities of adapting to New Zealand” (*North Shore Times Advertiser*, 26 October 2001). There were also a number of stories about the level of refugee engagement with New Zealand institutions. For example, the *North Shore Times Advertiser* (6 September 2001) focused on a Kurd from Iraq under the headline “Refugee cherishes his right to vote”. Finally, there was the case of Algerian asylum seeker Ahmed Zaoui; first imprisoned in December 2002, the circumstances of his imprisonment and the advice received about his alleged terrorist links had become a focus of public debate by August 2003 (see “The running man”, *Listener*, 16 August 2003).

In summary, three general patterns are evident in media reporting on refugees. First, there has been a contrast between those reports endorsing political concerns over ‘bogus’ refugees/asylum seekers in the late 1990s, and the more sympathetic reporting of personal stories of difficulty (and at times triumph) since 1999. The concern with ‘fraudulent’ or ‘bogus’
refugees/asylum seekers was initially driven by political debates and the concerns of government ministers, but there was support in the media (as expressed in editorials) for the need to take a tougher line. Second, there is a degree of confusion apparent in the comments of some politicians and media workers between ‘asylum seekers’ and ‘refugees’. Although this confusion has not been so apparent since 2001, the mistaken use by media workers of the term ‘refugee’ in items actually concerned with ‘asylum seekers’ obscures an important status distinction and thereby detracts from public understanding of the issue(s) involved. Finally, there has been a notable difference in the treatment accorded particular refugee groups. For example, those from Kosovo (and Bosnia) have typically been treated with sympathy while those from Ethiopia and Somalia have been portrayed as ‘problem’ refugees. An early Listener article (Campbell, 1995), profiling refugees from Ethiopia, noted that the difficulties of settling in New Zealand were not understood and that there was a “mutual culture of incomprehension”. Both points are still true to some extent but given recent media coverage of the challenges faced by refugees and the cultural differences between them and the host community, there is now less reason for this to be the case.

**Asians**

As pointed out earlier, the diversification of immigrant flows in the early 1990s produced a significant political backlash, effectively starting with the “Inv-Asian” articles in Auckland community newspapers in 1993. The role of New Zealand First and Winston Peters in the politicisation and racialisation of Asian immigrants has been discussed along with the way in which the label ‘immigrants’ was largely reserved for Asians by the mid-1990s. Further, the label ‘Asian’ overrode significant differences between various immigrant groups and represented a racialised box or label in political and media usage. These points should be borne in mind in the course of the following analysis and discussion of the print media coverage of Asian immigrants.

Beginning with the Booth and Martin articles in 1993, there was often an emphasis on the ‘problems’ presented by Asian immigrants, specifically the negative impacts associated with their arrival or what were deemed to be their essential characteristics. Some of this coverage reflected a grudging respect, notably with regard to the success of Asians in the education system. One columnist (Hames, 1996) commented on why “Asian students beat everyone” and compared this to the poor educational performance of Maori. Respect was mixed with concern as to what this success might do to New Zealand’s education system, and the implications for New Zealanders. Other reports commented on New Zealanders’ concerns at the ‘flood’ of Asian
immigrants. A survey reported in the *Dominion* (20 July 1996), for example, observed that New Zealanders felt that there were “too many Asian, [and] Islander immigrants” while another report had the headline “Migrant flood causes Shore funding crises” (*Shore News*, 30 January 2002). There were also scare stories about what Asians were doing to other institutions such as the health system (“Health on cheap for rich migrants”, *Sunday Star Times*, 26 March 1995).

But media reports such as the above were accompanied by others which emphasised the need for appropriate responses from New Zealanders, the need to encourage successful settlement, and the need to acknowledge the expectations and experiences of Asian communities. The *New Zealand Herald* (20 February 1995) remarked on the need to face the “challenges of cultural diversity”, and the fact that Asians were concerned at the growth in anti-Asian feeling. The *Sunday Star Times* (12 November 1995) acknowledged that it was a testing time for Asian immigrants, noted the difficulty of getting into the country and queried whether immigration policies were racist. This query was in part prompted by the introduction in October 1995 of the IELTS-5 English language test for both skilled and business migrants, seen in some Asian countries as racist, and the *Sunday Star Times* pointed out that many New Zealanders would fail the test. At the time of the 1996 General Election, there were even some articles that referred explicitly to ‘rednecks’ upsetting Asian migrants (*New Zealand Herald*, 19 September 1996), and Asians were reported as pleading for less criticism and negative comments (Hubbard, 1996).

In the wake of the 1996 election, with its politically inspired focus on the negative consequences of Asian immigration, it is interesting to note that the coverage in the late 1990s begins to give more attention to positive aspects. Though some stories still emphasised the negative aspects, they were outnumbered by assessments of the importance of Asians for the development of New Zealand. During 1999, for example, there was concern that Asian migrants were not finding New Zealand an attractive destination (*Dominion*, 20 August 1999) and what this might mean for the economy. One particular incident in 2001 deserves attention here. An immigrant, Esther Loong, was profiled and the reasons given for her return to Singapore described (“Where the heart is”, *Dominion*, 24 August 2001). It prompted a letter from a reader identified as Peter Sullivan (*Dominion*, 3 September 2001) which included the following comment: “I am overjoyed to read of the departure of Esther Loong and her family...Their business practices have been an absolute disaster for this country”. His comment elicited an interesting response, and of the ten letters published in the *Dominion* (5 September 2001; 6 September 2001), only one was sympathetic to Sullivan
while the rest deplored his comment and the departure of Loong. The *Dominion* (11 September 2001) then ran an article (“In the eye of the letter writing storm”) profiling Sullivan. Overall, the incident is interesting for the way in which a negative comment from a letter writer drew a significant response in support of the migrant concerned and the contribution of Asian immigrants more generally. Assuming, of course, that the letters published were representative of those received by the *Dominion’s* Editor, the incident symbolises an apparent change in perception among some New Zealanders with regard to the presence and contribution of Asian immigrants.

There were some important sub-themes in this media focus on Asian immigrants, two of which are dealt with here as they helped define these immigrants in the New Zealand public domain. The first of these is English language competency. As a means of tightening up entry to New Zealand, and in the context of a significant backlash against Asian immigrants, the government introduced the IELTS-5 English language requirement in 1995. The question of what might be expected of immigrants in terms of language competency was largely associated with immigrants from Asia, even though it involved migrants from a wide range of other sources. It was obvious in such headlines as “Pre-entry English urged for Asians” (*New Zealand Herald*, 15 June 1994) and “One in five Asian immigrants can’t speak in English” (*Sunday Star Times*, 11 January 1998). Further changes to policy in November 2002, when the English language requirement for skilled migrants was raised to IELTS-6.5, provoked another flurry of interest from the media. The move was seen as a way of cutting the number of Asian immigrants (see *New Zealand Herald*, 20 November 2002), and an editorial defined it as “Labour’s sell-out on migrants” and a response to Winston Peters (*New Zealand Herald*, 21 November 2002). It was a move that also produced a clash between the Minister of Immigration (Lianne Dalziel) and Winston Peters (*Dominion Post*, 21 November 2002), and a challenge to New Zealanders in terms of their own English language competency (“So you think you know how to speak English?” *Dominion Post*, 21 November 2002).

The second issue, that has increasingly defined Asian immigration and the contribution of Asians to New Zealand, has been the growing significance of international or export education. Even when Asian immigration was being politicised in the mid-1990s, the print media were carrying stories about the importance of international students (e.g. “Foreign students a growth industry”, *Sunday Star Times* 28 April 1996). In 2002, however, there was a warning from Winston Peters about “Asian student numbers” and their impact on education and the wider community (*Sunday Star Times*, 24 November 2002). But by this time, despite questions about the various difficulties they faced, the adequacy of the homestay provision and regulatory
framework, their numbers (in excess of 70,000) and the income they generated ($1.8 billion) were being given attention as a major earner for New Zealand and as a factor transforming Auckland’s declining CBD (see White, 2002). On the other hand, there were students who were technically permanent residents but who were members of ‘astronaut’ families with at least one parent working overseas. The concern was that they were not paying international student fees but were treated as domestic students (New Zealand Herald, 27 September 2002), and were putting pressure on schools struggling to cope with large numbers of non-English speakers.

