Campaign:

A Content Analysis of the New Zealand-based Chinese Language Ethnic Media's Coverage of the 2008, 2011 and 2014 New Zealand General Elections

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Abstract

New Zealand's ethnic Chinese population has grown significantly since the selection criteria of immigrants shifted from being defined by ethnic or national origin to personal merit in 1987. The ease with which non-citizens can vote in New Zealand, and the potential of New Zealand's Mixed Member Proportional electoral system to amplify the political impact of minority groups means that informing this growing demographic is crucially important. Many recent migrants are prevented by language barriers from accessing English language news. Consequently, the Chinese language ethnic media constitute the key source of political information for many ethnic Chinese voters. Because of this, these media are expected to provide a civic forum for pluralistic debate enabling those with the right to vote to do so in a way that is congruent with their political and social preferences. Despite their importance, the ethnic Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand have been the subject of few studies.

In response, this thesis utilises the method of content analysis to examine civic forums provided by the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice*, and the *New Zealand Messenger* during the 2008, 2011 and 2014 general election campaigns. The findings indicate that political coverage deviated from the normative expectations of the civic forum in a number of ways, including a strong incumbency bias – particularly when the National Party was in power; high levels of favourable coverage towards the ACT Party and the consequent marginalisation of many other parties. In addition, National Party candidate Yang Jian occupied a position of unique visibility during the 2014 election campaign while New Zealand First were subject to high levels of negative coverage.

These normative deviations, possibly stemming from the resource constraints that the newspapers operate within and coupled with their role as ethnic media outlets serving and advocating for minority groups, can hamper the readership's capacity for meaningful electoral participation.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This thesis examines the political content of three New Zealand Chinese language ethnic newspapers during the 2008, 2011 and 2014 election campaigns. This is a topic of considerable importance due to the role that the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand play as a civic forum for the country's fast growing ethnic Chinese population, particularly recent arrivals who are often reliant on the Chinese language ethnic media for information on New Zealand politics and the New Zealand political system (Barker & McMillan, 2017).

In recent decades, and in particular since the Fourth Labour government introduced the 1987 Immigration Act, crafted with the non-discriminatory intent of selecting immigrants "on the basis of personal merit rather than national or ethnic origin" (New Zealand Department of New Zealand Department of Statistics, 1989, p. 202), there has been rapid growth in migration from the People's Republic of China (PRC) to New Zealand. Between 2013 and 2018, the number of people usually resident in New Zealand who identified as ethnically Chinese grew by 59,976 to 231,387.[1] Over the same period the number of people born in the PRC and usually resident in New Zealand grew by 44,694 to 132,905, comprising 57.4% of the total ethnic Chinese population in New Zealand (Statistics New Statistics New Zealand, 2014a; Statistics New Statistics New Zealand, 2014b; Statistics New Zealand, 2019).[2] As a proportion

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[1] Those who identify as Hong Kong Chinese number 3,177, Cambodian Chinese 1,413, Malaysian Chinese 4,866, Singaporean Chinese 675, Vietnamese Chinese 609 and Taiwanese 6,570.

[2] 49,122 PRC nationals were granted New Zealand permanent residency between 1st of July 2009 and November 2019 (Immigration New Zealand, 2020). Between 2008 and 2018, 12,459 people born in the PRC obtained New Zealand citizenship (Department of Internal Department of Internal Affairs, 2019).

of the total population, people born in the PRC constitute around 3% of New Zealand's total population in 2018, up from 1% in 2001.

While such demographic changes are, broadly, not unique to New Zealand and have a number of similarities with trends in countries such Australia (Gao, 2017) and Canada (X. Li, 2015) among others, one factor that makes the situation in New Zealand unique is the ease with which non-citizens can vote. In New Zealand, permanent residents can vote after one year of continuous residency (New Zealand Electoral Electoral Commission, 2020). Although New Zealand is not the only country to offer universal voting rights to non-citizens,[3] in no other country is it easier than it is in New Zealand for non-citizens to vote (Earnest, 2008). Furthermore, New Zealand utilises a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system, in which voters are able to cast one electorate and one party vote. This can have the effect of amplifying the electoral impact of minority groups through the electorate vote if group members are concentrated in particular electorates, and can also incentivise parties to be more attentive to ethnic minority groups as they compete for the party vote (Barker & McMillan, 2017).

For many new migrants, ethnic media are an important source of information about their new country (Dai, 2016; Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach, 2011; Zhou & Cai, 2002) and, crucially, its political system (Ahadi & Yu, 2010; Lindgren, 2014); this has been shown to be true of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand (Barker & McMillan, 2017; P. H. Li, 2013). These media, reflecting the aforementioned demographic changes to the ethnic Chinese population in New Zealand, have increasingly become the domain, both in terms of their ownership and readership, of migrants from the PRC (Brady, 2017; Ip & Yin, 2016; P. H. Li, 2013; To, 2009). This mirrors the effects of earlier immigration patterns which had led to migrants and companies from Hong Kong and Taiwan playing dominant roles in the Chinese language ethnic mediascape in New Zealand (Ip, 2003; P. H. Li, 2013; To, 2009).[4] As a result, the Chinese language ethnic media now serve a larger audience than ever before and are an increasingly important component of New Zealand's democracy.

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[3] Chile, Malawi and Uruguay also do (Earnest, 2008).

[4] Broadly similar changes have occurred to Chinese ethnic media landscapes in a number of countries such as Australia (Sun, Yue, Sinclair, & Gao, 2011), the United States (To, 2009) and Brazil (Stenberg, 2016).

Because of the language barrier that many recent ethnic Chinese migrants, (particularly those from the PRC) to New Zealand, face, they are often reliant on the ethnic Chinese language media for information about New Zealand politics and its political system (Barker & McMillan, 2017). This places additional responsibility on the Chinese language ethnic media to provide their readership with a civic forum (Norris, 2000). As a civic forum the media should ideally provide space for pluralistic debate, enabling the electorate to gain an understanding of the parties and candidates seeking elective office, their track records, and their policy intentions (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002; Norris, 2000; Strömbäck, 2005). Information in the civic forum should be provided in a manner that is fair, impartial, and allows news media consumers to make informed electoral decisions that are congruent with their own social and political preferences (Dahl, 1979; Schudson, 1995). This function is most important during election campaigns (Norris, 2000; Street, 2011).

Many of the Chinese language ethnic media outlets in New Zealand recognise that they have an important role to play in providing information about domestic New Zealand politics to consumers of their news and opinion coverage (Home Voice, 2018; Stop Press, 2018). Political parties and their candidates are increasingly recognising the Chinese language ethnic media as providers of a civic forum through which they can communicate with a segment of the population with increasing electoral importance but who may not be able to be reached through the mainstream media. This is especially the case for National, Labour, but also a number of minor parties that have placed ethnically Chinese candidates in senior positions. This recognition of the role of ethnic language media was clear in the results of this study and will be discussed in more detail below, However, a more recent and illuminating example was how just four days after being selected as the National candidate for Botany, Christopher Luxon, sat down for an exclusive interview with the *Chinese Herald* (which was carried on the newspaper's front page) in an attempt to woo ethnic Chinese voters. It is clear he was specifically targeting voters from the PRC,

evidenced by his declaration of love for the PRC ("我超愛中國")[5] and the badge he wore to the interview bearing the New Zealand and PRC national flags (Chinese Chinese Herald, 2019).

It is important to note that ethnic media use is primarily associated with new migrants (P. H. Li, 2013; Zhou, 2009). Because of high predicted levels of migration (Statistics New Statistics New Zealand, 2015), and changes to the affordability and widespread use of communications technologies and international travel, increasing the ease with which people are able to maintain hyphenated identities (Matsaganis et al., 2011), the Chinese-language ethnic media in New Zealand will likely have a continuing, and perhaps even enhanced, relevance and importance to New Zealand politics in the future. Despite its potential to play an influential role in the democratic process, and the stated awareness of their roles by a number of newspapers (Home Voice, 2018; Stop Press, 2018) the Chinese-language media in New Zealand operates, however, in what is essentially a "regulatory vacuum" (P. H. Li, 2013, p. 36). The single Chinese-language newspaper belonging to any of the major regulatory bodies that cover the media in New Zealand is the *Waikato Weekly Chinese Newspaper* (怀卡托周报), which, via its membership of the Community Newspaper Association of New Zealand, is a member of the New Zealand Media Council (formerly the New Zealand Press Council)[6] (Community Newspaper Association of New Zealand, 2019; New Zealand Media Council, 2019). There is little,

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[5] A note on the use of Chinese characters in this thesis. All characters are presented in the form in which they were originally published. Therefore, some are in the traditional script, while others are simplified.

Chinese names, where appropriate, will be written in the first instance using both the Pinyin romanisation (or the person's English name) and characters. All subsequent mentions will use only Pinyin or the English name.

[6] The New Zealand New Zealand Press Council has noted that "the Chinese community in New Zealand is a large and growing one and deserves to be served by fair, objective, independent newspapers that meet the standards expected of news media in New Zealand" (New Zealand Press Council, 2017, p. 73).

therefore, to compel these publications to adhere to the principles of accuracy, fairness or balance.[7]

Barker and McMillan (2017) note that the Chinese language ethnic media[8] in New Zealand do not provide adequate information about New Zealand political parties, candidates, policies, or the New Zealand political system for those who are reliant on them to feel sufficiently informed at election time, which impacts negatively on their electoral participation. While problematic in any democratic nation, in New Zealand with the aforementioned ease with which non-citizens can vote, it is even more so. These failings are indicative of a failure by these media to provide a civic forum for their readership.

Despite their importance, their relative freedom from oversight, and the expression of concerns about their low informational value impacting negatively on political participation, the coverage of New Zealand politics by the ethnic Chinese language media in New Zealand has been the subject of only one published study (P. H. Li, 2013). While useful, Li's (2013) work covers only one point in time and does not provide systematic analysis of the visibility of parties, politicians, their policies or the tone of coverage and as a result leaves many questions about how the ethnic Chinese media function as a civic forum, unanswered. This study aims to fill in some of the existing gaps in the literature by investigating the civic forum provided by three Chinese language ethnic newspapers, the *Chinese Herald* (先驅報) , *Home Voice* (新西兰乡音报) and the *New Zealand Messenger* (新西兰信报).

1.2 Aim and Scope

Limits to this study are noted from the start. The focus is on the content of media rather than how that content is received by the audience. Furthermore, the concept of the civic forum is informed by the Schumpeterian model of representative

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[7] The few complaints that are made against the ethnic Chinese language media tend to be made by members of the Falun Dafa Association of New Zealand (新西兰法轮大法协会) arguing that they have been represented in ways that breach the principles of accuracy, fairness and balance (New Zealand Press Council, 2015, 2017).

[8] Among other types of ethnic media (Barker & McMillan, 2017)

democracy (Norris, 2000; Schumpeter, 1976), which is primarily concerned with the coverage of those competing for elective office, their policies, their intentions and their previous performance (Ferree et al., 2002; Strömbäck, 2005). The variables included in the content analysis, therefore, were selected to provide information on the visibility of, and tone towards parties, politicians and their policies. It does not seek to capture the media presence of members of the electorate or interest groups – areas of concern for some of the more inclusive models of democracy and their related conceptions of the civic forum (Ferree et al., 2002; Strömbäck, 2005). In addition, the content analysis utilised in this thesis focusses on the Chinese language ethnic press and does not, despite their importance, include data from other media forms due to the difficulty in collecting such data for the time period covered in this study (2008-2014).

1.3 Significance of study

One intended outcome of this study is to advance knowledge of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand and how they report on New Zealand politics. This study builds on the analysis of the Chinese language ethnic media's coverage of the 2017 New Zealand general election conducted by McMillan and Barker[9] (2017; 2018) by longitudinally extending their methodology to cover the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections. In doing this I provide the first study of the Chinese language ethnic media that covers more than one election which enables the analysis of the most longitudinally salient characteristics of the Chinese language ethnic media as civic forum during election campaigns. Furthermore, by using a sample period that covers elections with different incumbent parties (the Labour Party in 2008 and National Party in 2011 and 2014), I am able to test the effects of incumbency, something which has not been done to date. In addition, by longitudinally extending McMillan and Barker's (2017; 2018) methodology, I am also able to analyse changes to the ways that political parties communicate directly with the electorate in the form of candidate authored articles.

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[9] McMillan and Barker's (2017; 2018) research examined the Chinese (and other ethnic media) media's coverage of the 2017 New Zealand general election. An article based on this research is currently under review.

This thesis entailed the utilisation of content analysis, defined as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from tests (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 24) to examine the civic forum provided by Chinese language ethnic newspapers: the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice*, and the *New Zealand Messenger*. All articles on New Zealand politics published in these three newspapers in the six weeks prior to the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections were included. The variables – party mentioned, leader mentioned, candidate mentioned, policy mentioned, candidate author and tone of article – were informed by the previously mentioned normative expectations that the news media should provide a pluralistic civic forum which contains impartial and balanced information on parties and candidates from across the political spectrum that are competing for elective office (Ferree et al., 2002; Norris, 2000; Strömbäck, 2008). The findings of my research indicate that the coverage of New Zealand politics by the three newspapers in the sample deviate from the normative expectations of the civic forum in a number of significant ways. Briefly, these include a strong incumbency bonus, mostly when the National Party was in government, and further, that National Party candidate Yang Jian (杨健) was found to occupy a position of unmatched visibility through his regular syndicated articles during the 2014 election campaign. The ACT Party was also covered by the Chinese language media in a way that was inconsistent with the norms of the civic forum. This party benefitted from a widespread positive bias and received remarkably high levels of coverage. Despite receiving only 3.65%, 1.07% and 0.69% in the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections respectively (Electoral Commission, 2008, 2012, 2014), the quantity of coverage given to the ACT Party was often considerably more than other minor parties and, in the *New Zealand Messenger's* 2014 coverage, equal to the Labour Party – despite Labour being the main opposition party and receiving 36 times more votes than ACT at the election (Electoral Commission, 2014). It is clear that the high levels of coverage given to National and ACT reduced the space available within the civic forum for other parties. These results are possible manifestations of the resource stretched nature of the Chinese language ethnic media and also their alternative functions as advocates for, and providers of bonding social capital to, a minority group or groups.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is composed of five further chapters. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I introduce the key concepts relevant to this study and review the literature on the political coverage of the Chinese language ethnic media, both in New Zealand and globally. The literature on the ethnic media in New Zealand and the political coverage of New Zealand elections is also reviewed. This is followed by an overview of the development of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand. In Chapter 3 I set out the methodology used in my analysis and offer a brief introduction to each of the three newspapers included in this study. Chapter 4 details the results of the content analysis, organised around each variable. In Chapter 5 I discuss the key findings from the content analysis, possible reasons for deviations from the civic forum and their consequences. I also outline the limitations of this study. Chapter 6 contains the conclusions, primary contributions to the literature and lays out areas of possible future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This thesis analyses the civic forum constituted by three Chinese language newspapers, namely the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger*. This chapter offers an overview of the development of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand. Following on from this, an examination of the key concepts and studies related to this thesis will be presented, during which I will identify major gaps in the extant literature on Chinese language media in New Zealand, gaps which stubbornly persist despite the long history of the Chinese language ethnic media in this country (P. H. Li, 2013; Murphy, 1997; Ng, 1997) and the potential of these media to play an important role in New Zealand politics and society more broadly (Barker & McMillan, 2017; P. H. Li, 2013).

2.2 Chinese Print Media in New Zealand

The first organised group of Chinese migrants to New Zealand arrived in February 1866, when 12 Cantonese miners arrived in Otago from Victoria, Australia to rework the Otago goldfields (Chan, 2007; Ip, 1995; Sedgwick, 1985).[10] The ethnic Chinese population reached a 19th century peak of 5,004[11] in 1881, a number that was not surpassed until 1951 (Murphy, 2008). It is evident however that from 1881 the New Zealand government made repeated and concerted efforts to restrict Chinese immigration to New Zealand through various means such as a poll tax (beginning at £10 in 1881 and rising to £100 in 1896); mandatory finger printing upon entry from 1900; and a language test from 1907. In 1908 Chinese migrants lost their right to naturalisation, which they had previously held for 55 years (Ip, 1995; Sedgwick, 1985) and in 1921 a quota was enacted allowing 100 Chinese into New Zealand each year upon payment of the poll tax (Sedgwick, 1985). Further impediments included the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act in 1920 which

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[10] The first known Chinese settler in New Zealand was Wong Ahpoo Hock Ting (Appo Hocton), who arrived in Nelson in 1842 (Ip, 1995).

[11] Of the 5,004 only 9 were women (Murphy, 2008).

meant that all prospective immigrants who were not British or Irish by birth or descent had to apply in writing for permission to enter New Zealand. This Act defined New Zealand immigration policy right up until 1974 (Beaglehole, 2015; New Zealand New Zealand Parliament, 2018).

The racist, exclusionary nature of New Zealand immigration policy meant that many Chinese immigrants retained a 'sojourner' mentality well into the 20th century, and this, coupled with the small size of the Chinese community and the large geographical distance between New Zealand and China became reflected in the development and orientation of Chinese ethnic media in New Zealand[12] (Ip, 2006). The earliest and only known Chinese-language 'newspaper' to be published in the 19th century, was the *Kam Lei Tong I Po*, likely a handwritten sheet produced by the Presbyterian missionary Alexander Don which he pasted up on to the Round Hill Mission Church in Southland on the 12th of May 1883[13] (Ng, 1997). Initially, the factors noted above and widespread illiteracy among those in the Chinese community meant that the Chinese ethnic press was slow to develop, but those outlets that did manage to find an audience "would remain uncontested, exclusive and highly influential" in shaping the opinions of their readers (Ip, 2006, pg. 178).

Despite the restrictions placed on the Chinese community, by the 20th century a more educated and urbanised Chinese population had emerged and, alongside, an increase in local press activity. The *Man Sing Times* (民聲報), first published in Wellington in July 1921 by the Kuomintang's (國民黨) Wellington branch[14] (Murphy, 1997; P. H. Li, 2013) was the first formal Chinese-language newspaper produced in New Zealand (Ip, 2003; P. H. Li 2013). This highly partisan publication primarily featured Kuomintang notices, and China-related pro-KMT news and political commentary (P. H. Li, 2013) and initiated a lineage that closely tied the fortunes of

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[12] For an overview on the development of other forms of Chinese ethnic media in New Zealand see Ip (2006).

[13] The last mention of the Kam Lei Tong I Po was in October 1883 when members of the Chinese community criticised it for its information on the Sino-French War as contrary to their own (Ng, 1997).

[14] The Man Sing Times ceased publication in October 1922, likely due to a lack of funds (Ip, 2003).

the New Zealand-based ethnic Chinese press to those of governments and political parties in China and Taiwan - a phenomenon that persists to this day. Mirroring events in China, from 1928 the Kuomintang became the dominant political force among the Chinese community in New Zealand (Ip, 1995; Sedgwick, 1985) and a second Kuomintang newspaper was published by the Auckland branch in 1930 (Murphy, 1997).[15]

The partisan nature of the early Chinese ethnic press in New Zealand was in many ways not dissimilar to the English language press which had a long history of being used by owners and contributors to promote their own political agendas and careers. A prominent example of this was Sir Julius Vogel, co-founder and editor of the *Otago Daily Times* who used his own newspaper to support a political career which eventually culminated with him becoming Premier of New Zealand (Day, 1990).

The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, provided the impetus for the establishment of two further newspapers, the Wellington-based *New Zealand Chinese Weekly News* (中國大事週刊) in 1937, and the Auckland-based fortnightly paper the *Q-Sing Times* (屋崙僑聲) in 1938.[16] Both these newspapers, which together constituted a sizeable media for a community of around 4,000 people (Murphy, 2008), were supported by the New Zealand Chinese Association and its branches who worked closely with the Chinese embassy, printing Chinese government appeals and announcements. Stories and editorials were chosen for their patriotic content with the dual intention of bonding the community together and raising money for the war effort (Ip; 2006; Murphy, 1997). It is interesting to observe that the China-focus of the papers was such that the 'Domestic News' pages (本國新聞)[17] carried news on China rather than New Zealand, an emphasis that was not only a consequence of the ongoing war, but served to illustrate the general orientation of the community at the time (Ip, 2006). To the extent that New Zealand did feature in the newspapers,

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[15] It appears however, that only one issue was ever published (Murphy, 1997).

[16] The Second Sino-Japanese War also provided the motivation for the establishment of ethnic Chinese newspapers in other countries such as the Netherlands (Chong, 2016).

[17] A more modern example of this comes from the Christchurch-based *New Zealand Messenger* (新西兰信报) which, on its website's "About Us" page ("关于我们") refers to PRC and Hong Kong media outlets as domestic media (国内媒体) (New Zealand Messenger, 2018).

practical information was provided on life in New Zealand and advertisements in the papers featured both Chinese and non-Chinese businesses (P. H. Li, 2013).

In 1939 the New Zealand government began to allow women and children who had entered New Zealand on war refugee permits to stay, and other family members were able to apply to come to New Zealand for reunification. From 1947, they were given the opportunity to gain permanent residence. This, it has been argued, was a significant point in the transformation of the Chinese community in New Zealand, as they began to move from being sojourners to settlers, and, as Ip (1995) notes, this was the moment that the "transformation from being Chinese in New Zealand to Chinese New Zealanders began" (pg. 182).[18]

Reflecting this transformation was *The New Zealand Chinese Growers' Monthly Journal* (僑農月刊) which ran from July 1949 until August 1972. As already mentioned earlier Chinese language publications were generally influenced or controlled by political organisations outside of New Zealand and published content primarily focused on China. The *Journal* however, which was the official publication of the Dominion Federation of Chinese Commercial Growers Association and received support from Peter Fraser's Labour government, was notably different with a much greater local focus, quickly becoming the "de facto voice of the community" (Murphy, 1997, pg. 273) and the most prominent New Zealand-oriented civic forum up to that point. The government supported the journal with the twin goals of enhancing cohesion among the Chinese community in New Zealand (Ip, 2006) while concurrently increasing the coordination of market gardeners and ensuring New Zealand would be able to supply produce to American forces in the Pacific (Murphy, 1997). The *Journal* itself stated that its aim was "to strengthen the unity of the Chinese growers, to provide information on growing techniques and market gardening knowledge, to improve growers' living standards, and to spread Chinese culture"(New Zealand Chinese Growers Journal, 1 August, 1949; Cited in Ip, 2006, p 181). Ip (2006) however has argued that the establishment of the *Journal* was also a pre-emptive measure from a government concerned about the allegiance of New Zealand Chinese to the newly established PRC and further, that the establishment of

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[18] 1,323 Chinese gained residence this way (Ip, 1995).

ethnic media might encourage such loyalties. Alongside local news the *Journal* also carried international news, in particular news on China and Taiwan with pro-Republic of China leanings until, in response to pressure from the New Zealand government's assimilation push in 1960, all international news was removed (P. H. Li, 2013; Murphy, 1997).

The *Journal* played a crucial role in linking, or perhaps creating a broader imagined Chinese community, something which was especially meaningful for those who lived in isolated areas and seldom came into contact with other Chinese (P. H. Li, 2013). Up until that that point, the *Journal* was most comprehensive New Zealand-facing civic forum aimed at an ethnic Chinese readership.

By 1966, 75% of the ethnic Chinese community was New Zealand-born and many in the community were well educated and prosperous. While the Chinese population was in many ways highly integrated, there was a "polite and clear distance" between the mainstream and Chinese populations (Ip, 1995, pg. 186). It seemed that the need for ethnic media was no longer as strong as it had been and many in the community, in part due to continued government restrictions on immigration and a refusal to allow Chinese associations to recruit teachers from outside New Zealand (Sedgwick, 1985), lacked the Chinese language skills to engage with Chinese language publications (Ip, 2006). From 1972 until the late 1980s then, the New Zealand Chinese ethnic media lay in a state of dormancy (Murphy, 1997; Ip 2006).

This began to change in the 1980s, when events in New Zealand and China led to what became a renewed flourishing of the New Zealand Chinese ethnic media. Key to this was the 1984 Fourth Labour Government and their programme of neoliberal reforms which resulted in New Zealand having one of the least regulated media markets in the world (Rudd, 2016b) and in 1987, a reformed immigration policy which saw immigrants "selected on the basis of personal merit rather than national or ethnic origin" (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 1989, pg. 202).

Over a five year span (1984-1989) the demographic of New Zealand's Chinese communities changed rapidly, while almost concurrently, the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was signed; the PRC introduced the Law on Control of Entry and Exit of Citizens (公民出入境管理法); martial law ended in Taiwan and the

Tiananmen Square protests were brutally supressed (Ip, 2003; Ip, 2006; P. H. Li, 2013). This confluence of events played a significant role in making New Zealand both more desirable and easier to immigrate to for people from the PRC, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Between 1986 and 1996, the ethnic Chinese population in New Zealand rose from 19,506 to 82,320 (Murphy, 2008). The first wave of these new arrivals came from Hong Kong in the late 1980s[19], and brought about the resurrection of the ethnic Chinese press in New Zealand, with the most notable manifestation of this being the Hong Kong-owned bilingual[20] newspaper launched in 1989 in Auckland[21], the *Sing-Tao Weekly* (星島週報) later becoming the *Sing-Tao Daily* (星島日報) (Ip, 2006). The migrants from Hong Kong were followed in the early 1990s by those from Taiwan and by 2001, 81% of the usually resident in New Zealand Taiwan-born population had arrived in the preceding ten years. In 2002 the Taiwanese community in New Zealand was estimated at between 12,000-15,000[22] (Ip, 2003). Servicing this group (in media terms) was the most notable Taiwanese-owned newspaper, the *Independence Daily* (自立快報), a newspaper of high journalistic quality staffed by professional journalists, and, while the paper was pro-Taiwan, "great care seems to have been taken in achieving fair representation" of New Zealand, Taiwan and the PRC (Ip, 2006, pg. 187). The *Independence Daily*, along with the *Sing Tao Daily* were the only modern Chinese ethnic newspapers that were not however, available for free (Ip, 2006) and both of these papers struggled with the influx of free newspapers that began to flood the market in the 1990s and early

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[19] Between 1986 and 1996, 25,800 Hong Kong citizens were given New Zealand residence, although by 2001 only 10.458 of the New Zealand Chinese population was Hong Kong born (10% of the total ethnic Chinese population). Many returned to Hong Kong after gaining a New Zealand passport as insurance against the impending handover of Hong Kong to China (Ho, Ip, & Bedford, 2001; Ip, 2006).

[20] English and Chinese

[21] Aiming to capitalise on the influx of Chinese immigrants, the paper became the Sing-Tao Daily (星島日報) in 1991, charging $1.20 per issue/edition

[22] The Taiwanese community was very politically active in the 1990s. They played key roles in organising rallies prior to the 1993, 1996 and 1999 elections. The largest rally was organised by the Taiwanese Hwa Hsia Society of New Zealand (紐西蘭台灣華夏協會) took place in 1996 and attracted more than 3,000 people and representatives from seven political parties (Ip, 2003).

2000s (Ip, 2006). This contest saw the *Sing Tao Daily* cease operations in 1994 while the *Independence Daily* survived until 2005 when competition from the free newspapers became compounded by the difficulties of attracting advertisers and readers (P. H. Li, 2013) in a community and mediascape that had become increasingly dominated by PRC Chinese (Brady, 2017; Ip & Yin, 2016; P.H. Li, 2013; To, 2009). By 2013, the overseas born Chinese population in New Zealand stood at 124,494, 70.9% of whom were born in the PRC (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a). This was a demographic shift which radically and fundamentally altered the Chinese media landscape in New Zealand.

2.3 The Free Press

Following the revival of the Chinese ethnic press in New Zealand, the first of the free Chinese ethnic newspapers to appear was the Mandarin Pages (华页周刊), founded

in 1991 by a Singaporean migrant. While this newspaper initially provided useful coverage of New Zealand current events, the quality began to decline as it moved from a weekly to daily publishing schedule (Ip, 2006; Yang, 2005). In the new millennium the number of free newspapers greatly increased and were often started by migrants from the PRC. Many were little more than advertising flyers, often set up to promote the owner's business interests (P. H. Li, 2013) or, as low-cost option to gain points towards a residency visa by setting up a business in New Zealand (Ip, 2006). Technological advances also made it much easier and cheaper for newspapers to source content from mainland Chinese and mainstream New Zealand media, further lowering the cost of such ventures (Ip, 2006). Of the free newspapers, *The*

New Zealand Chinese Herald Weekly (中文週報) founded in 1994 and published by

The New Zealand Herald, was the largest and highest quality free Chinese newspaper to be launched in the 1990s. This paper provided comprehensive cover and a variety of news, aided by the ability to draw stories from its parent newspaper (Ip, 2006). In 1997 the paper split from the *New Zealand Herald* and subsequently rebranded as *The Chinese Herald* (先驅報). Carrying on from its predecessor, the

Chinese Herald remains the highest quality Chinese ethnic newspaper in New Zealand (P. H. Li, 2013).

The rapidity and scale of the change that has occurred to the media landscape has been profound and while Ip (2003) reflected on the Taiwanese community's "total dominance of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand" (pg. 206), just six years later, To (2009), wrote of "Beijing's overwhelming dominance" of the ethnic Chinese media in New Zealand and elsewhere (pg. 168).

The dominance of PRC Chinese owned and backed ethnic media over the last two decades at the expense of non-PRC Chinese ethnic media is not unique to New Zealand. Similar trends have been documented in a number of countries, including Australia (Sun et al., 2011), France (Dai, 2016) the United States (To, 2009) and Brazil (Stenberg, 2016). This reflects the waxing and waning of the power and influence of the PRC and Taiwan – as well as their resources, migration patterns and the emphasis each country has placed upon influencing Chinese ethnic media (Dai, 2016; P. H. Li, 2013; To, 2009; Brady, 2017). For many ethnic Chinese newspapers, their economic and business reality means that they need to maintain a good relationship with PRC authorities, which in turn impacts the staff they hire and the content that they publish (Sun et al., 2011; To, 2009; 2014). In recent years, PRC influence over the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand has been a lively topic of discussion both in academia (Brady, 2017; P. H. Li, 2013; To, 2009) and in New Zealand's English language mainstream media (Cook & Walters, 2019; Walters, 2019).

It is clear when reading the ethnic Chinese language media in New Zealand that much, if not all, of its international news, especially coverage of the PRC,[23] is taken directly from PRC media outlets. This integration is a key component of the PRC's efforts to exert control over the discourses that the Chinese diaspora are exposed to (Brady, 2017, 2018; Sun, 2015).

In addition to this, the internet has in recent years made the sourcing of content from both homeland and host country media increasingly easy and affordable for ethnic media in New Zealand and around the world (Brady, 2017; Chong, 2016; To, 2009). For example, the Christchurch-based New Zealand Messenger (新西兰信报)

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[23] As I will note later in this thesis, coverage of New Zealand politics is also increasingly, in some New Zealand-based Chinese language ethnic media outlets, sourced from PRC state media.

has partnerships[24] with PRC media outlets Xinhua News Agency (新华社), People's

Daily (人民日报), Southern Weekly (南方周末) and Wen Wei Po (文匯報),[25] as well as

the Dunedin-based mainstream media outlet the Otago Daily Times (New Zealand

Messenger, 2018). Furthermore, technological changes have allowed all major

Chinese ethnic newspapers in New Zealand to now publish through their WeChat

accounts and websites[26] allowing their content to reach, and potentially influence, a

much larger audience, both in New Zealand and overseas.

An illustration of pro-PRC alignment in the New Zealand Chinese ethnic media can

be seen in the mission statement of the Wellington-based newspaper *Home Voice

Chinese Weekly News'* (乡音). This newspaper, owned by Kevin Zeng, a recent

former President of the Wellington branch of the New Zealand China Council for the

Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China (新西兰惠灵顿中国和平统一促进

会) (China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification, 2017),

states on its website that one of the "aims of producing the newspaper is to continue

to persist in serving the local Chinese community and uniting people from all walks

of life to promote the peaceful unification[27] of the Motherland"[28] ("将继续坚持服务

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24 Such partnerships are not limited to ethnic Chinese newspapers. Mainstream media outlets around
the world regularly carry content produced by Chinese state media. In 2016 Fairfax signed a deal with
state media outlet China Daily which has seen a supplement prepared by the China Daily included in
Fairfax papers including the Dominion Post (Peacock, 2016; Wang, 2016).

25 Wen Wei Po is based in Hong Kong and is state owned (Huang & Song, 2018).

26 See P. H. Li (2013) and Ip (2006) for a discussion of other forms of Chinese-language ethnic media,
including radio, television and online.

27 I have used literal translation of *tongyi* 统一, "unification", however, in PRC sources it is normally
translated as reunification as illustrated by the name New Zealand China Council for the Promotion of
the Peaceful Reunification of China.