To sum up, the coverage of Asian immigrants in the print media can be divided into two phases. The first is obvious in the early and mid-1990s when newspapers - by their choice of stories and the wording of those stories - certainly contributed to public perceptions of the problems deemed to be associated with their arrival and settlement. They were described as ‘Asian immigrants’ with little or nothing to indicate the significant variations in cultural and other characteristics between immigrants from different parts of Asia. But even in this early period, there was some coverage which suggested a more complex picture. By the late 1990s, there was concern that Asian immigrants were less interested in New Zealand, and the emphasis was increasingly on their associated economic benefits. After 2000, both the negative coverage and wording tended to be in the minority, and there was now more detailed and balanced reporting, to the extent that the experiences and views of Asian communities were given more prominence. This change is confirmed with the material provided in feature articles (see below). Although there is still a tendency in some quarters to see Asians as a relatively homogeneous group with a broadly common culture and facing similar issues, there is evidence of a wider acceptance that Asian communities are now part of a culturally diverse society and that their immigration and participation has a range of impacts – cultural, economic, social – which may benefit New Zealand.

South Africans

Since the mid-1990s, South Africans have consistently been one of the most significant immigrant groups in terms of the numbers arriving each year, typically as skilled migrants accompanied by immediate family members, and once settled they have often assisted and/or encouraged the immigration of other family members and friends. Interestingly, with two notable exceptions (see below), they have attracted little attention from the print media. The question is why? Is it because they have not been racialised in the way that Pacific peoples were in the 1970s and Asian groups were in the 1990s? A
survey of the media does not provide a satisfactory answer, but in terms of column centimetres, there is little that identifies South African immigrants explicitly, or highlights their presence, either in a negative or positive sense.

The two exceptions concern the presence of an extremist and a call for support for Afrikaans tuition in schools. In the first case, the media gave considerable coverage in May 1994 to the presence of a South African immigrant, Jan Smith, who was described as a white supremacist living in Pakuranga (New Zealand Herald, 11 May 1994; 25 May 1994). His involvement in a “white holy war” and the question of whether such a person ought to obtain a residency permit became a public issue with extensive print (e.g. Sunday Star Times, 15 May 1994) and television coverage. Given the politics surrounding New Zealand’s rugby contacts with apartheid South Africa in previous decades, and the intensity of community feeling on such matters, media attention to Jan Smith echoed the concerns of commentators such as John Minto about the possible racist attitudes of some South African immigrants. In the end, with the departure of Smith, this particular issue disappeared, but the media coverage is well remembered by some South Africans as the focus group confirmed (see ‘Audience Research’ later in this report).

The second issue was a call from the Afrikaanse Klub to introduce Afrikaans into schools as part of a push to preserve “our [Afrikaans] culture” (North Shore Times Advertiser, 23 November 1999). This issue was generally focused on Auckland’s North Shore as the place where tuition (if the call was successful) might be implemented, although South African immigrants elsewhere also contributed to the debate. Letters deploring such a move, largely from other South Africans, appeared in the North Shore Times (26 November 1999; 30 November 1999) with some apologising for the arrogance of the call, describing it as an embarrassment and declaring “we’re in New Zealand not South Africa”. George Deeb, prominent in the South Africa New Zealand (SANZ) charitable trust, indicated that the Afrikaanse Klub represented only 58 families and the call for Afrikaans tuition was dropped (North Shore Times Advertiser, 7 December 1999). Though short-lived, this issue was of interest because it highlighted considerable differences between South African groups, in this case primarily English and Boer South Africans, although there is also an important Jewish dimension to this migration (New Zealand Jewish Chronicle, October 1998) and another of ‘coloured’ South Africans (see Evening Post, 10 April 2002).

Aside from the two exceptions outlined above, there has been only passing mention of South Africans and occasionally Zimbabweans (e.g. North Shore Times Advertiser, 7 March 2002) in the print media. Issues of post-arrival
settlement have attracted very little attention, with only the rare article on topics such as employment difficulties (see *North Shore Times Advertiser*, 25 November 1999), and an occasional feature such as Paul Smith’s “Long walk to freedom” (*Metro*, November 2001) which canvassed some of the difficulties faced and the sensitivity around racism. In general, in terms of print media coverage (1993 to 2003), South Africans have been all but invisible compared to the attention given to Asian immigrants.

**Economic Growth, Employment and Welfare**

Given that a central part of New Zealand’s immigration policy since the late 1980s has been skills-based, the post-arrival engagement of immigrants with the labour market and their contribution to economic growth have been important issues. The relatively high unemployment rates of skilled Asian migrants attracted some attention in the early 1990s, but the overall impression gained from an analysis of print media coverage has been one of concern at the lack of appropriate labour market participation, either in terms of unemployment or under-employment where the jobs taken up do not fit the qualifications and skills of the migrants in question.

A particular issue was that of immigrants qualified in medicine and their failure to gain registration and hence employment (see North et al., 1999). This issue stemmed from a flaw in the 1991 immigration policy that was eventually corrected in the 1995 policy changes (see Trlin, 1997), but the legacy of the years 1991-1995 became something of an ongoing theme in the media. There were repeated stories about the difficulty of getting registration (e.g. “Migrant doctors take a buffeting”, *New Zealand Herald*, 8 September 1997; also TV1 *Frontline*, 31 July 1994, programme on registration), and the impact on individual doctors (“Exam stress fatal for doctor”, *North Shore Times Advertiser*, 18 October 1996) or their families (“Hard times for immigrant doctor’s family”, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 May 1996). The immigrants concerned questioned the stance of the New Zealand Medical Council (*North Shore Times Advertiser*, 12 September 1996), which led eventually to a defensive response from the Council’s President (*New Zealand Herald*, 23 September 1998). A number of those profiled in the media who demonstrated the problems facing these immigrant doctors were Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi (*New Zealand Herald*, 18 May 1996). Other immigrant professionals facing similar difficulties included teachers and engineers, some of the latter exempt from statutory registration requirements to practice but (like some teachers) still encountering barriers to satisfactory employment.
As a corollary to this attention on unemployed skilled immigrants, there was also some concern in the mid-1990s about immigrants on welfare benefits. The story was given attention during the 1996 election campaign when it was announced that there were “nearly 6000 immigrants on special benefit[s]” (New Zealand Herald, 6 April 1996), which in turn prompted attention from New Zealand First and a call from the Clevedon branch of the National Party to ban immigrants from receiving the ‘dole’ (North Harbour News, 18 April 1996). Further attention was given to the matter the following year, when a connection was made between unemployment, being on the ‘dole’ and the lack of English language competency (e.g. North Shore Times Advertiser, 5 March 1997). The skills and competencies of immigrants were significant issues at the time, but with the 1995 change in immigration policy some of the media attention has declined, and very few articles have since paid attention to immigrants and welfare benefit dependence.

Since 1999, the focus has increasingly been on the difficulties of getting employment, a focus supported by research on the attitudes and practices of employers. A survey of Sri Lankans by the EEO Trust (Basnayake, 1999) found that many claimed they were denied employment because of a lack of New Zealand experience. This finding received considerable publicity (see New Zealand Herald, 20-21 November 1999; 6 December 1999) with sympathetic coverage. One article, titled “Educated immigrants are an asset left to waste” (New Zealand Herald, 20-21 November 1999), noted that Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan migrants were professionally qualified and fluent in English. Subsequently, the New Zealand Herald also carried an article on the fact that one-third of Auckland’s unemployed were migrants and commented that this was a waste of human capital (New Zealand Herald, 6 December 1999). Two years later, it was reported that there had been a significant drop in unemployed immigrants and that the rate was at a “record low” (North Shore Times Advertiser, 26 October 2001). More recently, however, attention has again been given to the loss of human capital represented by unemployed immigrants, and the rejection experiences of immigrant job-seekers (see “Migrants sick of rejection”, New Zealand Herald, 13 July 2001; “Rejection a way of life for skilled newcomers”, New Zealand Herald, 23-24 February 2002).