28 Manifestations of this commitment are regularly visible in the newspaper. An example being an
article published in *Home Voice* on the 19th of May 2019, but sourced from PRC state media outlet
Beijing Daily (北京日报) and published under the banner of the Wellington branch of the New

Zealand China Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China titled "Liu Jieyi:
Completing the Great Cause of Unifying the Motherland is a Necessary Requirement for the Great

"当地华人华侨、团结各界人士促进祖国的和平统一"的办报宗旨") (Home Voice, 2018).

Similarly, Wang Lili, owner of *the Chinese Herald*, speaking at a media workshop for ethnic Chinese media hosted by the Guangdong Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (广东省人民政府侨务办公室), highlighted the Chinese ethnic media's wish to serve as channels to promote China's Belt and Road Initiative (People's Government of Guangdong Provence Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, 2018). While such patriotic sentiment is well received by portions of the PRC Chinese community in New Zealand, it can also alienate non-PRC Chinese and PRC Chinese who do not share the same views (P. H. Li, 2013). This also raises a number of concerns about how these media outlets report on issues that arise in New Zealand's domestic politics that are not in the interests of the PRC – an area that is, unfortunately, underrepresented in the literature.

It is important to note that many recent migrants from the PRC are dependent on the Chinese language ethnic media to learn about New Zealand politics and the New Zealand political system. This is most acutely the case for people who do not have the linguistic capabilities to access the mainstream English language news media (Barker & McMillan, 2017) and it makes these media a crucial civic forum for many Chinese New Zealanders. In addition, the increases in the PRC-born population in New Zealand, which grew by 44,694 between 2013 and 2018 to reach 132,905 (57.4% of 231,387 people who identify as ethnically Chinese in New Zealand)[29] (Statistics New Statistics New Zealand, 2014a; Statistics New Statistics New Zealand, 2014b; Statistics New Zealand, 2019) mean that these media have the responsibility of serving a larger population than ever before.

Under these circumstances, the importance of these media as civic forums providing space for pluralistic debate to inform the readership of the diversity of political

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Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation" (刘结一: 完成祖国统一大业是实现中华民族伟大复兴的必然要求")

(Home Voice, 2019).

[29] Other recorded variations of Chinese ethnicity are Hong Kong Chinese 3,177 people, Cambodian Chinese 1,413 people, Malaysian Chinese 4,866 people, Singaporean Chinese 675 people, Vietnamese Chinese 609 people and Taiwanese 6,570 people.

options available to them (Norris, 2000) would be high in any democratic nation, however, in New Zealand this is especially critical. New Zealand is unique in allowing permanent residents the right to vote after one year of continuous residency (New Zealand Electoral Electoral Commission, 2020), making it the easiest country in the world for non-citizens to vote (Earnest, 2008).

In addition to this, New Zealand's MMP electoral system with its electoral and party votes has the potential to increase the electoral impact of minority groups that are concentrated in particular electorates and also to incentivise parties to pay attention to minority groups as they compete for the party vote (Barker & McMillan, 2017). These factors ensure that the provision by these media of a civic forum is of great importance.

Many of the ethnic Chinese language media do show an awareness of their role in New Zealand's democracy, for example, *Home Voice* declares that it carries regular columns from Labour Party MP Raymond Huo and National Party MP Yang Jian with a stated intention to "keep its readership abreast of, and correctly interpret New Zealand government policies" ("让大家能及时了解新西兰的各项政策和正确的解读政策") (Home Voice, 2018). Furthermore, the ethnic Chinese media are increasingly viewed as an important way for politicians to reach the Chinese community. This was evident when during the 2017 election, then Prime Minister Bill English twice visited the *Chinese Herald* offices for an interview, while Labour leader Jacinda Ardern visited once.

The biggest constraint on the quality of news provided by the Chinese ethnic newspapers, all of which are free in New Zealand, is a lack of resources (P. H. Li, 2013). The newspapers still carry vast amounts of advertising and very few have the resources to produce quality original content.[30] When reporting New Zealand news, many newspapers translate articles, often unattributed, from the mainstream media

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[30] The highest quality newspaper (P. H. Li, 2013), the *Chinese Herald* reduced its publication from three times to once per week since New Zealand entered a nationwide lockdown in response to the Coronavirus pandemic on March 25th, 2020. It has continued to publish only once per week but still publishes daily through online channels. This change presumably occurred in response to the difficult financial situation in which the newspaper is operating in.

(Ip, 2006; P. H. Li, 2013). The cost of hiring people fluent in Mandarin and English, with a strong understanding of mainstream New Zealand and China, and who are professional journalists is prohibitive for many organisations. This leaves much of the reporting to people who are often recent arrivals in New Zealand and with possibly limited understanding of the country and Western journalistic norms (P. H. Li, 2013). Despite these shortcomings, there is still a strong desire and need for many in the Chinese community to learn more about New Zealand and New Zealand politics through the Chinese media (Barker & McMillan, 2017; P. H. Li, 2013).

2.4 Media and Democracy

Central to this thesis is the relationship between democracy and the media. The relationship between mass media and modern democracy has been examined extensively in the literature.[31] The symbiotic relationship between the two has, been argued by some scholars, to be such that one cannot survive without the other (Strömbäck, 2005). This connection refers to on the one hand, the media and journalism itself requiring democracy's tolerance and protection of freedom of speech, information, expression, and media independence from the state. On the other hand however, democracy needs the media to circulate information, provide a civic forum for pluralistic discussion and act as an independent watchdog (Carey, 1999; Kemp, 2016b; McQuail, 1992; Norris, 2000; Strömbäck, 2005).

A consequence of this relationship is the mediation of politics, which occurs when the media constitute the most important source of information and means of communication between the public and their government (Bennett & Entman, 2001; Graber, 2004; Kemp, 2016b; Strömbäck, 2008). Under such conditions, it is the media that the public are dependent on for information on politics and society, and to reach out to, and notify politicians of their opinions. In the opposite direction, politicians rely on the media to communicate to them the opinions of the public, to provide a channel for public engagement, and to understand trends in society (Kemp, 2016b; McQuail, 2010; Strömbäck, 2008). The responsibility to present a

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[31] A number of scholars offer detailed overviews of the media's role in democracy ie. Street (2011), Louw (2005), Schudson (1995), McNair (2003) and Kemp (2016b).

form of 'reality' can potentially give considerable power to media outlets. This can occur through agenda setting - the idea that the greater the attention that an issue receives in the media the higher the level of importance the public attach to the issue (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar & Simon, 2000; Strömberg, 2015), priming – the more salient issues are in the media, the more likely the public are to recall those issues when evaluating politicians and political parties (Druckman, 2004; Rudd, 2016a); framing – the process of emphasising particular aspects of a perceived reality at the expense of others "in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52) and mediatisation – a process in which central aspects of social or cultural activity take media form (Hjarvard, 2004). In the political form arena, mediatisation can lead to political actors being governed by media rather than political logic (Strömbäck, 2008).

There is, as Robert Dahl (1956) famously wrote, "no democratic theory – only democratic theories" (p. 1) and the normative expectations of the news media vary greatly across different conceptions of democracy. Ranging from those that desire to limit public participation in politics and the public sphere (Lippmann, 1957; Schumpeter, 1976) to more participatory forms that seek broader public participation and engagement (Barber, 1984; Dewey, 1927; Putnam, 2000). Various models of democracy and their normative implications for the media have been studied in depth (C. E. Baker, 2002; Ferree et al., 2002; Strömbäck, 2005) and compared with actually existing democracies (Downey, Mihelj, & Koenig, 2012; Ferree et al., 2002; Walter, 2017b).

The normative approach of greatest relevance to this thesis is the one taken by Norris (2000) in her analysis of the news media in post-industrial societies. Following the Schumpeterian model[32](Schumpeter, 1976), Norris (2000) outlined the structural

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[32] According to Schumpeter (1976) "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote" (pg. 241), with the role of the people being "to produce a government, or else an intermediate body which in turn will produce a national executive or government" (pg. 241).

characteristics of liberal democracy. These are: pluralistic competition among parties and individuals for elective office; free and fair elections held at regular intervals in which voters can select their representatives; and civil and political liberties that allow the public to speak, publish, organise, and assemble freely[33] (Schumpeter, 1976; Norris, 2000, Ferree et al., 2002; Strömbäck, 2005). Further, Norris (2000) identified three main functions of the news media within this tradition – as a *civic forum* to facilitate pluralistic debate, as a *mobilising agent* to encourage public participation in the political process, and as a *watchdog* to protect civil and political liberties.

Of these three functions, the provision by the news media of a civic forum will be the theoretical focus of this thesis. It is a concept most notably associated with the public sphere articulated by Jürgen Habermas in his seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989). A work which examined the rise of the bourgeois public sphere that emerged from interactions between capitalism and the state in 17th and 18th century Europe, and its subsequent decline as the distinction between state and society became increasingly blurred (Calhoun, 1992; Habermas, 1989).

Habermas' bourgeois public sphere, which was situated apart from the state, formal economy, and family, "may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public" (1989, pg. 27) to freely engage in rational-critical debate on matters of general interest. The increasingly independent press played a key role in informing the debates (and transmitting public opinion to those in power) that took place among the bourgeois in the coffee houses and salons of 18th century Europe that Habermas' work so idealised. Importantly, social inequalities were to be bracket and neutralised in the public sphere, allowing participants to engage as peers (Habermas, 1989; Norris, 2000).

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[33] The Schumpeterian perspective provides one of the most commonly accepted understandings of democratic institutions (Norris, 2000; Elliot, 1994) and is commonly referred to in discussions of the media's role in democracy (Strömbäck, 2005; Ferree et al., 2002; Baker 2001). It has been operationalised with the Gastil index, used by Freedom House in measuring the quality of democracies (Norris, 2000).

The notion of the public sphere posited in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) has been both singularly influential in the study of the public sphere (Rauchfleisch, 2017) and the recipient of extensive criticism[34]. Notable criticisms include that the work relied on a significantly mistaken understanding of the nature of the early British press (Curran, 1993); was overly restrictive in what it considered to be political issues (Eley, 1990; Fraser, 1990, 1992) and that it failed to fully acknowledge the ways in which women, ethnic minorities and men that did not meet the property qualifications and were therefore excluded from the bourgeois public square (Benhabib, 1992; Curran, 2000; Fraser, 1990, 1992; Ikegami, 2000). Further critiques of Habermas' lack of attention to non-bourgeois publics were swift in arriving following the English language translation[35] (Fraser, 1990; 1992; Benhabib, 1992). Fraser (1990) labelled the alternative publics subaltern counterpublics, which she defined as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (pg. 67). These critiques have played an important role in conceptualising ethnic media as existing within a plurality of publics that have their own ways of understanding and deliberating on political issues and engaging with a broader, dominant public sphere (Budarick, 2019a; Budarick & Han, 2015; Couldry & Dreher, 2007).

Related to Fraser's (1990) subaltern counterpublics are sphericules, defined by Karim (2002) as spaces for "distinct civic discourses not often heard in hegemonic spaces like the mass media" (pg. 231) which has been used in the study of ethnic media and their coverage of elections (Ahadi & Murray, 2009; Ahadi & Yu, 2010; Lindgren, 2014). Indeed Habermas' later work was accepting of plurality's importance and the concept of overlapping publics engaged in political dialogue with one another (Budarick, 2019a, 2019b; Gong, 2015).

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[34] Habermas himself acknowledged shortcomings of his bourgeois public sphere as first presented in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and subsequently revised his positions (Habermas, 1992; 1996).

[35] The German edition was published in 1962.

Closely related to Habermas' bourgeois public sphere is the civic forum. The civic forum, as articulated by Norris (2000) and utilised in her previously mentioned study, is a space constituted by the news media for pluralistic debate. In their function as a civic forum, the news media should function, on a general level, as a conduit between those in, and seeking power, and the electorate (Norris, 2000). Reflecting Schumpeter's (1976) focus, priority in the process should be given to those seeking elective office (Norris, 2000).

In order to facilitate pluralistic competition, the civic forum should be reflective of a wide array of views and ideas that circulate within society. Information should be provided in a fair and impartial manner that includes contextual information that enables individuals to comprehend the importance of what they read relative to their own particular context and to make an informed decision at the ballot box (C. E. Baker, 2007; Curran, 2000; McNair, 2003; Norris, 2000; Schudson, 1995; Street, 2011).

The normative concepts of the public sphere and the civic forum provide highly useful frameworks for the analysis of the news provided by the ethnic media and their coverage of politics, as has been demonstrated in the literature (Lindgren, 2014; McMillan & Barker, 2017, 2018)

2.5 Ethnic Media

Ethnic media, which may exist in many different forms and sizes (Browne, 2005; Riggins, 1992) can be generally defined as media produced by and for immigrants and racial, ethnic and linguistic minorities (Jeffres, 1999; Park, 1970; Viswanath & Arora, 2000; Yin, 2013). While the definition of ethnic media often holds that the production of such media is undertaken in the host country by members of the ethnic community in order to serve their political, cultural, economic and day to day needs, the transnational nature of many media outlets that serve these communities also needs to be acknowledged (Yin, 2013; S. Yu, 2009). This is true for many types of ethnic media, and certainly, applies to the Chinese ethnic media both in New Zealand (Ip, 2006; P. H. Li, 2013; Brady, 2017) and around the world (Chong, 2016; Sun et al., 2011; Pál, 2016). This has largely been facilitated by technological, political, economic and demographic changes (Hartig, 2019; Ip, 2006; Sun, 2015).

Transnational production, in relation to Chinese ethnic media, can provide a cost effective (in fact often free) and convenient way for media outlets, often facing considerable financial and human resource pressures (Sun et al., 2011; P. H. Li, 2013; Chong, 2016), to facilitate community and bond with their audience by publishing homeland related content (Yin, 2015). Conversely, this content and the possible dependence outlets may have on it to fill their pages, may restrict the ability of ethnic media to speak for and to the communities that they supposedly serve. The 'intervening homeland' may promote a form of cultural essentialism that denies or even restricts the rights of ethnic communities to self-identification and self-expression (Chong, 2016; Brady, 2017).

The emergence and subsequent flourishing of ethnic media can be seen as both proactive and reactive, as well as being inward and outward (Fleras, 2009). Reactive can be read as a response to the mistreatment of ethnic minorities in the mainstream media – for example, being excluded or represented through negative framing (Fleras & Kunz, 2001; Husband, 2005; S. S. Yu, 2016; Zou, 2014). However, by being proactive and redefining the reality of their experiences via ethnic media, ethnic minority groups can celebrate their successes and aspirations and help their communities to foster a collective confidence and identity (Putnam, 2000; Jeffres, 1999; Fleras, 2009; 2011; Zhou & Cai, 2002; Zou, 2014).

When examining their outward-looking role, it is clear that ethnic media supply information to immigrants, help them to navigate life in their new country and build bridges between ethnic communities and the mainstream which enables them to participate in civic society (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001; Fleras, 2009; Matsaganis et al., 2011). Ethnic media may also perform a sentinel function, warning the ethnic group against possible threats by publishing stories on, for example, crime against immigrants or law changes that may affect the group (Wright, 1960; Viswanath & Arora, 2000). Inwardly ethnic media transmit culturally important news and notices about the homeland and the host country. They exercise social control by notifying the community of behaviours that are considered acceptable within the values and norms of the ethnic community ((Viswanath & Arora, 2000; Viswanath & Demers, 1999).

Ethnic media may also be viewed as providing the communities they serve with forms of social capital. Fleras (2009), building on Putnam's (2000) conceptions of bridging and bonding social capital, developed a typology of ethnic media as social capital. As such, the inward functions of ethnic media create bonding capital, which is comprised of high levels of mutual support and based on strong social ties and high levels of trust within the group. On the other hand, the externally oriented bridging capital provided by ethnic media, which is provided by the outward functions of ethnic media, contains greater levels of general trust and is more inclusive, tolerant and aids with the dissemination of information (Fleras, 2009; Peeters & D'Haenens, 2012; Putnam, 2000).

2.6 Ethnic Media and Political Coverage

The extant literature on ethnic media and politics has focussed on certain areas while also leaving significant gaps. One area that has received considerable attention, and is of particular importance given the size of the Latino population, is the United States-based Spanish language ethnic media. Here there has been a focus on coverage of immigration issues, particularly in comparison to the mainstream English language media (Branton & Dunaway, 2008a) and its subsequent impact on attitudes towards immigration (Abrajano & Singh, 2009).

Ethnic media in Canada, which has a very ethnically diverse population (Vitoroulis, Brittain, & Vaillancourt, 2016) and a lively ethnic media environment (Lindgren, 2014) have been the subject of a relatively large number of studies on election reporting. Ahadi and Yu (2010) examined the difference between the Korean and the English language media's election coverage finding that the Korean language ethnic media published more voter education information than the English language media and focussed on different issues. It also gave considerable attention to the one in-group candidate running at the election.

Focussing on five ethnic language newspapers (two Punjabi and one each of Korean, Russian and Chinese) in the Greater Toronto Area, Lindgren (2014) found greatly varying degrees of quality in their election reporting during the 2011 Canadian federal election while Kwak (2017) examined television advertisements

from the Conservative Party of Canada targeting Asian Canadians in the 2011 Canadian federal election.

Recent studies on ethnic media and host country political coverage have examined: how certain policy issues are covered or 're-coded' by ethnic media to suit their audience (Zou, 2014; Branton & Dunaway, 2008); how the unique coverage of ethnic media may relate to an audience's perspective on certain issues (Abrajano & Singh, 2009); the use of minority media by ethnic minority politicians (Collet, 2008) and election campaign reporting (Yu & Ahadi, 2010; Lindgren, 2014), with the election coverage of Spanish language ethnic media in the United States, in particular, receiving considerable attention (Constantakis-Valdéz, 2008; Hale, Olsen, & Fowler, 2008; Subervi-Velez, 2008).

Very few studies have examined the political coverage of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand or internationally. Those that have include Yang (2005) who briefly examined a small number of articles published in the Chinese language ethnic press on Kenneth Wang becoming an MP and the New Zealand local body elections. To date, the only published study on New Zealand-based Chinese ethnic media election reporting in New Zealand is P. H. Li's (2013) examination of Auckland-based Chinese language ethnic media outlets[36] during the 2005 New Zealand general election. Li's study made a valuable contribution to the literature, providing an insight into a subject which had previously been untouched. In particular it shed useful light on the coverage of the ACT Party and its ethnically Chinese candidate Kenneth Wang (王小選) and his strong levels of opposition to Labour's social welfare policies (which were sometimes framed in a highly racist manner towards Māori and Pasifika), and broadly uniform coverage across different mediums. Also important was the highlighting of a perceived set of 'community' interests that were thought to be best served by having ethnically Chinese candidates elected to parliament. The study was however, somewhat narrow it its focus and did not feature a systematic analysis of party, politician or policy visibility, or the tone with which they are

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[36] The outlets covered were radio station 936 FM, New Zealand-based website chinese.net.nz and New Zealand's largest Chinese language newspaper the Chinese Herald (先驅報).

covered,[37] resulting in many unanswered questions about how the Chinese language ethnic media cover New Zealand elections.

McMillan and Barker's (2017; 2018) forthcoming study into the ethnic media's coverage of New Zealand's 2017 election includes Chinese language ethnic media and will provide a valuable contribution to the literature.

In surveying non-New Zeeland studies of the Chinese language ethnic media's political coverage, Lindgren's (2014) examination of campaign reporting during the Canadian 2011 federal election included one Chinese ethnic newspaper[38], the Toronto branch of Hong Kong-owned *Ming Pao*. Lindgren found that the *Ming Pao* provided more balanced coverage than other ethnic newspapers, in part due to its greater resources relative to the others in her sample. Beyond these two studies, thus far, studies of ethnic Chinese language media's coverage of politics are limited. In his overview of the Chinese language media in Cambodia, Pál (2016) notes that Khmer-language newspapers barely reported on opposition activities during the 2013 Cambodian general election, whereas by contrast, some Chinese ethnic newspapers did devote attention to their activities reflecting the frustration that many of their audience had with the perceived corruption and inefficiency in Cambodia. However, Pál's attention to election coverage was neither systematic nor in depth. Dai (2016), devoted a paragraph to the support offered to Chen Wenxiong (陈文雄) an ethnically Chinese candidate for Vice-Mayor of Paris' Thirteenth Arrondissement in a chapter examining the development of the Chinese language media in France, but again, did not delve deeply. Lim and Luan (2006) explored the advocacy role of the ethnic Chinese press in Malaysia and their relationships with political parties but without engaging in systematic analysis. Recently, the role of Chinese social media platform WeChat in democracies has begun to emerge as fertile ground for study and will surely become a focus of much future scholarship. Sun and Yu (2020) found that WeChat is playing an increasingly important role in civic education and participation in Australia. Further, Sun (2019) briefly analysed an article on the Bennelong

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[37] The exception was the tone of call-ins to the radio station 936 FM for which Li recorded which parties were the subject of the call in and the tone (positive, negative and neutral) of the comments towards them.

[38] The study also examined Korean, Punjabi and Russian ethnic media (Lindgren, 2014).

byelection in Sydney in her exploration of WeChat's role in public diplomacy in Australia.

Studies[39] of the Chinese ethnic media in New Zealand have tended to focus on its historical development (Ip, 2006; P. H. Li, 2013; Murphy, 1997; Ng, 1997; Yang, 2005). There has also been considerable work carried out on the ethnic Chinese language media's contribution to the identity construction of ethnic Chinese in New Zealand. In particular, the Chinese language ethnic media's portrayal of the Chinese diaspora in response to English language mainstream media reports on Chinese New Zealanders (Yao, 2015), identity construction in print (Duan, 2011; Lin, 2007) and online media (Yin, 2013; Yin, 2015, Ip & Yin, 2016) and the Chinese language ethnic media's representation of Māori and its influence on how recent Chinese migrants view Māori (Liu, 2009). The most comprehensive study on contemporary Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand is P. H. Li's (2013) *A Virtual Chinatown* and the PhD thesis of the same name which forms its basis (P. H. Li, 2009). Here, P. H. Li (2009; 2013) examined the historical and current contexts of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand and the communities that they serve.

More broadly, the ethnic language media in New Zealand has been the subject of relatively few studies. Māori language media, as Abel (2016) notes, despite having been published since 1842, has received little attention in the literature. Areas of the Māori language ethnic media that have been studied include their role in the revitalisation of te reo Māori (de Bruin & Mane, 2016; Matamua, 2014; Te Rito, 2014); the role of *Te Hokioi e Rere Atu-na* the newspaper of the Kīngitanga in challenging the dominant discourse and advocating for a separate Māori state (Paterson, 2013); social marketing in Māori language media (Duncan, 2013); the Māori language ethnic media's role in Māori (Stuart, 2003) and non-Māori (Turner,

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[39] The one study on the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand that I was not able to review was Raymond Huo's MA thesis *A Study of Chinese Print Media in New Zealand - History, Culture and Professionalism* which Auckland University declined to interloan. The thesis had been referenced in the work of Ip (2006) and Lin (2007).

2011) identity construction; the way that journalists at Māori media outlets view their role (Hanusch, 2014); differences in reporting between Māori and English language media (Kupu Kupu Taea, 2007), iwi radio (Mane, 2014) and Māori language media's coverage of the 2017 election (Tahana, 2018). In addition to this there have been a number of studies on Pasifika ethnic media. In particular, the media landscape that serves Pasifika people, their functions and the severe resource constraints that they face have all been examined (Kailahi, 2009; Neilson, 2015; Robie, 2009). So too has the audiences' frustrations with the amount and quality of the journalism that is available to them through Pasifika ethnic media (T. Ross, 2017).

Beyond this list however, the study of ethnic media in New Zealand remains is very limited. and it is apparent that in the literature there has been very little attention paid to the way that ethnic media report on New Zealand politics and elections. This is also true of internationally and it has been noted that despite the importance of the field, there remains a lack of scholarship examining ethnic's media coverage of elections (Karmin, 2002; Hale et al., 2008; Yang, 2005; and Lindgren, 2014). Such studies are crucial to understand the quality of a democracy, and in the case of the ethnic Chinese media in New Zealand (and many other countries around the world), an increasingly important part of democracy.

2.7 Mainstream Media Coverage of New Zealand Politics

There is, however, a rich body of literature examining New Zealand's English language media's domestic political coverage, from the relationships between the first newspapers printed in New Zealand, namely the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* and the *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette*, with the Crown Colony Government and its settlers (Day, 1990; Scholefield, 1958) to more modern appraisals of the news media and New Zealand politics (Atkinson, 2016; Bunce, 2019; Edwards, 2016).

Recent New Zealand election campaign coverage by the English language media has been the subject of a great deal of scholarly study. For example, the 2008 (Bahador, 2010; Comrie, 2009; Rudd & Hayward, 2009), 2011 (Clifton, 2012; Higgs, 2012), 2014 (Boyd & Bahador, 2015; McMillan, 2015; Rupar, Owen, & Baker, 2015) and 2017 elections (Mills, Berti, & Rupar, 2018) have all been examined in significant

detail. Other scholars, such as Bahador, Boyd, and Roff (2016) who looked at the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections and Boyd (2019), who scrutinised television campaign coverage from 1993 until 2017, have taken a longitudinal approach. Research has also focussed on related areas such as media coverage of local body election campaigns (S. Baker et al., 2017; Zvulun, 2015), televised leaders' debates (Craig, 2009; McMillan, 2007), political advertising (Robinson, 2009; Rudd, Connew, Harris, & Parackal, 2007) political blogs (Hopkins & Matheson, 2005, 2012), and social media (Beveridge, 2015; K. Ross, Fountaine, & Comrie, 2015; Salmond, 2010).

2.8 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the Chinese language ethnic print media in New Zealand and its development in becoming an important civic forum for Chinese New Zealanders. It has summarised key concepts relating to this thesis and then reviewed the literature on the ethnic media's coverage of politics, with particular emphasis on the Chinese language ethnic media and media coverage of New Zealand politics. It is clear that there are many gaps in the literature on the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand. The only published study on the subject, while a useful and sorely needed addition to the literature, illustrates that there are a great many gaps left to fill, not least how these media perform as a civic forum. This function is vital due to the ethnic language media's status and role as key sources of political information for a large subset of the population, who while they have the right to vote, may be are unable to (or not comfortable to do so) access the mainstream English language media (Barker & McMillan, 2017).

In light of these gaps, this thesis seeks to examine the civic forum provided by three Chinese language newspapers. In particular, it will focus on the visibility of parties, their leaders, candidates and policies as the core actors in the civic forum.

3. Method

3.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the civic forum constituted by the Chinese language ethnic newspapers in New Zealand. In pursuit of this, I conducted a content analysis of every article – a total of 980 - related to New Zealand politics published in the six weeks prior to the 2008, 2011 and 2014 New Zealand general elections in three Chinese language ethnic newspapers – the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger*.

Content analysis is defined broadly as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Holsti, 1969, p. 14), or more specifically, as a systematic and replicable technique for making valid inferences from texts or other meaningful matter based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 2013; Stemler, 2001). As the definition indicates, content analysis can be applied to a broad variety of matter, from video games and music, to print media and television programmes (Krippendorff, 2013) and is widely used in research on mass communication (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). Content analysis was chosen as the method for this study as it is considered the optimal method for analysing the performance of the news media as a civic forum (Norris, 2000) due to its capacity to be used to analyse the visibility of political actors, their associate policies and coverage tone from a large number of articles. Indeed, content analysis has been widely employed to these ends and also for the examination of the closely related concept of the public sphere constituted by the ethnic (Lindgren, 2014; McMillan & Barker, 2017, 2018) and mainstream media (S. Baker et al., 2017; Boyd & Bahador, 2015; Lindgren, 2014; Walter, 2017a).

3.2 Time Period and Data Collection

The time period covered by the content analysis was chosen to capture a period in which both major parties, National (2011 and 2014) and Labour (2008), had been in power. This was in order to examine possible differences in coverage that may have been specific to one particular party being in power. Analysing the coverage from

multiple elections, which had not been done in any previous studies of Chinese language ethnic media's political coverage, was important to increase the likelihood of uncovering the most salient characteristics of the civic forum during election campaigns, and to observe changes that have taken place over time.

The coding criteria utilised in the analysis was developed by McMillan and Barker (2017; 2018) and was specifically designed for the examination of the civic forum provided by ethnic media in New Zealand. Using their coding criteria will also allow for future comparison of the results of this study with the results from their forthcoming study of the ethnic media's coverage of the 2017 New Zealand general election. This will provide greater longitudinal insight into the civic forum available to consumers of Chinese language ethnic newspapers in New Zealand.

The information presented in the newspapers analysed in this study in no way constitute the entirety of the political information available to Chinese New Zealanders. Although there is reason to think that there may be a relatively high level of consistency in the quality and type of political information provided across various Chinese language ethnic media outlets and forms in New Zealand (P. H. Li, 2013), I make no claim to the generalisability of the findings of this study.

The newspapers included in this study were the Auckland-based *Chinese Herald* (先驅報), the Wellington-based *Home Voice* (新西兰乡音报) and the Christchurch-based *New Zealand Messenger* (新西兰信报). These papers were selected for this study because they are the main Chinese language ethnic newspapers in the three New Zealand regions that have the largest ethnic Chinese populations – and are collectively home to 86.5% New Zealand's ethnic Chinese population (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). In total, 980 articles were coded – 503 from the *Chinese Herald*, 275 from *Home Voice* and 202 from the *Messenger*.

3.3 Newspapers

The *Chinese Herald* (先驅報)

The Auckland-based *Chinese Herald* was founded in 1994 by the *New Zealand Herald*, New Zealand's highest circulation newspaper (New Zealand Audit Bureau of

New Zealand Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2020), and initially known as the *New Zealand Chinese Herald Weekly* (中文週報). It split from its parent publication in 1997 and while ownership of the paper has changed hands several times since (P. H. Li, 2013) the newspaper is currently owned by Auckland businesswoman Wang Lili (王立立) (New Zealand Companies New Zealand Companies Office, 2020a).Regarded as New Zealand's highest quality Chinese language ethnic newspaper (P. H. Li, 2013), the *Chinese Herald* is published in broadsheet format using traditional Chinese script. The *Chinese Herald* was published three times a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) in 2008 and four times a week in 2011 and 2014 (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday). The paper, which is free, claims to be available from more than 100 locations throughout Auckland, Hamilton, Napier, Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch and have an estimated readership of 30,000-40,000 per issue (Chinese Herald, 2018). The *Chinese Herald* also publishes via a number of other mediums, which greatly expands its reach. Its asserts that its news website (chineseherald.co.nz), receives 120,000 weekly visitors (Chinese Herald, 2018). [40] In addition to this, a full digital version of the newspaper is also available to read online at chnet.co.nz and it has a significant social media presence on WeChat (45,000+ subscribers), Weibo (36,548 followers), Facebook (47, 138 likes) and Twitter (4,882 followers).[41]

Home Voice (新西兰乡音报)

Home Voice was founded in 1998 and is owned by Wellington businessman Kevin Zeng (曾凯文)[42] (New Zealand Companies Office, 2020b). *Home Voice* is produced in

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[40] Between October 2016 and December 2019 the *Chinese Herald* and New Zealand Media and Entertainment, the owner of the *New Zealand Herald* ran a joint venture called the *Chinese New Zealand Herald* (新西兰先驱报中文网). The website is now solely run by the Chinese Herald.

[41] According to *The Chinese Herald* (Chinese Herald, 2018).

[42] Kevin Zeng is also a former President of the Wellington branch of the New Zealand China Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China (新西兰惠灵顿中国和平统一促进会) (China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification, 2017)

tabloid format, using simplified Chinese characters. It was published every Friday during all three election periods in my sample. *Home Voice* claims to be available at more than 50 different locations throughout Wellington and the lower North Island and have a circulation in the tens of thousands. The full *Home Voice* newspaper and select articles are published through the subscription WeChat account of owner Kevin Zeng. *Home Voice* also publishes stories on its website (ehomevoice.com) and the full newspaper can also be read online through digital content hosting website Issuu.com and on *Home Voice's* own website. *Home Voice* also has an app for iOS and Android.

The *New Zealand Messenger* (新西兰信报)

The *New Zealand Messenger* was founded in 2003 and is currently owned by Huadu International Management Group which in turn is owned by Beijing businessman Wang Jianping (王建平) (New Zealand Companies New Zealand Companies Office, 2020c; New Zealand Companies New Zealand Companies Office, 2020d). The *New Zealand Messenger* is published in tabloid format and claims that 7,000 copies of the newspaper are published each week. It estimates its readership at 21,200 per issue and states that 70% of its papers are distributed in Christchurch while the rest are available around the rest of the South Island, Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand Messenger, 2018).During the 2008 and 2011 elections the newspaper was published each Wednesday and used traditional characters. By 2014 the newspaper was published each Thursday and printed using simplified characters. News and the full paper can be read through the *New Zealand Messenger's* website (nzmessengers.co.nz), and select articles are also published through its WeChat account.

My sample of articles includes all articles on domestic New Zealand politics. This was defined as those that concerned national or local body politics, or policy issues over which the government exercises control (McMillan and Barker, 2017; 2018) that were published in the three newspapers during the six weeks immediately preceding the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections.