Even when questions were being asked about the desirability of immigrants, and Asian immigrants in particular, there was an assumption in many print media reports that a primary reason for the current rates of immigration and their diversity was that the growing and future geo-political linkages with Asia would help stimulate local economic growth. Domestically, there were reports on the role of immigrants in driving the demand for housing (“Migrants behind boom in housing”, New Zealand Herald, 16 September 1996), which produced negative comments about the Auckland housing
market determining mortgage rates for the whole country. But the possibility of a drop in immigrant numbers also produced reports on the potential negative impacts for Auckland ("Migration slowdown puts Auckland growth at risk", New Zealand Herald, 14 September 1996; "Migrants mean more houses", Dominion, 29 February 1996). By 2002, there were articles that explicitly identified international migration and an effective immigration policy, complete with attention to issues of migrant settlement, as key factors in New Zealand’s economic performance (e.g. "Migration; engine for economic growth", Press, 29 October 2002). The focus was often on the adaptation of migrants and their subsequent contribution to business activity. Examples included the commitment, loyalty and adaptation of Chinese, Korean and Taiwanese businesspeople (Yarwood, "Tide of life", Metro, April 2002), the Korean contribution to new businesses in Northland ("Korean migrants drift north", New Zealand Herald, 29 September 2002), and migrant involvement in small businesses ("Small business boom", Unlimited, February 2003).

Crime and Immigrants

Internationally, one aspect in the racialising of immigrants has been their association with certain criminal activities, and this has also been true of New Zealand. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Pacific Island immigrants were deemed to be responsible for certain types of criminal behaviour, especially in relation to public spaces and law and order. Apart from the ‘crime’ of ‘overstaying’, there was also public concern, well represented in the media, about their involvement in crimes of violence such as rape and assault (see Trln, 1973). Post-1990, the types of criminal activity associated with the new immigrants from Asia were rather different. Now, the crimes were those associated with affluence – drugs, fast cars, gambling – and with the activities of Asian gangs, often identified as triads. All these aspects have been given attention, but while they represent a relatively minor aspect of print media coverage (in terms of space), they remain an important sub-theme with periodic flurries of interest.

The most significant media issue has been the activity of Asian gangs, part of which has been identified as involving triads (for a discussion of Asian organised crime in New Zealand, see Newbold, 2000: 210-215). Early material suggested that triads were recruiting members in Auckland schools (see “Triads go hunting in school grounds”, New Zealand Herald, 17 October 1996), an activity given further publicity when Auckland Boys Grammar School sought the help of the police ("Headmaster calls in Asian crime squad", New Zealand Herald, 10 May 1997). At about the same time, there were articles
suggesting that a major triad in Asia, 14K, was active locally and had recruited “700 teenagers” (“Moore rekindles case for strategy on gangs”, *New Zealand Herald*, 3 June 1997). However, not all the ‘gang’ stories were seen as triad-related; some were reported as conflict between wealthy Asian adolescents (see “Eastside story. Wealthy Asian kids are fighting gang war”, *Listener*, 13 January 1996).

Extortion, including blackmail, to gain goods or money from Asian businesses, and kidnapping, have often been associated by the media with gang activity. Some early reports indicated that Asians were being targeted (“Robbers target Asians”, *North Shore Times Advertiser*, 15 August 1996), but a feature which has received regular coverage since then has been the role of Asians as both the perpetrators and victims. In the late 1990s, Asian food outlets were being robbed and there were regular reports of extortion (e.g. “Police warn Asian food outlet owners”, *North Shore Times Advertiser*, 16 September 1999; “Extortion tactics ‘not acceptable’”, *New Zealand Herald*, 10 July 1997). Only two days after the latter report, the *New Zealand Herald* (12 July 1997) ran another story under the headline “No tattoos, no patches, in invisible Asian extortion” that both echoed and provided a contrast with an earlier concern with Polynesian gangs, and the way in which the Mongrel Mob or Black Power, were patched and very visible. There was also a growing concern, illustrated by the headline “Crime by Asians streaking ahead” (*New Zealand Herald*, 1 August 1997), with the rapid increase in Asian criminal activity. More recently, the *Dominion Post* (3 December 2002) ran an article with the headline “Asian violence on rise in Wellington – police” that included comment on the involvement of Asians in extortion activities and conflict between Asians, especially in bars in Courtney Place. But it also noted, given the growth in the size of Wellington’s Asian communities, that increased levels of crime might be expected and that there was no evidence of gang activity.

Aside from gangs and extortion, there were two other issues which gained media coverage and were described in a particular way. The first of these was gambling. Seen as a particular ‘Asian problem’, there are stereotypic assumptions conveyed and sustained in the print media about the inclination of Asians to gamble on anything. Associated with this, there were occasional reports on deliberate attempts to subvert gambling systems; the *New Zealand Herald* (8-9 February 2003), for example, carried a story on how a pokie syndicate was breaking a casino ban, and that it was using Chinese students to do so. The other issue concerned driving-related offences. As the original “Inv-Asian” stories from Booth and Martin indicated, Asians are perceived to be poor drivers, typically with expensive cars and driving without being
licensed to do so (see, for example, “Immigrants drive after failing test – police”, *Dominion*, 20 June 1996).

The coverage of these various issues was sporadic during the period under review, but they came together in May 2003, in part because of a high profile kidnapping trial. The *New Zealand Herald*, (21 May 2003), in an article on the trial, provided a boxed section titled “Asian kidnapping”. This began with the observation that: “Asian students have reported at least 20 cases this year involving kidnapping, aggravated robberies or demanding with menaces”. A police officer had offered comments about ‘Chinese crime’ in downtown Auckland, which then became a front page story (*New Zealand Herald*, 21 May 2003), with subsequent comments that this had caused political embarrassment to the Government (*New Zealand Herald*, 22 May 2003).

Perhaps inevitably, the story prompted New Zealand First to offer its assessment (“NZ First says Asian crime out of control”, *Dominion Post*, 22 May 2003) as well as an article by columnist Rosemary McLeod who began with the words: “We have a real problem in this country with Asians and crime” (“When $1.7b buys silence on Asian crime”, *Sunday Star Times*, 25 May 2003). She went on to list some of the major offences committed by Asians in New Zealand, 2001 to 2003, although statistically there are some points which need to be taken into account with regard to the significance of crime associated with Asians (see *Dominion Post*, 22 May 2003).

Overall, there is little doubt that by mid-2003, print media coverage had firmly established an association between recent Asian arrivals and certain crimes, and that the trade-off made by some commentators was between the positive (economic) and negative (crime) aspects of such immigrants. There are two points which need to be made about this association. First, the label ‘Asian’ was used throughout the print media reports yet police reports indicate that certain activities such as extortion and gang activity, whether triad-based or not, tend to be associated with certain Asian communities and not others. This was not apparent in print media reports on these activities. The other point is that the racialisation of Asian immigration, and the subsequent criminalisation of Asian immigrants in general, has simply repeated a theme that was apparent in the moral panic around the immigration of Pacific peoples in earlier decades.
COLUMNS AND FEATURES, 1993-2003

Two quite different contributions are made to debates and understandings in the media by columnists and feature writers. Columnists represent a significant political range in papers such as the New Zealand Herald, Sunday Star Times and the Dominion Post, and fall into two categories: those columnists commissioned by the papers who contribute on a regular basis; and those who send in unsolicited comments (for example, for the Dialogue page in the New Zealand Herald). It is the first group who are the prime focus here. Many of them have been active for some years, and their columns reinforce or dispute what is provided in other sections of a newspaper, especially news stories. Feature writers on the other hand are typically investigative journalists who provide in-depth items or features on various aspects of immigrant life. An interesting development within these features are the ‘series’ – that is, a number of articles on a theme associated with immigration. The space and attention given to both one-off features and series signals the importance of immigration in the public arena, and the contribution of the print media to public debates and understanding.