I manually coded all articles included in the content analysis using the coding criteria developed by McMillan and Barker (2017; 2018). Issues of the *Chinese Herald* from 2011 and 2014 were sourced from the *Chinese Herald's* website, which holds complete electronic copies of each issue of newspaper from the 13th of August 2011 to the present. The electronic copies held on the website contain the full newspaper, including ads and simulate the experience of reading a hardcopy of each issue. This avoids the validity and reliability concerns that stem from the use of newspaper databases that rely on key word searches (Deacon, 2007). Physical copies of the *Chinese Herald* from 2008 were sourced from the National Library of New Zealand, as were all issues of *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger*. Data was collated using Microsoft Excel and then processed using the statistical analysis software SPSS Statistics.

3.4 Civic Forum and Analysis

As the purpose of this study is to examine the civic forum provided by the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice*, and the *New Zealand Messenger*, my choice of variables were informed by the normative ideal of the civic forum introduced in detail in the previous chapter. To briefly recap, the civic forum exists within the lineage of the Schumpeterian model of democracy, which, according to Schumpeter (1976) "is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote" (pg. 241). The Schumpeterian perspective provides one of the most commonly accepted understandings of democratic institutions (Norris, 2000; Elliot, 1994) and has been operationalised with the Gastil index, used by Freedom House in measuring the quality of democracies (Norris, 2000). It is commonly utilised in discussions of the media's role within democracies (C. E. Baker, 2002; Ferree et al., 2002; Norris, 2000; Strömbäck, 2005). Within this tradition, the role of the public is primarily to choose between those seeking elective office by voting (Schumpeter, 1976). One of the primary facilitators of this is the news media, and in particular their provision of a civic forum for pluralistic debate. The civic forum, informed by this understanding, should provide rich political information that is easily accessible to the public and its purpose is to inform the electorate about the plurality of parties, candidates and policies competing for their votes so that they may make cast an informed vote. To

facilitate this, information should be presented in a balanced and impartial manner to enable voices from *across* the political spectrum to be heard by the electorate (Ferree et al., 2002; Norris, 2000; Strömbäck, 2005).

The variables in the study, Party Mentioned, Leader Mentioned, Candidate Mentioned, Candidate Author and Party Policy Mentioned were selected to analyse the degree to which pluralistic coverage of those competing for office (and their policies) was provided. In addition, to measure whether or not the civic forum was populated by content that was balanced and impartial, the tone with which parties, leaders, candidates and their policies were mentioned were recorded.

Party, Leader, Candidate and Policy Mentioned

When a party, leader, candidate, or policy was addressed in an article it was coded as a mention. However, if one party (or their leader, candidate or policy) was the major focus of an article and another party or parties (or their leaders, candidates or policies) were mentioned in a brief and insubstantial manner, then only the main party (or their leader, candidate or policy) mentioned was coded. This avoided overstating the importance of incidental mentions and diminishing the coverage of the party that was the overwhelming focus of the article. Weber (1990) notes that synonyms may cause problems for coders that are too rigid in their coding of a concept. To avoid this, synonyms were recorded under their main concept. For example a reference to the Prime Minister (總理) would be counted as a mention of the leader of the party that was in power. Similarly, a reference to Winston Peters (溫斯頓·彼得斯) or Laopi (老皮), one of Peters' nicknames in the Chinese language ethnic media, would both be recorded as a reference to the leader of New Zealand First.

Candidate Articles

Candidate authored articles offer candidates the opportunity to communicate directly with the readership without the expectation that is placed on journalists writing news articles to provide balance and to utilise expert sources (Fogarty &

Wolak, 2009). Because of their partisan nature, it is important that if columns from candidates are going to be printed, then space should be provided for articles by candidates from across the political spectrum (Newton, 1989; Norris, 2000).
In order to measure this, articles authored by a candidate were coded as being authored by a candidate from the candidate's party, for example, an article by Labour's Raymond Huo (霍建强) would be coded as an article from a Labour Party candidate.

Tone

Tone was coded as neutral, positive, negative, or positive and negative depending on the tone of the statements that were aimed at the party or parties reported in the article. If an article primarily featured criticism of a party, leader, candidate, or policy then it was coded as negative towards the party that was being subject to the criticism. If the criticism was directed more at a leader, candidate or policy then it was coded as negative towards the party that they belonged to. Articles that did not contain negative or positive statements about a party, leader, candidate or party were coded as neutral.

If criticisms were aimed at two or more parties or their leader(s), candidate(s) or policy (or policies) then it was coded as negative towards those parties. The coding of positive articles and articles that were both positive and negative followed the same logic.

For example, if an article reported on Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei attacking National Party leader John Key over the number of children living in poverty in New Zealand, then that would be coded as negative toward the National Party. However, if the same article also, for example, featured positive statements about National's progress reducing the number of children in poverty that amounted to more than a minor rebuttal of Turei's comments, the article would be coded as both positive and negative towards National.

Reliability

The coding criteria used in this thesis were developed by McMillan and Barker (2017; 2018) for their aforementioned study of the New Zealand-based ethnic language

media's coverage of the 2017 New Zealand general election. Using McMillan and Baker's coding criteria will enable greater longitudinal understanding once both studies are published. This will encompass the 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017 elections and a period of time which has seen many changes to the New Zealand Chinese population and its media. It will also cover elections in which both major parties have had the role of incumbent and of challenger; and have been the victor and the defeated.

Following a pilot content analysis, I analysed every domestic political domestic story that appeared in the three newspapers in the six weeks preceding the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections. Domestic political stories were defined as any story that concerned New Zealand parliamentary or local body politics or policy issues over which the New Zealand government had control (McMillan & Barker, 2017; 2018).

Reliability and Validity

For any content analysis to be regarded as empirically sound its results must be reliable and valid (Krippendorff, 2013). Reliability, is demonstrated when it is clear that the "data are obtained independent of the measuring event, instrument or person" (Kaplan & Goldstein, 1965) (pp. 83-84). There most commonly used two types of reliability will be discussed here. The first is stability which refers to the results of a content analysis being unchanging over time. This is measured through an intra-observer test in which the same coder recodes the content that they originally coded. Inconsistencies in the coding signalling unreliability (Weber, 1990). While this is a relatively straight forward way to test reliability, it is also considered to provide the weakest measure of reliability (Krippendorff, 2013; Weber, 1990). The second type of reliability is reproducibility or replicability, measured test by conducting an inter-coder reliability test. Replicability, measures whether the results of the content analysis can be reproduced by another coder or coders (Krippendorff, 2013; Weber, 1990). Conflicting results from the coders in the inter-coder reliability test signify reliability issues. Replicability is more difficult to achieve and test for than stability, however, it gives a stronger measure of reliability and is standard in much of the literature (Krippendorff, 2013; Lombard et al., 2002; Weber, 1990).

To ensure that my content analysis was reliable, and more specifically replicable, I engaged an independent coder to carry out an intercoder reliability test, using my initial coding as the baseline. If I had more resources, I would have used a third or even a fourth coder, however, this was not possible. While not perfect, conducting the inter-coder reliability test with two coders is adequate to measure replicability (Weber, 1990; Lombard et al., 2002) and indeed is likely makes this analysis more robust than many published in the literature (Lombard et al., 2002).

As part of the inter-coder reliability test, the independent coder coded 110 articles (11.2% of all articles in my sample). While there are varying ideas about how large the sample used in an inter-coder reliability test should be (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999), 11.2% is a sufficiently large proportion of the total sample (Lombard et al., 2002). In order to ensure that the articles coded by the independent coder were representative of my sample, the articles included in the inter-coder reliability test were randomly selected by giving each article a number (1-980) and using Microsoft Excel's random number generator function to choose which articles would be in the inter-coder test.

Inter-coder agreement was measured using Krippendorff's Alpha (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007; Krippendorff, 2013), which has been widely used in the literature to measure the reliability of content analyses due to its suitability for this purpose (Boyd & Bahador, 2015; D. N. Hopmann, de Vreese, & Albæk, 2011; Meyer, Haselmayer, & Wagner, 2020; Walter, 2017a).

Within the framework of Krippendorff's Alpha, 1.000 indicates perfect reliability and 0.000 indicates the absence of reliably. Variables with a reliability rating of 0.800 and above are considered reliable. (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007; Krippendorff, 2013). The results of the inter-coder test (Figure 1) indicated that the data for each variable in this study can be considered to be reliable.

Variable	Krippendorff's Alpha
Party	0.8685
Leader	0.8606
Candidate	0.8393
Policy	0.8285
Tone	0.8126

Author	0.9799

Figure 1 – *Intercoder Reliability Results*

In terms of validity (something that many content analyses in the literature fail to mention (Boyd & Bahador, 2015; Brandenburg, 2005; Lindgren, 2014)), Krippendorff (2013) notes that a "content analysis is valid if the inferences drawn from the available texts withstand the test of independently available evidence, of new observations, of competing theories or interpretations, or of being able to inform successful action (p.329). That it examines a relevant body of articles and measures what it intends to. Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999) state that the key to validity is a good coding scheme - one that operationalises theory and is logically consistent with clearly defined categories. The coding scheme utilised in my content analysis and exhaustively developed by McMillan and Barker (2017; 2018) to measure the civic forum of the ethnic media has been, through the peer review process, recognised as fulfilling these qualities.

In addition to this, my sample includes all New Zealand-politics related articles published in the three newspapers. To ensure that *all* relevant articles were included, every article in each newspaper was checked twice for content relating to New Zealand politics. This was a time-consuming process, but one that increases confidence in the validity of the sample used in this study.

The use of a six-week period of observation utilised in this study and in McMillan and Barker's (2017; 2018) study also, offers more insight into the election campaign than studies that examine shorter periods (Bahador et al., 2016; Boyd & Bahador, 2015; Rudd & Connew, 2007; Rupar et al., 2015). Parties often begin campaigning through the media three to four months prior to election day (James, 2003), and while a three or four month observation period was not feasible for this study, six weeks offers a good level of insight into how the campaigns were covered in the newspapers in my sample. This provides high levels of confidence in the validity of my sample and that my analysis has done what it I stated that it would - examine the political coverage in the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice* and *New Zealand Messenger* during the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this study has been to understand the how the main Chinese-language newspapers in each of the three regions which account for 86.5% of the ethnic Chinese population (Stats New Statistics New Zealand, 2014b) in New Zealand, perform the civic forum function of the news media during general election campaigns. As a civic forum, news media are expected to provide a balanced and inclusive space within which those in, or competing for elective office, can communicate with the electorate and, vice versa, prioritising information about political parties, their candidates and their policies and communicating it to voters (Norris, 2000).

The results of the content analysis undertaken in pursuit of this understanding are reported in this chapter. In total, the analysis presented covers 980 articles published in the Auckland-based *New Zealand Chinese Herald*, the Wellington-based *Home Voice*, and the Christchurch-based *New Zealand Messenger* in the six weeks prior to the 2008, 2011 and 2014 New Zealand general elections. Of these 980 articles, 503 were from the *Chinese Herald*, 275 from *Home Voice*, and 202 from the *New Zealand Messenger*.

From the content analysis, it is clear that there were a number of significant deviations from the normative expectations of the civic forum. These include a strong incumbency bonus (most significantly when the National Party was in power), bias towards the ACT Party and against New Zealand First, low levels of coverage of minor party policy and National Party MP Yang Jian occupying a uniquely visible position through his published articles.

4.2 Party Mentioned

When examining party mentions in the *Chinese Herald* (Figure 2) it is clear that the main incumbent party received the most coverage during each of the three election campaigns in my sample. However, in the two elections when National was the main governing party, the gap between the National Party and the Labour Party (the main

opposition party) was greatest, despite both parties having similar levels of coverage when in power. When National was in power in 2011 and 2014, they were mentioned in 71.4% and 68% of all articles on New Zealand politics, respectively. In the same two elections Labour was mentioned in just 43.6% and 38.7% of all articles on New Zealand politics. In 2008, the incumbent Labour Party was mentioned in 65.7% of articles and National in 61.5%.

The ACT Party was afforded consistently high levels of coverage in all three elections. Its highest level of coverage in the *Chinese Herald* came in 2008 when it was mentioned in nearly one quarter of all articles on New Zealand politics.

The *Chinese Herald*, during the 2008 election campaign, provided a platform for the Kiwi and Family parties - both of which had ethnic Chinese candidates high on their party lists.[43] These two parties were mentioned in 14.8% and 4.1% of all articles on New Zealand politics respectively, despite both having relatively low profiles in the mainstream media and receiving only 0.54% and 0.35% of the party vote each. *Home Voice* (Figure 3) and the *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 4) by contrast, gave little attention to either party.


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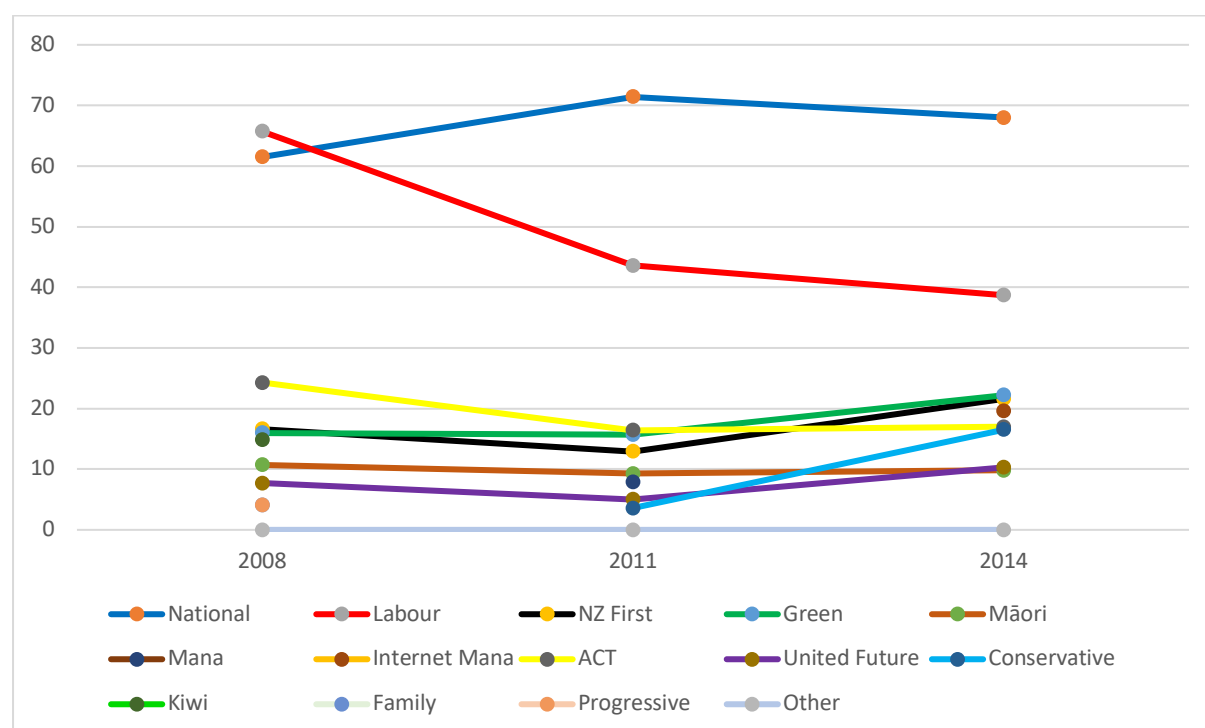
[43] The Kiwi Party fielded Simon Kan(簡紹武) at number 3 on their party list and ran him in the Botany electorate. Angela Xu was 3rd on the Family Party's list and ran in Northcote.

In *Home Voice*, party mentions (Figure 3) indicated a strong bias in the quantity of coverage towards the largest governing party during each campaign. Each campaign saw the main incumbent party receive more than twice as many mentions as the main opposition party. Unlike the *Chinese Herald* and the *New Zealand Messenger*, the gap between the primary incumbent and opposition party, which was 35.4 percentage points in 2008, 44.8 in 2011 and 35.1 in 2014, remained relatively equal under both Labour and National-led governments.

Again, ACT received high levels of coverage and was the third-most covered party during all three election campaigns. Coverage of ACT reached its highest point in 2014 when the party was mentioned in 25.4% of all articles on New Zealand politics, a remarkably high number for a party that was the 8th most supported in that year's election holding just 0.69% of the popular vote.