Columns and Columnists

In terms of the contribution of columnists, there are at least three discernable positions adopted: (a) those who question the appropriateness of current immigration policy; (b) those who maintain a position of sympathy for immigrants and question people (politicians and other media workers) critical of immigrants and immigration policy; and (c) some columnists who provide an occasional contribution to particular parts of the debate. In the first category are columnists such as Pat Booth and Garth George, the former via his columns in Auckland community newspapers and the latter in the New Zealand Herald. Booth was one of the journalists who provided the original “Inv-Asian” articles in 1993. He has since offered periodic comments about immigration (e.g. North Shore Times Advertiser, 25 July 1995), not always hostile to immigrants, but has continued to defend the original articles.

One columnist who has regularly questioned aspects of immigration policy has been Garth George. His items in the New Zealand Herald have tended to focus on the problems of settlement, along with critical questions directed at the previous Minister of Immigration, Lianne Dalziel. Examples include: the column head-lined “What happens when control freaks lose their grip” (New Zealand Herald, 28 November 2002), which was concerned with Dalziel; and another following the tightening of immigration policy in November 2002,
titled “Breathtaking hypocrisy in Labour’s immigration u-turn” (New Zealand Herald, 21 November 2002). Elsewhere, there are some consistent themes from George about the difficulties experienced by or confronting both immigrants and members of the host community, including columns titled: “Far too much immigration without preparation” (New Zealand Herald, 15 August 2002), “Never mind about people, just worry about the money” (New Zealand Herald, 14 November 2002), and “No wonder life is sour for migrants” (New Zealand Herald, 12 July 2001). He tends to focus on the problems associated with immigration (“...overcrowded schools, teacher shortages, overflowing hospitals with interminable waiting lists, near gridlocked roads and house prices that make the Kiwi dream a fantasy”, New Zealand Herald, 15 August 2002), especially from Asia. Such views, combined with some personal preferences (“I don’t particularly care for Indian food (I loathe curry) – or Chinese or Malaysian or Korean or Vietnamese for that matter,” New Zealand Herald, 15 August 2002), make his attitude towards Asian migrants and what they contribute quite clear.

A contrast is provided by columnists who have been highly critical of the way in which New Zealanders, especially some politicians, have reacted to immigration. The two most obvious and outspoken ones in this group have been Tapu Misa in the New Zealand Herald, and Raybon Kan in the Sunday Star Times. Misa has often spoken from her own Pacific background and made the connection between the experiences of migrants from the Pacific and Asia. She has been a vocal opponent of New Zealand First and Winston Peters; for example, her column titled “Not racist, just bewildered strangers. Yeah, right” (New Zealand Herald, 14 August 2002) voiced her criticism of Peter Brown, deputy leader of New Zealand First, and his positive references to Enoch Powell. In making the connection with Pacific migrants, her column titled “Yes, more islanders should take their skills home” (New Zealand Herald, 24 July 2002) reminds readers that not all migrants are Asians, and that there have been racist responses historically to non-European immigrants by New Zealanders. Raybon Kan provides similar comments, with a focus on his own experience as a Chinese New Zealander (see “Let’s face it – its not just about numbers”, Sunday Star Times, 24 November 2002), although he is also critical of the Minister of Immigration for the use of English language proficiency to screen immigrants, as well as Garth George for his attitudes. Kan ended one column with these words (Sunday Star Times, 24 November 2002): “This is just not a debate about immigration. This is also a debate about what we, as a nation, will be proud of in the future.”

Other columnists have also provided a perspective on the issues raised by immigration. Brian Gaynor (“How NZ comings and goings add up to grave loss”, New Zealand Herald, 24-25 July 1999) has been concerned with the way
in which immigration and emigration impact upon economic performance, as has Gareth Morgan, although from a conservative viewpoint which is typically critical of the Labour Government (see "Wrong type of migrant not good for the economy", New Zealand Herald, 31 March 1998; "Government's knee-jerk reactions damaging", Evening Post, 1 April 1998). Normally conservative on many issues, Frank Haden has voiced his opposition to Winston Peters and his approach to immigration. His column "Anti-Asian sentiment is going from nasty to Nazi" (Sunday Star Times, 20 October 2002), compared anti-Asian attitudes with anti-Semitism. Finally, Rosemary McLeod has been concerned about the relationship between immigration and identity (Dominion Post, 19 September 2002), although, as noted earlier in this report, she has also provided a negative commentary on Asians and crime (Sunday Star Times, 25 May 2003).

Features, Feature Writers and Series

Alongside the contributions of columnists, there are those of the feature writers. They often do two things: provide information that is 'factual', in the sense that the material has been verified; and offer personal profiles of immigrants as a way of personalising the communities concerned and indicating some of the concerns and ambitions of individual immigrants. Personalisation stands in contrast to the use of racial labels (which ignore important differences) and the stereotypes that may accompany them. Despite an emphasis on factual information and personalising immigrants, feature writers will often also voice an opinion about the issues and debates at hand.

Some of the earlier features appeared in magazines such as North and South and Metro, rather than daily newspapers. The political debate associated with the 1996 election, for example, prompted features such as the "The European Invasion" (Metro, June 1996), which, in spite of its title, was concerned with the immigration debate as the by-line made clear: "Vincent Heeringa wades through the clichés of anti-Asian attitudes in search of the facts on immigration, and uncovers a different picture altogether". In the same month, North and South ran an article titled "Immigration. What have we got to fear?" (Legat, 1996) which provided profiles of immigrants and included the question: can New Zealand "...absorb the large number of Asian immigrants without provoking racial tension? And do we decide sensibly the population level we want?" This article was supported by an editorial, "At face value", by Robyn Langwell (North and South, June 1996). But the dailies also provided their own features: Hewitson's "A stranger in paradise" (New Zealand Herald, 30 March 1996), for example, discussed what it meant to live in another
culture; and Carroll’s “The class of 96” (New Zealand Herald, 30 March 1996) explored the issues of Asian pupils in Auckland schools. The Sunday Star Times (18 August 1996) had a feature on New Zealanders which looked at “...new arrivals to our land, who they are, why they come here and how they cope with living in a new country”, while a Newspapers In Education feature focused on immigration issues, with the following statement: “We encourage our younger readers to investigate the factors which contribute to our developing multicultural society” (Sunday Star Times, 28 April 1996). In the midst of a significant political debate, both magazines and newspapers were providing context and depth to the understanding of immigration.

The Dominion Post, New Zealand Herald and Christchurch Press have each run series on immigration. For example, the Dominion Post ran a series in September 2002 called “The Immigration Debate.” The intention was to “put a reasonable argument, be forward-looking and constructive”, and with this brief the journalists involved covered a number of aspects as follows:

- D. Dekker, “Why Maori fear being swamped”, “National identity crises behind rhetoric of fear”, and “Welfare statistics shatter bludger myth” (Dominion Post, 16 September 2002);
- R. Trow, “Looking for the magic number” (Dominion Post, 17 September 2002);
- D. McCurdy, “Paradise postponed” and J. Milne, “The tough questions that won’t go away” (Dominion Post, 18 September 2002);
- F. Tyler, “Why the melting pot doesn’t work” (Dominion Post, 19 September 2002).

Despite some of the wording in the headlines, there was extensive coverage of the issues, along with profiles of immigrants from Britain, the Netherlands, Samoa, China and South Africa. In addition, the Dominion Post (and the Evening Post before it) has run a series over a long period titled “Ethnicity. Celebrating Cultural Diversity.” Each item in this series typically provides information on the country of origin of a particular migrant group, a profile of a family that has settled in the Wellington region and details of the family’s post-arrival experiences (see Dominion Post, 26 March 2003, for an example, in this case on Tongans).

The New Zealand Herald has also run some one-off features on immigrants as well as a number of series. A recent example, a series called “The Immigrants”, was published in November and December 2002, in order to (New Zealand Herald, 23-24 November 2002):

...contribute to a reasoned debate on immigration issues...[by]
presenting the views of a variety of New Zealanders and setting out the
facts on migrants, population and economic growth. [Thereby tackling the question] What should New Zealand immigration policy be?

The initial articles were extensive, the first ran for three pages, and included the following: C. Schaer, "Where the races meet", G. Cumming, "Variety is the spice of life..." and C. Masters, "Fuming Asians tackle Dalziel" (New Zealand Herald, 23-24 November 2002). Subsequent articles included W. Gamble and G. Cumming, "The numbers game" (New Zealand Herald, 30 November 2002), M. Hewitson, "Reluctant face of the new New Zealanders" and A. Gifford and G. Ansley, "Tough new entry rules biting back" (New Zealand Herald, 1 December 2002). Responses to these articles came from a variety of sources and appeared in the paper's Dialogue pages (New Zealand Herald, 2 December 2002; 3 December 2002; 9 December 2002).

The material provided by the paper's own journalists, combined with a significant response from the public (in both letters and Dialogue page items), represented a major investment in and contribution to public debate. It was preceded by a number of features which dealt with a variety of issues. These included: a focus on particular groups, such as British immigrants (see New Zealand Herald, 26 July 2000), which provided demographic information and interviews with migrants; features which questioned public myths (e.g. G. Reid, "Dreaded Asian invasion a myth", New Zealand Herald, 12 July 2000); and details of the country's changing demographic structure (see "Transplanted and bedding in" and "Changing face of New Zealand", New Zealand Herald, 2-3 March 2002, which covered ethnic diversity, place of birth, language, religion, age and sex).

To sum up, the major newspapers, along with magazines such as North and South, Metro and the Listener, have all provided features on immigrants and immigration since 1996. A distinguishing characteristic of this coverage has been the generally pro-immigrant or pro-immigration stance adopted, with either direct or indirect opposition to the anti-immigration position of New Zealand First. In both periods of major opposition from New Zealand First (the General Elections of 1996 and 2002), there have been series or feature articles published, specifically to provide 'reasoned' and 'factual' information. In relation to major series published in the New Zealand Herald, the Press and Dominion Post in 2002, it would be hard to find any other national issue which has occupied as much space in terms of both contributions from journalists and the public. In contrast to some of the news reporting, which has tended to contribute (at times) to the racialisation and Asianisation of immigration, the feature and series material provides a significant counterpoint. Of course there are some qualifying points that need to be acknowledged, as the focus
groups (reported in the next section) make clear, but the print media have
generally played a positive role in shaping the debate on immigration,
especially with the detailed and personalised material that comes from in-
depth features.
AUDIENCE RESEARCH

If an important part of the media analysis process is to understand the images and messages produced by the media, equally important is the impact of these images and messages on their various audiences. Focus groups were used here to explore how immigrants saw themselves being portrayed by the media, not as merely passive consumers but as individuals and groups comprising audiences that vary significantly in how they interpret, react, challenge and respond to media reporting. In some instances, they will share the same cultural frameworks as those producing media coverage, or will understand sufficient of that framework so that audience and media producer will not differ significantly in the encoding and decoding process. But it is possible to decode in significantly different ways (Barker, 1999: 111), and it cannot be assumed with any certainty how any particular audience will react to a specific item. Accordingly, this part of the research project seeks to provide, via three focus groups (one with Koreans, one with South Africans and one with members of the host community), a better understanding of the response of immigrants to media coverage, and how they decode and possibly construct their own interpretations of events and issues.

Focus Groups

The focus groups involved four South Africans, five Koreans and three New Zealand residents. They were designed to establish how each group felt the media covered issues of relevance or importance to them, and what this might mean for immigrant-host relations. In addition, they were asked about the alternative media (i.e. non-mainstream communication channels) that they accessed, and how they used these media (see Appendix 1). Given the size of the three focus groups, this part of the research simply indicates some of the aspects involved, including those that could be pursued in more detailed immigrant audience research, rather than providing any definitive answers.

Korean Focus Group

The five Koreans who took part in this focus group had arrived in 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000. The 1993 arrival did little for the first 7-8 years in New Zealand and then opened a business associated with Korean immigrants. A clear reason for coming was educational. Two of the others had enrolled at tertiary institutions after arrival, one successfully (she had completed one qualification and was now enrolled for a PhD), while the other had experienced difficulties and withdrew. Another had undertaken a number of
jobs (most recently for a Korean magazine), while the last was a church minister and a counsellor. An interpreter was available for the focus group if required.

All five participants read New Zealand newspapers but acknowledged that there were problems in understanding some of the material because of the English required. One, reasonably fluent in English, admitted that they required a dictionary. They were all regular television watchers, especially of the BBC and CNN programmes, and two mentioned Radio Pacific and John Banks as something they listened to and enjoyed. In general, the print media presented some difficulties while radio and television were easier for them to understand.

On the question of media coverage and the treatment of Koreans, the opening comment was: “First of all I don’t expect anything from the newspapers...”. This was because of the print media’s tendency to employ the label ‘Asian’, which the Koreans in turn were inclined to interpret as ‘Chinese’ and therefore not related or relevant to them. Moreover, when articles about Koreans did appear they were negative in nature and it was observed that:

[Its] typical of the media just to focus on problems...the New Zealand media [see] minority groups as troublemakers...[and] to generalise.

As examples, the focus group participants mentioned a story that involved a Korean gambler, and one other about Korean students. Another issue was the coverage of Winston Peters, which served to confirm for them the negative, problematising approach of the media to Asians in general and (at least by implication) to Koreans in particular.

On the matter of Korean culture, apart from the fact that it attracted little coverage, what attention it did get had been disappointing. The participants talked about “incorrect information”, and two examples were used – the eating of seahorses and of dogs. The latter was mentioned in a profile of Korea published by the New Zealand Herald during the 2003 Soccer World Cup. They claimed that this topic misled Kiwis and pointed out that neither seahorses nor dogs were eaten by them. One participant then commented:

...Korean people are very angry about that article, like me, so we gather together and get some lawyers and Korean professionals and [were] going to sue. At first, our mind is to [take it up] formally and if they don’t [respond] we want to sue to hell.
I was personally trying to talk to the reporter who was reporting the article but he was always unavailable to talk to...they don’t apologise, they don’t do any kind of thing.

The negative or inaccurate coverage obviously generated strong feelings. In their eyes, the only times Koreans were mentioned was when there were problems, and the misleading information added to a generally negative perception. The examples that rankled – eating seahorses and dogs – had only appeared once but they were hurtful and disrupted life with other New Zealanders, especially as it was repeated back to them: “My colleague[s] say I have to keep my dog safe [because] one of my neighbour[s] is Korean”. They also related these issues to other issues such as the size of the Korean community:

[The] problem is we are either politically used or just a small group trying to say [something but] it is not about changing the mainstream...I’ve been living here [for] ten years ...and [it is] quite difficult for Korean people to get into political activities or any community work...

A strategy identified to deal with this situation was to increase the pressure on media such as the New Zealand Herald as the Korean community became more powerful in a business sense, especially given trade with Korea and the increased number of Korean tourists.

A common response among immigrants to the issues raised above is to use alternative media, from either local or homeland sources, that employ the migrant’s native language. It was clear that most of the focus group members, especially more recent arrivals, relied extensively on such alternative media. English language competency was acknowledged as an important reason (which waned as competency increased with a longer duration of residence) but the alternative media also had two other attractive features: aspects of Korean culture were better understood and reported; and they provided a much better coverage of homeland events. Although not mentioned, a third feature was undoubtedly that the alternative media were somewhat better attuned to immigrant settlement needs, helping the adjustment process by providing information on housing, employment, services such as education or health, and other aspects of New Zealand life.

To sum up, the Korean focus group members expressed some dissatisfaction with the local mainstream media because of: the absence of any coverage of Koreans and matters of importance to Koreans; particular incidents when the media got it badly wrong (e.g. the eating of dogs); and an emphasis on
negative aspects of Asians/Koreans. There were certainly indications that they were increasingly prepared to defend their interests and to put pressure on the media to take them seriously as a cultural and business community. Not surprising in this context was their extensive reliance on alternative (Korean) media for reasons of English language competency, the provision of homeland news, a more competent understanding of Korean culture, and the provision of support and local information for new arrivals.