Home Voice had very limited coverage of the Kiwi and Family parties in 2008, and indeed, in 2011, gave very little space at all to any minor parties other than the ACT Party.
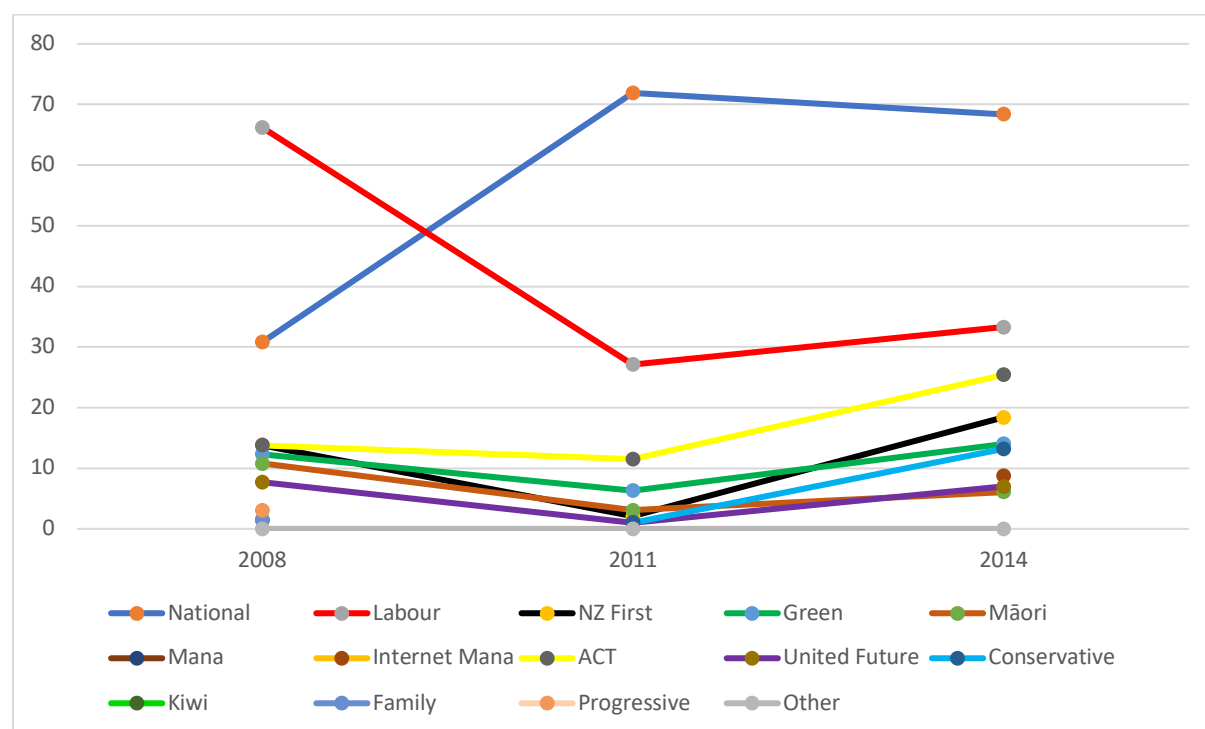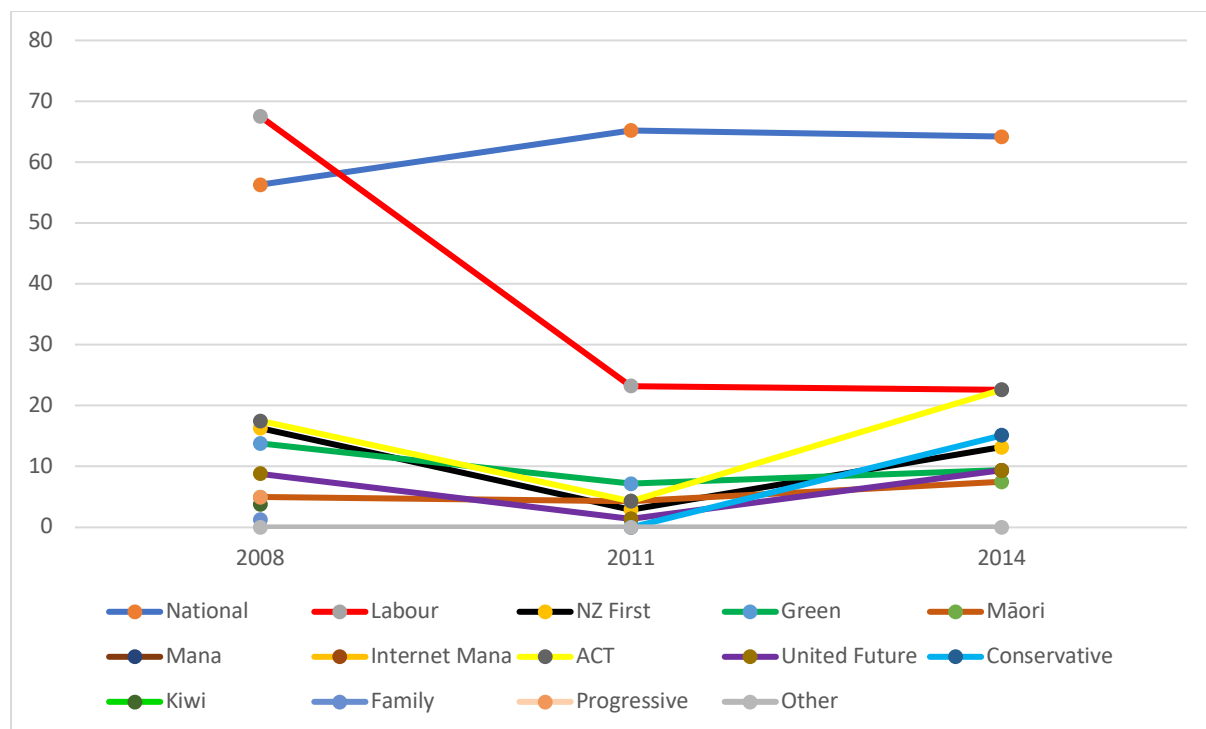

Figure 3 – Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Each Party Was Mentioned In (Home Voice, 2008-2014)

Like the *Chinese Herald* and *Home Voice*, the *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 4) focussed on the main governing party which received the most coverage during each of the three election campaigns. Although, as was the case with the *Chinese Herald*, the gap between the leading party in the governing coalition and the main opposition party was significantly greater when National was in power. In 2008 the gap between Labour and National mentions was 11.2 percentage points. In 2011 and 2014 when the National Party was in government the gap was 42 and 41.6 percentage points respectively.

The ACT Party, as was the case in the other two newspapers, featured prominently in the *New Zealand Messenger* (with the exception of the 2011 campaign). In 2008 ACT had the third highest level of coverage (17.5%). In 2014 it was mentioned in as many articles as the Labour Party (22.6%), illustrative of not only ACT's visibility, but also of the relative neglect that Labour - the most likely leader of an alternative government was subject to.

Of all three newspapers, the *New Zealand Messenger* provided the least coverage of minor parties. There were no news mentions of the Family Party in 2008, or the Mana or Conservative parties in 2011. In 2014 the Green, Māori or Internet-Mana parties were completely absent from news coverage. Their absence was not total however, with opinion pieces making mention of all of the aforementioned parties - albeit infrequently.
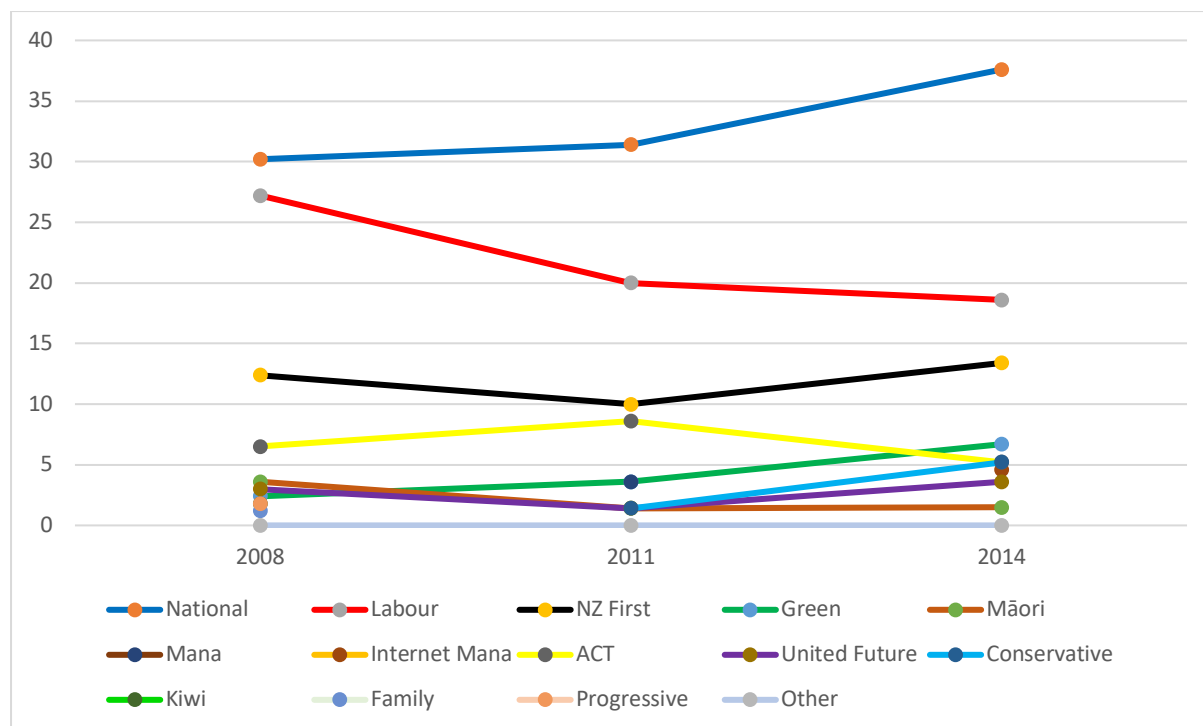
Figure 4 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Each Party Was Mentioned In* (*New Zealand Messenger,* 2008-2014)
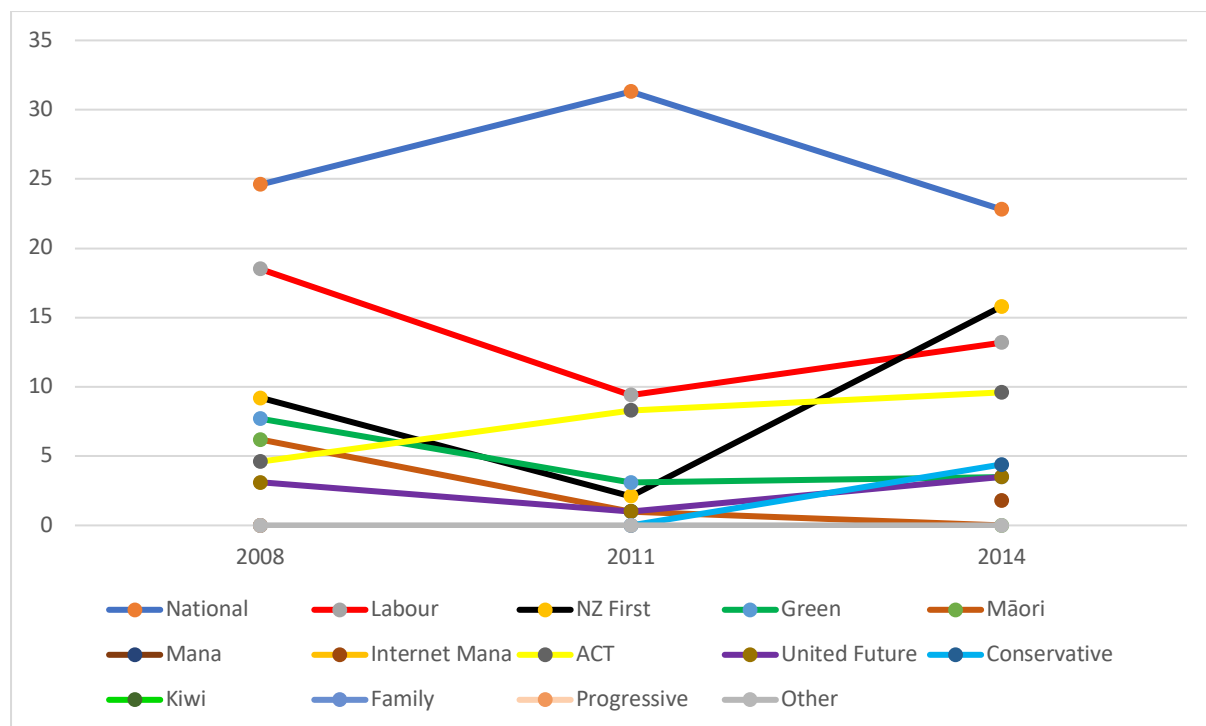
4.3 Leader Mentioned

In the *Chinese Herald* (Figure 5), National Party leader John Key was the most visible party leader, even when in opposition in 2008. During that campaign Key was mentioned in 30.2% of all articles on New Zealand politics (by contrast Prime Minister Helen Clark was mentioned in 27.3%). As Prime Minister, the gap between Key's visibility and that of his Labour Party counterparts only grew. In 2014, Key (37.6%) was mentioned in more than twice as many articles as Labour leader David Cunliffe (18.6%).

New Zealand First leader Winston Peters, the focal point of New Zealand First coverage in my sample, was the third most mentioned leader during each campaign. ACT Party leaders were the fourth most covered in 2008 (6.5%) and 2011 (8.6%). However, in 2014 ACT leader Jamie Whyte received less coverage (5.2%), than Green Party co-leaders Russel Norman and Metiria Turei (6.7%).

Figure 5 *– Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Each Party Leader Was Mentioned In* (*Chinese Herald,* 2008-2014)

Home Voice's coverage (Figure 6) also focussed on John Key more than any other leader during all three elections. By contrast, coverage of Labour Party leaders, especially when the party was in opposition, was severely limited. Despite being the leader of the opposition Phil Goff struggled for coverage in the 2011 campaign, being mentioned in only 9.4% of articles, just ahead of ACT Party leader John Banks (8.3%). In 2014, coverage of Cunliffe (13.2%) exceeded that of his predecessor but was still behind New Zealand First's Winston Peters (15.8%).
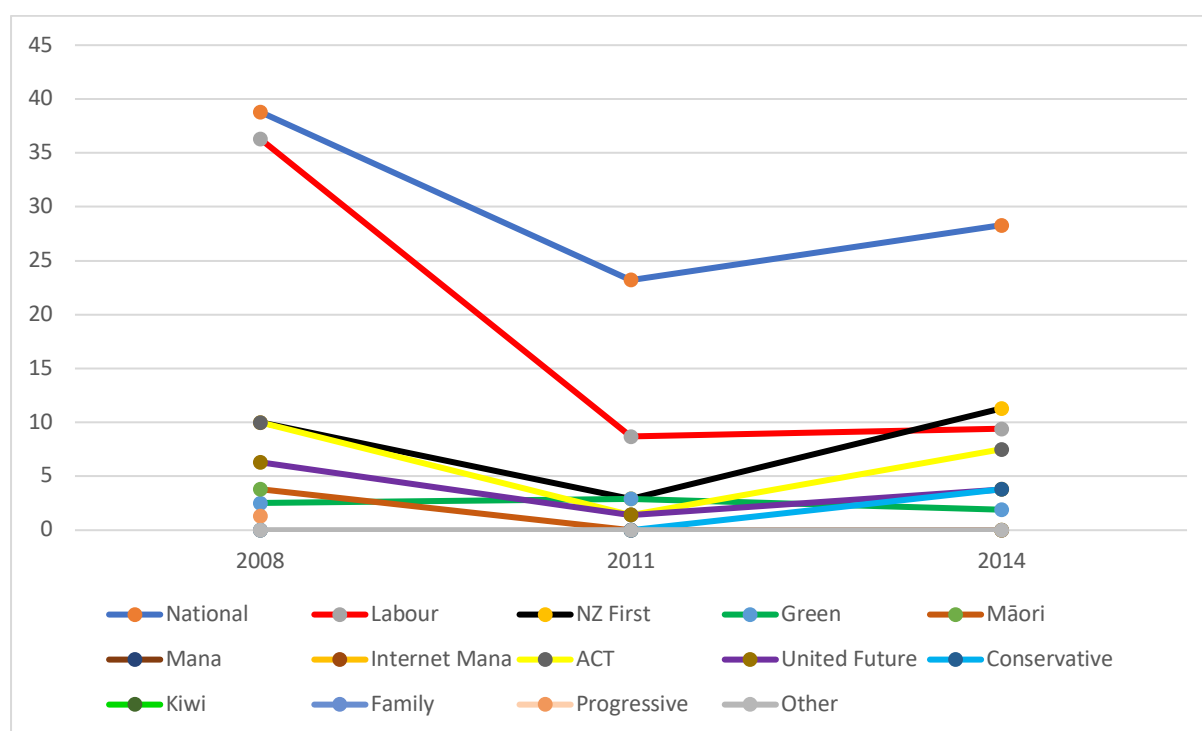
Figure 6 -*Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Each Party Leader Was Mentioned In* (*Home Voice,* 2008-2014)

As with the other two newspapers, the *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 7) gave far more coverage to John Key than any other leader when he was Prime Minister (and also more coverage than Clarke when he was leader of the opposition). As leader of the opposition, coverage of Key (38.8%) just exceeded that of Prime Minister Helen Clark (36.3%). As Prime Minister, however, the gap between coverage of Key and Labour Party leaders was significant, increasing at each election. Key (23.2%) received more than twice the amount of coverage afforded to Labour leader Phil Goff (8.7%) in 2011, and in 2014 Key's (28.3%) coverage was three times that of Labour's David Cunliffe (9.4%), who, as was also the case in *Home Voice*, had fewer mentions than New Zealand First leader Winston Peters (11.3%).