**South African Focus Group**

The four South Africans in this focus group had all migrated to New Zealand in the mid-1990s and were skilled professionals employed in jobs ranging from a university lecturer to being self-employed in management consultancy and architectural design. Their use of the New Zealand media was broad, with all of them reading a newspaper, watching television and listening to the radio. However, they had certain preferences. In reading the *New Zealand Herald,* most commented that they were not so interested in the A section, largely because it dealt with New Zealand politics, whereas they read the B section on international events and news much more avidly as well as the letters page because, as one participant said, it “gives me [coverage of] day-to-day issues and a wide range of opinions”.

On the nature and quality of the local coverage of South African immigrants, there were varying opinions about what issues were raised and the local media’s approach. Some saw that coverage in a positive light, as the following comment illustrates:

*I think I still have a little bit of cultural cringe. There’s a South African cultural cringe as opposed to a local cultural cringe because Kiwis also have a cultural cringe...its [in relation to South Africans] usually a bit of a joke about the accent and that is good for everybody...I don’t see that as a negative. I just see that as having a slight laugh about a difference. I tend to generally expect it [the local media] to be neutral and even-handed. I am not often wrong.*

But others disagreed.

*I think that whenever something is reported on South Africa, it is usually more negative. There is very little that I can find that could [be regarded] as positive...*

*Well certainly a feeling that I have... is that the New Zealand media will identify a person as South African if they are being reported on*
...they will say “Two South African men recently arrested with ecstasy tablets”, but they won’t say “A South African professor did something great at the university yesterday”.

Examples used to illustrate this point included Terenso Bozzone, a tri-athlete who had won both national and international titles for his age group and who, it was claimed, was identified as a Rangitoto College pupil, never as a South African. The exception to this observation cited by focus group members was Irene Van Dyke (Silver Ferns netball player), who is identified as South African – perhaps because she had represented South Africa internationally.

This topic produced an exchange amongst members of the focus group in which it was clear that there were differing views, with some seeing an emphasis on negative coverage and others regarding the local media as balanced and more positive. One important distinction was made by one of the participants during this discussion.

Perhaps...one needs to distinguish...between the way...things are reported about South Africans that happen to be living here as opposed to issues and things happening in South Africa...usually small fragments of sensational information from South Africa [are] reported in astonishment and have slightly negative or total[ly] negative [elements].

There was also a contrast made between media reports and the way in which New Zealanders reacted to South Africans on a personal basis.

I [have] found New Zealanders in general to be first amazingly tolerant of my point of view, amazingly tolerant of South Africans...generally I have never had a problem with acceptance from the average New Zealander...sometimes almost in direct contrast to the media, like the article about the racist [Ian Smith].

Another member of the focus group suggested that the media were only interested in sensational reporting that emphasised the negative aspects of an event or group.

The history of relationships between the two countries, especially relating to the period of apartheid South Africa, was another issue.

...if you look back twenty or thirty years, and the criticisms that New Zealand levelled against the South Africans, there was always this
little bit of New Zealand [being] on the moral high ground... "We are right" speaking from the New Zealand perspective and the "South Africans are wrong"... for a very long time, it was the case... [and] there was always this thing about "We will know better about these things than you South Africans because you have done so many wrong things in the past".

Others also commented on this, saying that the history of South Africa was complex and that they did not think this was well understood locally. But this was qualified: "I wouldn't expect it [the New Zealand public] to have the depth of understanding that our [South African] people do". All were agreed that for the size of the South African community, there was little coverage of South Africans resident in New Zealand, although this was not true in certain localities, especially in community newspapers such as the North Shore Times. There was some concern that this coverage tended to peak with negative examples, such as the issue of teaching Afrikaans in the schools, although it was acknowledged that the backlash came from other South Africans. There was also the issue of Jan Smith who gained considerable coverage for a period because of his association with a racist group in South Africa. While the latter was seen as another example of identifying someone perceived negatively as South African, there was also comment in relation to the negative reporting of South African issues. For example, a report about a car which had flames come out the side to protect the occupants against attack, that "they [New Zealanders] weren't antagonistic [to] at all, just absolutely incredulous... Well, you have to see it in the context of daily life in South Africa at this point".

This discussion of the way in which South Africans are portrayed in the New Zealand media reflects a complex history, both within South Africa and the intersection of that history with New Zealand. Unlike the Korean focus group that lacked significant historical contact (with the exception of the Korean War, and that was not mentioned), there is a detailed history of contact between South Africa and New Zealand, from the Boer War through to ongoing rugby contact, including points of particular tension such as the 1981 Springbok rugby tour. That history and the views concerning it complicated what were seen by this focus group as relevant issues and the way in which they are portrayed. It was quite clear that there were two different views.

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2 Jan Smith was a member of an extreme right wing religious group that incorporated racist views about social groups as part of its theology. This association was made public after his arrival in New Zealand, and his house was subject to anti-racist protests. He eventually returned to South Africa.
represented within the group about the degree to which the New Zealand media focused on the negative aspects of either South Africa or South African immigrants.

This focus group also had views about the politicisation of immigrants in New Zealand. First, there was concern about Winston Peters and the way in which he portrayed immigrants, despite the fact that the immigrants in question did not necessarily include South Africans. One participant put it quite bluntly when he said:

..his [Peters'] stand on what he calls immigration is actually not a stand on immigration; it is an utterly racist stand...my South African friends and other South Africans went to...[the 1996 New Zealand First election] meeting. There were people standing at the door checking who was coming in. The South Africans were let in because they said nothing...the Koreans and other people were turned away...Winston Peters' issue is not immigration; it's only anti-Asian.

Such general sentiments, in effect sympathy for Asian immigrants, were supported by others in the focus group.

I feel very sorry for Asian immigrants, especially Korean and Indian immigrants, because I think they get the raw end of the deal much more than South Africans. I think South Africans are, in a certain sense, discriminated against in terms of looking for jobs but not as much as Asian immigrants.

Such comments suggest an interesting 'fellow' immigrant perspective, especially in relation to the way in which Asians are portrayed by the media.

...you will get media reports on the 'Asians' doing this [or that]...What I find amazing is that they [the media] say they are 'Asians' [but] there is a huge difference between India, China, Japan and Korea but [yet] they say they are 'Asian'.

Contact with their homeland was maintained by reading South African newspapers on the web, although there were two quite different approaches. Some tended to read these newspapers more consistently when they first arrived and that had now dropped away, while others they have used the web to access newspapers (and music) when there is a particular need. As one participant said:
Whenever something happens that is interesting [in South Africa] then I go onto a website...I'll probably read a bit on that just to catch up on what's going on, but I seem to read much more New Zealand news rather than South African news.

Another commented:

One advantage is that the Internet allows you to instantly look at a very localised paper in South Africa...I would never be able to get a paper copy of it so I can look at it on the web.

It was acknowledged that there are networks and subtle ways of indicating through the media that a person is South African and looking for the business of other South Africans in terms of food supplies, health or dental care, real estate and so on. Both a local South African media (a local newspaper and an electronic newsletter) and the mainstream media are used to advertise the South African connection or service, even though this might be oblique (e.g. advertising a particular foodstuff). This was recognised as being particularly the case for the Afrikaans-speaking community, although networking occurs more broadly as well.

The South African media and social networks operate to connect South Africans and to provide information about a range of social and cultural services and activities, with immigrant business networks an important part of this. As one participant indicated, this networking via South African media performs an important adjustment function.

It is almost like a comfort zone for some people. There is the shock of immigration... and you need comfort in that shock and part of that comfort is to grab onto someone else who understands you...Certainly the reading of the [South African] magazine is important and in the first year, you look forward to it...