Other than the coverage afforded to Peters in 2008 and 2014, attention given to minor party leaders in the *New Zealand Messenger* was very limited. In 2011 no party leaders other than those from the two major parties were mentioned in more than 3% of articles and Colin Craig, leader of the Conservative Party, was not mentioned at all. Māori Party leaders were completely absent from 2011 and 2014 campaigns as presented in the *New Zealand Messenger*, as were the leaders of the

Mana Party and its 2014 iteration, the Internet Mana Party.[44] Coverage of Green Party leaders was also minimal, the party's party co-leaders were mentioned in just 2.5% of articles in 2008, 2.9% in 2011 and 1.9% in 2014, despite the party being the third-largest party at both elections.

Figure 7 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Each Party Leader Was Mentioned In* (*New Zealand Messenger,* 2008-2014)
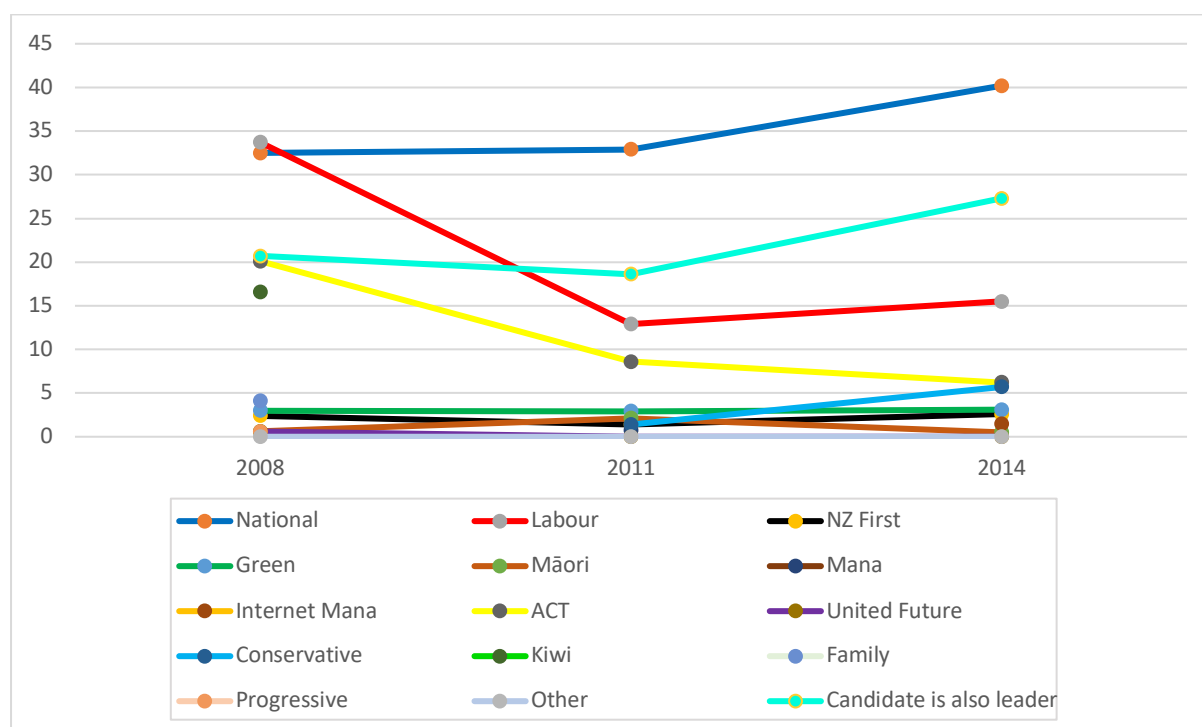
4.4 Candidate Mentioned

In the *Chinese Herald* (Figure 8), candidates from the governing party received the most mentions during each campaign, however, as with party mentions, the benefit of incumbency was more pronounced for the National Party than for Labour, and increased at each election. In 2008, candidates from the incumbent Labour party were mentioned in 33.7% of articles, just ahead of their National Party counterparts (32.5%). In 2011, with National in power, Labour candidates were mentioned in

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[44] The Internet Mana Party, led by co-leaders Hone Harawira and Laila Harré, was a coalition between the Internet and the Mana parties and formed solely for electoral purposes. The arrangement included a sunset clause that would dissolve the alliance upon entering parliament. The party failed to win any seats however and was disbanded shortly after the election (Levine, 2015).

12.9% of articles while National candidates were mentioned in 32.9%, a gap of 20 percentage points. During the 2014 campaign the gap rose further to 24.7 percentage points. National candidates were mentioned in 40.2% of articles, significantly boosted by the frequent presence of ethnic Chinese candidate Yang Jian, while Labour candidates featured in only 15.5% of articles.

During all three campaigns ACT party candidates were the third-most mentioned, declining from a high of 20.1% in 2008 to 8.6% in 2011 and 6.2% in 2014.

Again, illustrating the platform that was given to the Kiwi and Family parties by the *Chinese Herald* in 2008 (and in particular their ethnic Chinese candidates), Kiwi Party candidates were the fourth-most mentioned, appearing in 16.6% of articles, while Family Party candidates were present in 4.1%. Kiwi Party candidate Simon Kan was mentioned in more articles than his party (16.6% compared to 14.8%), while Family Party candidate Angela Xu featured in every article that mentioned the Family Party. Similarly, ethnic Chinese candidate Paul Young (楊宗澤) was mentioned in more articles (2.6%) than any other Conservative Party candidate.

Figure 8 *– Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Party Candidates Were Mentioned In* (*Chinese Herald,* 2008-2014)

In *Home Voice* (Figure 9) candidates from the main governing party were also mentioned more than their opposition counterparts during each campaign. Mentions of National candidates increased sharply when they were the incumbent in 2011 and again in 2014 – this in part was due to the high visibility of Yang Jian.

In general, candidates from the minor parties received very limited coverage. In 2008, candidates from just four parties (Labour, National, Māori and ACT) were mentioned, with ACT and Māori Party candidates only mentioned in 1.5% of articles. In 2011 only 1% of articles mentioned Green or Māori Party candidates and New Zealand First, Mana, Conservative or United Future candidates were completely absent from any coverage of the campaign, both news and opinion. In 2014 Internet-Mana, New Zealand First and Māori Party candidates were mentioned in only 0.9% of articles while Conservative and Green Party candidates were mentioned in 4.4% and 3.5% of articles respectively. The major exception to the neglect of minor party candidates was (and continued to be the case with many variables) the ACT Party. This was especially so in 2014, when ACT candidates were mentioned in 16.7% of articles.
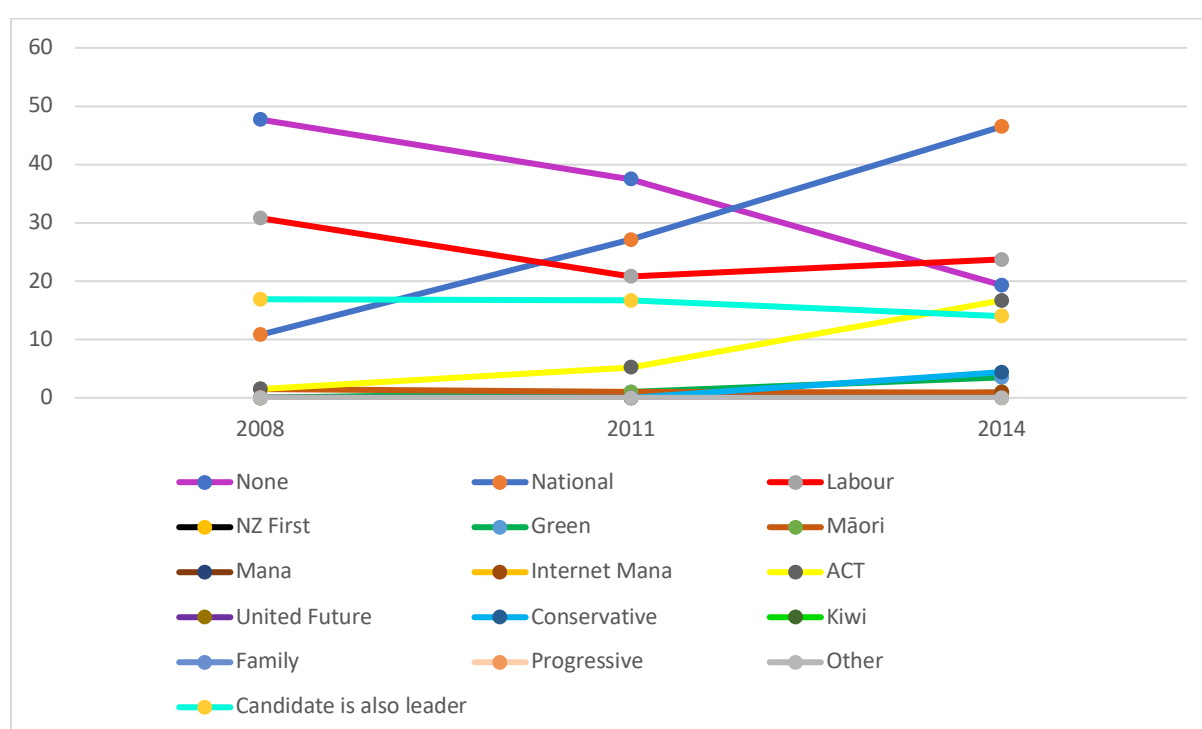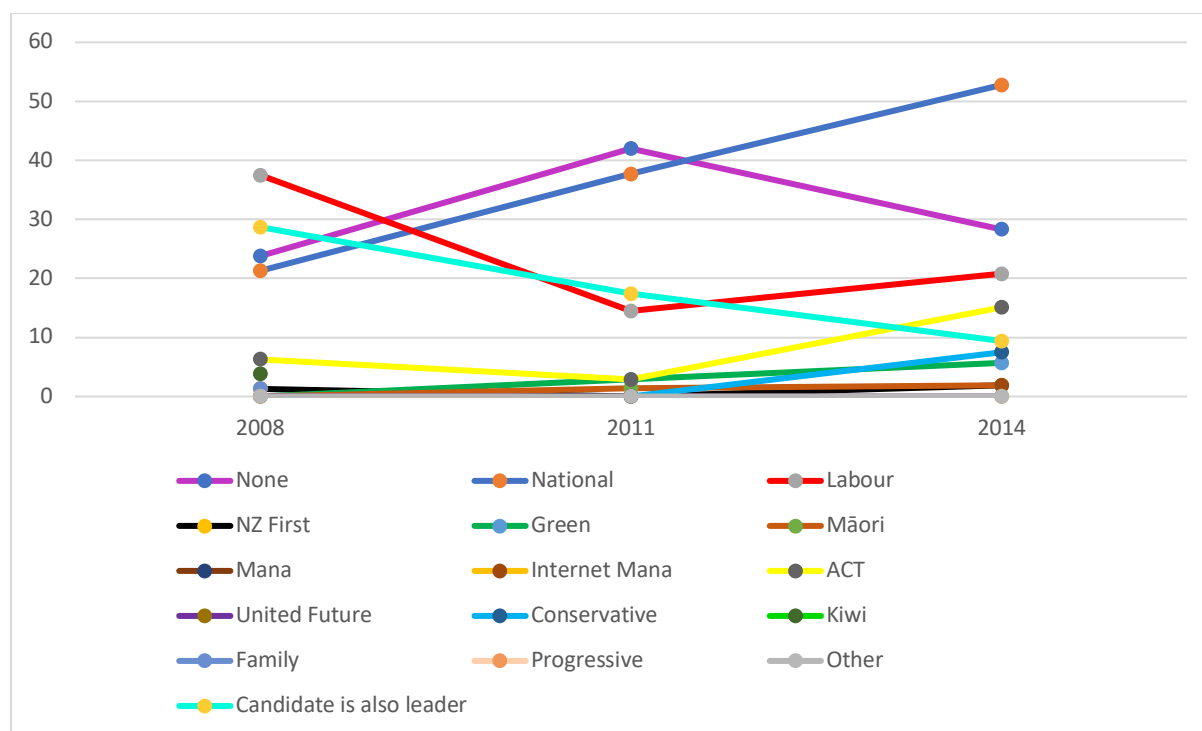

Figure 9 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Party Candidates Were Mentioned In* (*Home Voice,* 2008-2014)

Candidate coverage in the *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 10) followed a similar pattern to coverage in *Home* Voice. Candidates from the main governing party received significantly more coverage than their counterparts from other parties. The incumbency bonus was again greatest for National candidates. During the two campaigns that the National was in power, its candidates were mentioned (37.7% in 2011 and 52.8% in 2014) in more than twice as many articles as candidates from the Labour Party (14.5% in 2011 and 20.8% in 2014).

ACT Party candidates were the third-most mentioned in each campaign, appearing in 6.3% of articles in 2008, 2.9% in 2011 and 15.1% in 2011.

Continuing the especially low levels of coverage that other minor parties received in general in the *New Zealand Messenger*, during the 2008 campaign there were no mentions of candidates from Green, Māori, United Future or Progressive parties. In 2011, candidates from New Zealand First, Mana, the Conservatives and United Future were completely absent from the *New Zealand Messenger's* coverage. Coverage of minor party candidates did increase in 2014, with only United Future, a party that had a caucus of one (its leader Peter Dunne), without any candidate mentions.
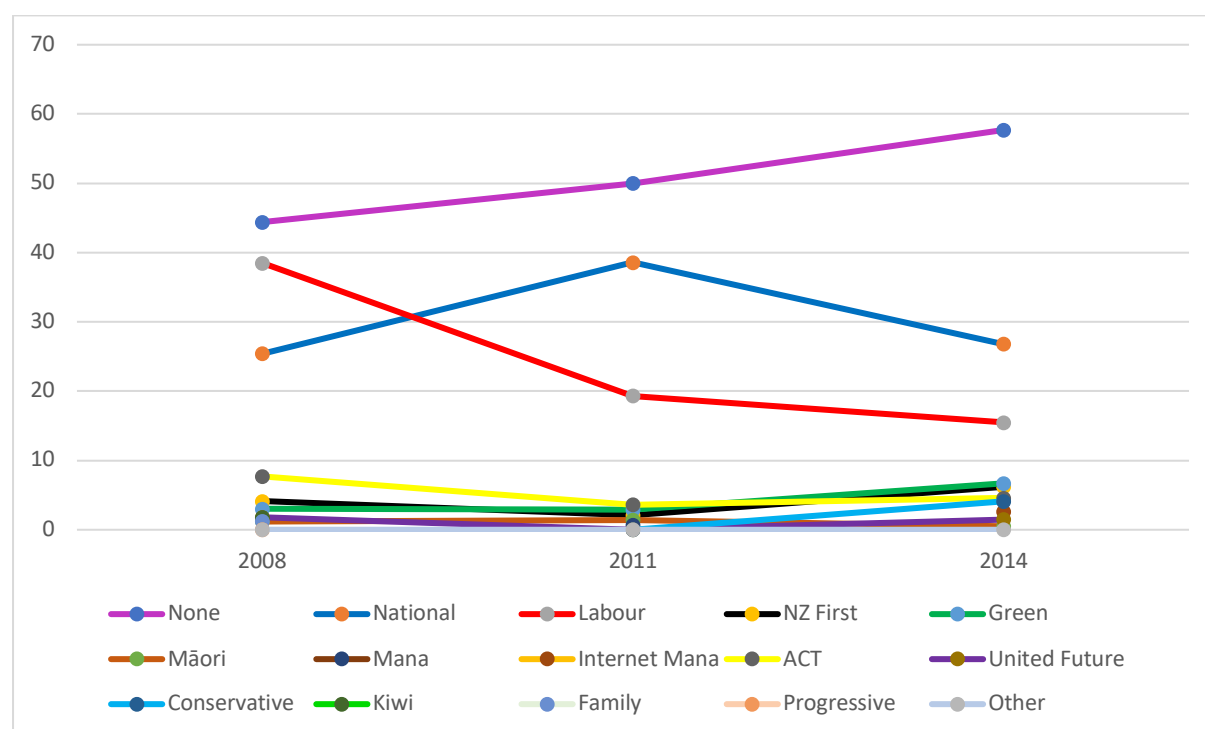

Figure 10 *– Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Party Candidates Were Mentioned In* (*New Zealand Messenger,* 2008-2014)

4.5 Policy Mentioned

The *Chinese Herald* (Figure 11) gave the policies of the main governing party the most coverage during each campaign, with the gap between the incumbent and the main challenger largest in 2011 when National policy (38.6%) was mentioned exactly twice as many times as Labour policy (19.3%). Coverage of minor party policy was limited. In 2008 ACT policy had the third highest coverage, appearing in 7.7% of articles, and again in 2011, despite its policy being mentioned in just 3.6% of all articles. In 2014 Green policy (6.7%) was the third most mentioned, followed by New Zealand First (6.2%) and ACT (4.6%).