Overall, the South African focus group had a quite different set of experiences concerning the media compared with the Koreans. There were still the examples in which the media focused on negative aspects of South Africans here, or life in contemporary South Africa. At the personal level, it was acknowledged that individual New Zealanders could be ignorant but were well intentioned. However, this was complicated by historical connections between South Africa and New Zealand, so that there were pre-existing Understandings and views which intervened, both in terms of the attitude of individual New Zealanders and the media. For example, the question of apartheid still appeared from time to time. But, in contrast to the Koreans,
South Africans were English-speaking and were able to understand the nuances and culture of the media, and this gave them a certain advantage compared with a group from a non-English speaking background. They were also more cynical about the media, and mentioned its sensational, negative focus, especially with regard to Asian immigrants who, it was felt, were portrayed inaccurately and unfairly. South African immigrants, especially recent ones, used the local South African media to help them adjust and (albeit on an intermittent basis) accessed the media in South Africa to maintain a connection with events in that country.

**Local Community Focus Group**

To provide a point of comparison to the experiences and understandings of the Korean and South African immigrant focus groups, a small group of New Zealand, non-immigrant residents were also interviewed. Like the South Africans, they read the newspaper(s), watched television and listened to the radio in more or less equal degrees.

The first issue was how the media portrayed immigrants in general as well as particular groups. There were some interesting and somewhat contradictory sentiments. It was acknowledged that there tended to be a focus on ethnicity when it came to certain images or problems, although it was pointed out by one that this was largely focused on Maori and Pacific peoples rather than more recent immigrants. But then there were critical comments about the accuracy of media reporting in terms of Asian immigrants and their large cars or houses. Each participant in the focus group accepted that there were major differences between and within immigrant groups, but there was also a feeling that there was some truth to the view that there were particular types of cars or houses owned by Asian immigrants. Scepticism about media reporting, and an acknowledgement that Asian immigrants varied, did not necessarily mean that the focus group members entirely disavowed the stereotypical images.

The sensationalist focus of the media and its impact on certain immigrants was noted. Interestingly, one of the issues raised by the Korean focus group was also mentioned here.

[There] was a really sensationalised picture [concerning Korea]...The thing about this one that really struck me was the way the media played up the Asian dogs [as a food] which was totally unreasonable...I think that is pure sensationalism; we eat lamb. That is probably just as abhorrent to some people from Asia, especially if they are Buddhist...
Similar comments were made about media coverage relating to the use of Afrikaans in a North Shore school. It was agreed that this was a short-term issue which emphasised the conflict within an immigrant group. When asked about the effect of this reporting, and whether it helped immigrant settlement, the answer was unanimous: “No, it did not”. All members of this focus group felt that the media role in encouraging immigrant settlement was an unhelpful one.

_We need inclusion…and we need to make [immigrants] more acceptable. If we sensationalise the problem [it does not help]._

_Bad news sells; good news really doesn’t [sell]._

_Asia Down Under_ was mentioned as one television programme that helped redress the balance of the media more generally, as did the series in the _New Zealand Herald_ (November and December 2002) about immigrants and immigrant settlement. There were also interesting comments which compared what was happening in New Zealand and Australia. It was felt, for example, that the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, had contributed more to immigrant-bashing (especially of Asians) than Winston Peters, and that Australia and its media tended to be more racist towards immigrants. As the focus group discussion came toward an end, there were positive comments about the way in which immigration was contributing to the development of New Zealand, and the importance of positive media coverage in this process.

There was an interesting level of overlap between the three focus groups in relation to some aspects of the media’s negative coverage of immigrants. The eating of dogs in Korea, for example, was cited by both the immigrant group concerned and the host focus group. It was agreed that this was sensationalist and unfair, and that it did not represent the general character and lives of immigrants in the group concerned. But, while the host group agreed that media reporting on immigrants tended to be negative and sensationalist, there was also some agreement that there were issues associated with these groups which needed to be discussed and which had appeared in the media. They might be sceptical about the way in which the media portrayed immigrants, but members of the host group were endorsing some of the images that appeared in articles such as the 1993 “Inv-Asian” articles. That said, there was an expectation that the media should play a constructive role in the process of settlement and community development as immigrant and host interacted and accommodated to one another, a role and process that sensationalist, negative media reporting seriously hampered.
IMMIGRANT MEDIA

Migrants have always had opportunities to communicate amongst themselves, ranging from both formal and relatively informal gatherings to printed media of various sorts (see Griffith et al., 1997: 267-303). Since the early 1990s, with the expansion of new information technologies, the opportunities for alternative, community-specific media have increased substantially, both in the reduced costs and enhanced transmission options available, and there are now a variety of forms, both local and trans-border, which meet immigrant (and indigenous) community needs for information and entertainment. The point is that these media, and specifically those which are locally-based, speak directly to their audience. They are based in the community and their message is not filtered or constructed by the mass media.

This media industry developed with community and government-funded options such as Access Radio (see Tohill, 1990), and more recently Planet FM. Maori tribal radio which developed through the 1980s provided one model that could be used by other ethnic and immigrant groups, and there are now a number of radio stations and programmes ranging from 531PI (which meets Pacific peoples interests) through to those provided in a variety of Asian languages. Alongside these, and parallel with Maori publications, are newspapers and magazines that range from those addressing the issues faced by all immigrant communities (see Migrant News) through to non-English language and community-specific publications. These have proliferated, and there are now more than 30 that meet Asian immigrant community needs in New Zealand. Television is more limited because of the expense involved, but there are programmes provided on TV One which are concerned with Pacific and Asian communities (Tagata Pasifika and Asia Down Under, respectively). The other option with regard to television, thanks to advances in satellite relay and reception systems, is the opportunity to access some country of origin channels and programmes. A recent example is the introduction to New Zealand of trans-border media which provides an opportunity for transnational communities to maintain contact with events in their homeland, to maintain language and, to a degree, cultural fluency. This is reinforced with the circulation of videos.

In addition to the orthodox media of print, radio and television, new information technologies based on the internet provide real-time, low-cost options. These might be at a person-to-person level, but web-sites which allow for virtual communities to exist have become increasing important. A
web-site such as the *Kava Bowl*, for example, fulfilled a variety of functions while it was in operation. It was set up to connect Tongans at home and abroad and to provide an opportunity to discuss matters of significance, both cultural and political. In reality, it also provided an opportunity as a sexual chat-room, a noticeboard for all sorts of activities and information about a range of non-cultural behaviour (e.g. obtaining employment or accommodation, travel etc). These virtual networks have some interesting implications for questions of identity and cultural/language maintenance (see Spoonley, 2001). They are an extension of the traditional immigrant-entrepreneurial and support networks that help immigrants adjust to life in a new country and which maintain cultural networks. They supplement the more traditional information flows and provide an alternative to mass media and (at times) to immigrant-generated media.

These new media and the expansion of more traditional options have some interesting ramifications for immigrant communities, and for the nation-building process. There are mixed opinions as to whether the now more extensive immigrant-specific media help adjustment and settlement, or whether they encourage introspection within the community and constitute a barrier to adjustment (Mahtani, 2001). Moreover, there is the question of what constitutes a culturally diverse society and what role immigrant – and mass – media play in the process of a public and inclusive debate about citizenship, nationality and ethnic diversity/identity. For some people, global influences are believed to be helpful (Kymlicka, 2001: 322):

> Being open to the world is, for many people, an important part of their self-conception as members of modern pluralistic societies, and they autonomously decide to pursue that self-conception through various international agreements and institutions. Such decisions are not a denial of people's national identity, or sovereignty, but precisely an affirmation of their national identity, and a highly valued exercise of their national sovereignty.

But Kymlicka (2001: 231) also goes on to note that majority nationalism, to which national and mass media institutions contribute significantly, can undermine the esteem and presence of minority groups:

> The fact that state nation-building can be minority nation-destroying even when conducted within the constraints of a liberal democratic constitution helps to explain why minority nationalism remains a powerful force within Western democracies....
The proliferation of immigrant-specific media obviously meets certain needs, including help in the adjustment process, the provision of important information and the maintenance of cultural and linguistic identities. They provide an important alternative to the mass media and the information it supplies. But in fulfilling these functions, do these media contribute to a common public debate about a culturally diverse and inclusive society? Equally, the mass media are an obvious place for debates about national and regional policies which concern nationality, citizenship and cultural diversity, but they may not do this in a way which respects the integrity of immigrant and other minority groups, nor may they provide sufficiently accurate information on the issues of the diverse groups that comprise the society. For both minority and majority group, for both immigrant-specific and mass media, the reflection of all cultural identities and the opportunity to discuss both specific and national futures is important for a successful, democratic, culturally-diverse society. Kymlicka (2001: 250) makes the point that:

Being able to express one’s cultural identity is important for many reasons: cultural membership is a precondition of autonomous moral choices, and itself reflects an autonomous cultural choice that is worthy of respect; it is a “constitutional” aspect of one’s identity which affects one’s sense of status and self-respect.

The interviews with the Korean and South African focus groups hinted at the importance of these alternative media networks, both in terms of their size and their significance in the settlement process. In a city such as Auckland, the availability of immigrant community print media is readily apparent at specialist shops or places such as doctors’ surgeries. The cheap cost and reach of electronic options has greatly extended the opportunity to generate networks and media, and to supplement, if not circumvent, the mass media. There are conversations and information-sharing going on within these immigrant communities that is largely (if not totally) invisible to others outside that particular community. This growth and its significance deserve further attention, especially in terms of questions concerning immigrant adjustment and national social cohesion.
CONCLUSION

The mass media play a central role in democratic societies, providing an important means of communicating information and a critical understanding of political process. In societies that are becoming more culturally diverse as part of an ongoing nation-building process, the centrality and critical nature of that role is accentuated, with the need to explain the political options and the diversity of that society. To ignore or marginalise ethnic groups (be they indigenous or immigrant) is incompatible with the democratic role of the media (Barker, 1999: 78). The politics of recognition and incorporation (c.f. Spoonley and Berg, 1997) are played out in the media and contribute to the quality of understanding and debate in both public and private realms. As Mahtani (2001: 99) comments with regard to Canada, "...the media is responsible for the ways that Canadian society is interpreted, considered and evaluated amongst its residents". The media cannot, as it has done in the past, claim that it is simply reflecting the society in which it is located and responding to the interests of the public (c.f. Alibhai-Brown, 2001: 124).

A review of the coverage and approach of the print media between 1993 and 2003 indicates that the reality of immigrants' lives and the impact of immigration have been extensively covered. While the mid-1990s provided some undesirable examples of stereotypical reporting, the media performance overall has improved to the extent that it has provided more nuanced and detailed coverage of immigrants and immigration. However, this acknowledgement of the improvement that has occurred needs to be qualified. There is still a tendency to use crude all-inclusive labels such as 'Asian' for particular individuals and groups when there are significant cultural, linguistic and economic differences between groups. There is a tendency to focus on negative elements – criminal behaviour, for example – that contribute to a problematising of immigration, even though this is counterbalanced by more positive reporting. And there is too often a focus on immigrants from Asia, rather than the full range of immigrants who arrive in New Zealand. This focus tends to occur, most often, in news stories in the print media. By contrast, features, series and columnists have (with some exceptions) generally helped to construct a more nuanced and sympathetic picture of what is happening.

In discussing these issues with two immigrant groups, it was clear that the negative reporting tended to predominate and to be seen as a matter of considerable importance in the life of these communities and as an indication of how they are seen by others. The media thus becomes representative of the
host community and a major contributor in defining the nature of intergroup relations. As an alternative for a variety of reasons – contact with a homeland, culturally sensitive media, help with settlement in New Zealand, intra-immigrant group business activity – the immigrant groups accessed alternative media which might be locally generated or come from a homeland.

The nature of immigrant reactions and engagement with the local mass media or alternative forms of media raises significant issues concerning both immigrant and host perceptions and adjustment. Do alternative or local mass media hinder those processes and successful outcomes? More research on audience reactions to various media and the impact of mass and alternative media on group interaction and understanding is required.

Improving Media Performance

As noted above, the performance of the media appears to have improved since the mid-1990s, but there was nevertheless some concern amongst the members of the two immigrant focus groups with regard to the ongoing performance of the mass media. The question then arises as to what might be done to improve this performance.

An earlier book (Spooner and Hirsh, 1990) which focused on the role of the media in reporting on indigenous and ethnic (largely Pacific) peoples provided some guidance. In particular, Tully (1990) suggested a code of ethics for journalists reporting on ethnic relations, while Webber (1990) identified the responsibilities of the media, including a better representation of journalists from ethnic and indigenous groups in the newsrooms, and a concern with the process of generating news and information. McGregor (1991) further highlighted the importance of having appropriately qualified journalists and management in media organisations. Strategies for dealing with a culturally competent media must address “employment practices, including training, recruitment, promotion and executive control”, along with a concern with what happens in production and post-production activities such as “scripting, producing, directing, reporting and reconceptualising... [a] society as diverse and conflictual” (Jakubowicz, 1994: 196).

In addition to these suggestions concerning representation and the qualifications of those in the media, there are issues about encouragement and compliance in the everyday pressures of working in the media. Suggestions that have been made elsewhere include the possibility of an in-house ombudsman to investigate compliance (Stannard, 1989), although the issue of
whether this role should be about compliance or encouragement, or both, has important ramifications. There are management and leadership responsibilities within media organisations that should not be displaced or abdicated to an ombudsman. Equally, encouragement and a positive, supportive environment might be more in keeping with the ethos surrounding the recognition of cultural diversity, with more explicit compliance options reserved for the larger organisation or the more recalcitrant.

There is also the question of whether, at this stage, the compliance mechanism should be in-house or whether an industry provision is important. The New Zealand Broadcasting Standards Authority and the Press Council constitute important avenues for redress which are formal and relatively independent. But there are barriers. It is daunting for someone new to a country, especially someone whose English language skills might be limited or who feels vulnerable, to contemplate a formal complaint. Even when the complaint has been laid, there is no guarantee that those investigating it will have the required expertise or be willing to censure the media appropriately. For example, a Press Council decision to rule that a *Northland Times* headline (“World Judaism Shamed. Bestial Israelis Switch to Death Camp Tactics”, 15 April 1988) was not offensive to Jews was difficult to understand (see Spoonley, 1990: 34).

Canada has moved significantly to address some of these questions, especially through the federal and provincial Departments of Communication and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Committee (CRTC). They legislatively enshrine the right to receive and transmit what is deemed to be an appropriately balanced depiction of Canadian multicultural society. The question is whether this formal acknowledgement, while a good beginning, has “changed our minds about issues of cultural and racial diversity?” As Roth (1998: 495) notes:

*A socially responsible media, one which is actively engaged in exploring the multicultural reality, remains a long way off. Industry self-regulation may ensure that the status quo remains unchallenged; political and social activities are required to ensure the challenge is sustained.*
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1

Migrant Focus Group Questions

General opening questions:

How long have you been in the country?
How much time do you spend watching TV/reading newspapers/listening to the radio?
   How many hours per week?

What sorts of programmes/newspapers do you commonly watch/read or listen to?

Mainstream Media:

When accessing mainstream media e.g. TV, radio or newspapers, what do you expect to see in relation to your group?
   What kinds of material, images or words etc?

How do you perceive that your group is portrayed in the media?
   Examples?
   Possible prompts: under-represented, misrepresented, over-represented.

What types of images, words or material are most common?

What types of images, words or material are most positive?

What types of images, words or material are most negative?

Example of 6 newspaper clippings. Question: what do you think of these?

Have you ever done anything to try and influence or respond to something in the media?
   Have you found these strategies to be effective/ineffective?

What do you think has been the impact of mainstream media reporting on your particular group?
How do you think this has affected your group’s relationship with NZ society generally?

What would you like to see done differently in mainstream media reporting? Suggestions for improvement?

Alternative Media:

Are there any media that you access? Own radio station/show? Newspaper? Television show?

Do you feel that alternative media offers an alternative to dominant mainstream media reporting? In what ways do you think this is important?

Is alternative media a more important source of information for you than the mainstream media?

Overall, do you think that mainstream reporting of migrant issues has improved or worsened since you have been in New Zealand?
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