Each election saw a significant increase in the number of articles that did not mention any policy at all. In 2008 44.4% of articles had no policy in them, while in 2011 this figure stood at 50% and 57.7% in 2014.
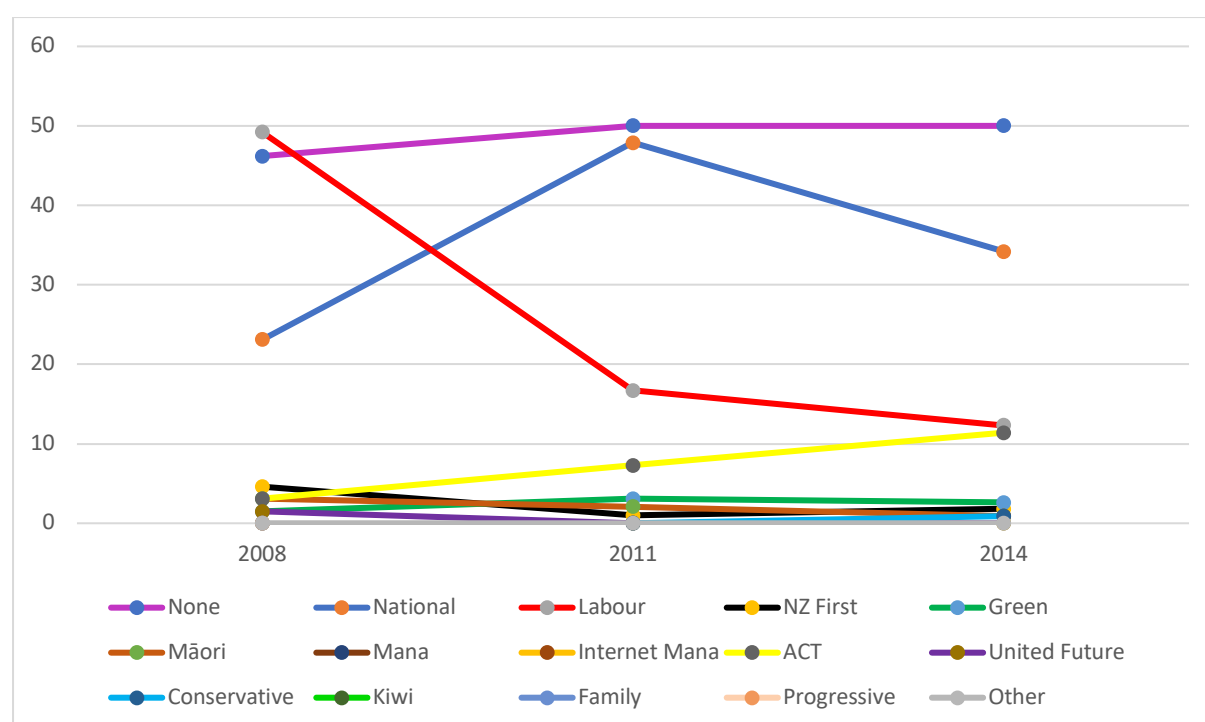

Figure 11 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Party Policy Was Mentioned In* (*Chinese Herald,* 2008-2014)

Home Voice's policy coverage (Figure 12) was heavily skewed towards both Labour and National incumbents. However, while in opposition, Labour policy did not

receive significant coverage, especially in 2014 when the party's policy was only mentioned in 12.3% of articles, almost three times less than National policy (34.2%). Beyond National and Labour, and with the exception of ACT, which during the 2014 campaign had its policy mentioned in almost as many articles (11.4%) as Labour, coverage of minor party policy was very limited. Apart from these three, no other parties had policy mentioned in more than 5% of articles at any election. The 2011 campaign saw the least coverage given to minor party policy and no coverage at all of Mana, Conservative or United Future policy.

Figure 12 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Party Policy Was Mentioned In* (*Home Voice,* 2008-2014)

As with the other newspapers in my sample, policies from the main governing party received the most coverage in the *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 13) - however when Labour was in opposition its policies received much less coverage than National's when they were in opposition. In 2008 Labour policy was mentioned in 43.8% of articles, while National's rate was 27.5%. As the incumbent during the 2011 campaign, National's policies (44.9%) received more than five times as much coverage as Labour's (8.7%). In 2014 the difference between the two parties narrowed slightly but National policy (37.7%) still received more than four times the amount of coverage afforded to Labour (9.4%).

As was the case with the other newspapers, coverage of minor party policies was limited. No parties other than National and Labour had their policy mentioned in more than 4% of articles in 2008. In the following campaign, no minor party's policy was mentioned in more than 3% of articles and no policies from New Zealand First, Mana or the Conservative Party were mentioned at all. In 2014 ACT (7.5%) were the only minor party mentioned in more than 5% of articles. Green, Māori, Internet-Mana and United Future party policies were not mentioned at all during the 2014 campaign.
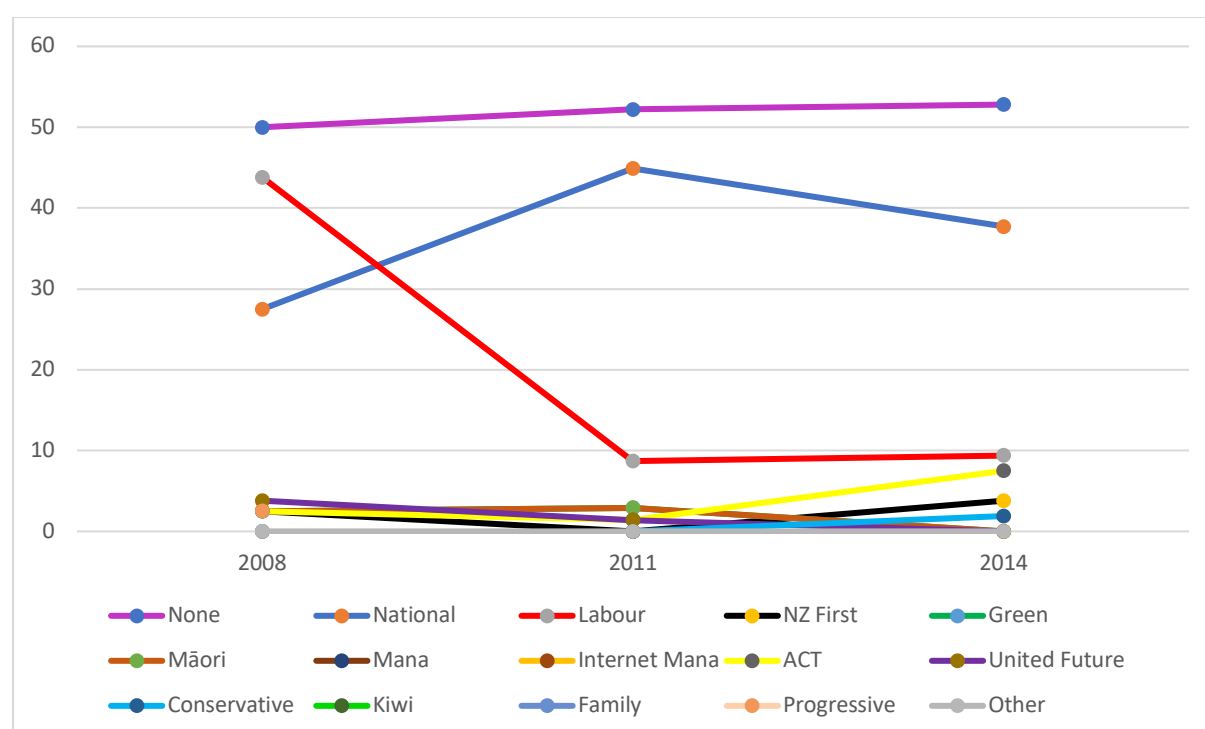
Figure 13 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics That Party Policy Was Mentioned In* (*New Zealand Messenger,* 2008-2014)

4.6 Articles Written by Political Party Candidates

During the 2008 campaign the Chinese Herald (Figure 14) provided a pluralistic space for candidates to communicate directly with the electorate that was unrivalled by any other newspaper, during all three campaigns. In 2008, 7.7% of all articles on New Zealand politics in the *Chinese Herald*[45] were supplied by the National Party

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[45] The *Chinese Herald* provided considerable space – much more than either of the other two newspapers – for columns and opinion pieces of journalists, politicians and community members to

(with 2.4% authored by in-group[46] candidate Pansy Wong (黃徐毓芳) and 5.3% from non-ingroup candidates), while the Kiwi Party accounted for 4.1% of articles (all authored by Simon Kan[47] (簡紹武)). Labour accounted for 3.6% of articles (3% from non-ingroup candidates and 0.6% from in-group candidate Raymond Huo, and candidates from ACT contributed 3% of articles (1.8% from in-group candidate Kenneth Wang and 1.2% from non-ingroup candidates). Family Party candidates accounted for 1.8% of articles (1.2% from in-group candidate Angela Xu (徐麗濤) and 0.6% from non-ingroup candidates).

Vastly different, however, was the provision of candidate authored columns in later elections. From 2011 onwards the only candidate, from any political party, to have an article published in the *Chinese Herald* during an election campaign was National Party candidate Yang Jian. In 2011 Yang contributed two articles, both on the sister city relationship between Auckland and Guangzhou. The articles were not authored in his capacity as a National Party candidate, however, as they were published shortly before the election and Yang was a known candidate, they were coded as authored by a political party candidate.

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communicate with readers during the 2008 election campaign, This space however, became greatly diminished during subsequent elections to the point that, in 2014, Yang Jian of the National Party was not only the sole representative from a political party with a direct platform to communicate with readers of the *Chinese Herald*, but one of very few voices from the wider community that had such a platform. While my data collection did cover this, a systematic analysis of non-candidate columnists is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[46] By 'in-group' I refer to those who were labelled as *huaren* (华人), ethnic Chinese by the newspapers. The term is often applied to ethnic Chinese people who do not hold Chinese citizenship. For example, Labour's Raymond Huo was often referred to as *huaren* MP (华人议员). Yin (2013), in relation to the use of *huaren* in the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand states that it is "an essentialised idea that emphasises biological similarity and covers every single ethnic Chinese under its umbrella" (p. 223).

[47] Kan had a column at the *Chinese Herald* that predated him running for the Kiwi Party.

During the 2014 campaign Yang authored 11 articles (6 of these his regular column (楊議員談時政) and 5 his New Zealand Health Handbook (新西蘭醫療衛生手冊)[48]), accounting for 5.7% of all articles on New Zealand in the *Chinese Herald*.
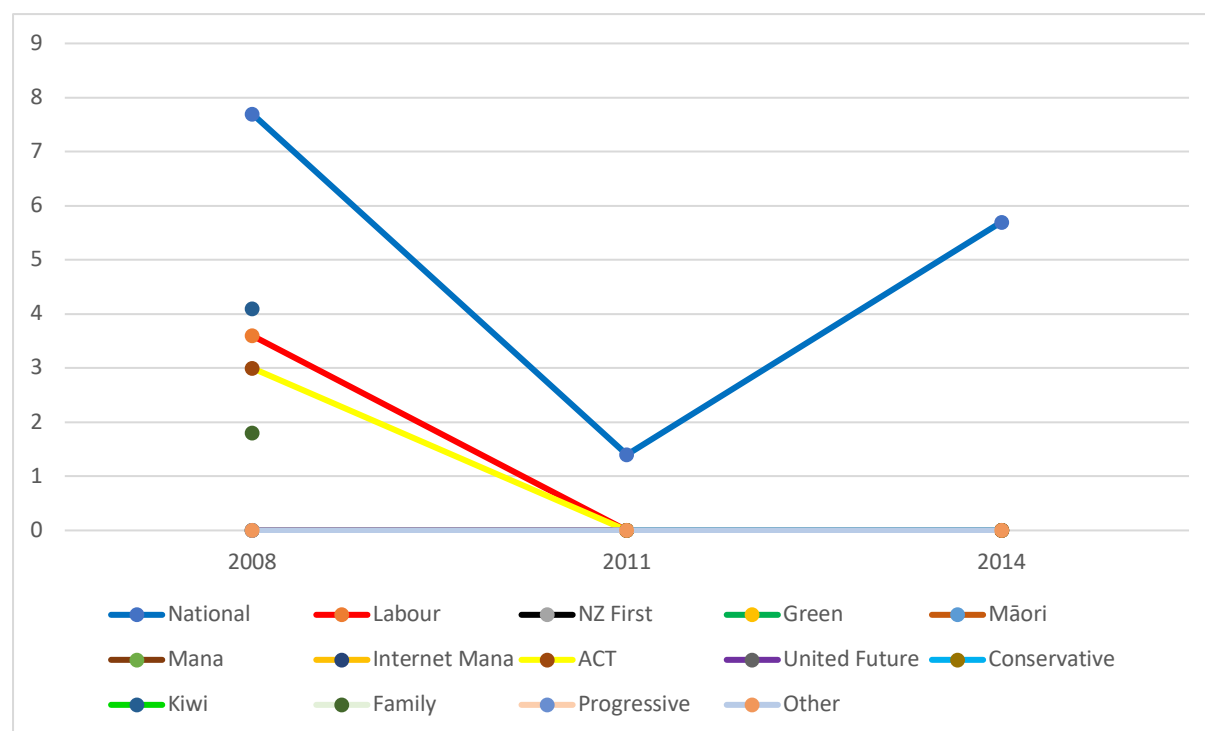
Figure 14 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics Written by Party Candidates* (*Chinese Herald,* 2008-2014)

During the 2008 campaign in *Home Voice* (Figure 15) National party candidates were the only candidates to contribute articles to the newspaper, with Pansy Wong providing 1.5% of all articles about New Zealand politics and 4.6% coming from John

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[48] Yang Jian's New Zealand Health Handbook (新西兰医疗卫生手册) was first published in the Chinese media in late March 2014, the first edition published in the *Chinese Herald* and *Skykiwi* on the 27th of March 2014 and in *Home Voice* on the 28th of March. The New Zealand Health Handbook was aimed at informing Chinese New Zealanders about treatment options for various ailments and how to navigate the New Zealand health system. The Health Book ran weekly for one year across media outlets such as the Chinese Herald, Home Voice, the Messenger and Skykiwi. Yang later also published the New Zealand Education Handbook (新西兰教育手册) to help readers understand and engage with New Zealand's education system. It was also syndicated in news outlets and available through social media.

Key. In 2011 candidates from National again provided the most articles (10.7% of all articles on New Zealand politics), all of which came from non-ingroup candidates. Over the same period, articles from Labour accounted for 8.3% of all articles on New Zealand politics (7.3% from in-group candidate Raymond Huo and 1% from non-ingroup candidate Annette King) while 1% of came from ACT Party leader Don Brash.

In 2014, Yang Jian was the most visible candidate author, and while unlike in the *Chinese Herald*, Yang wasn't the only candidate to have their articles published, he did publish far more articles than any other candidate. Yang's articles constituted a remarkable 13.2% of all articles on New Zealand politics. Labour in-group candidate Raymond Huo accounted for 1.8%, while ACT's in-group candidate Kenneth Wang and party leader (and non-ingroup candidate) Jamie Whyte both accounted for 0.9% of total articles each.[49]
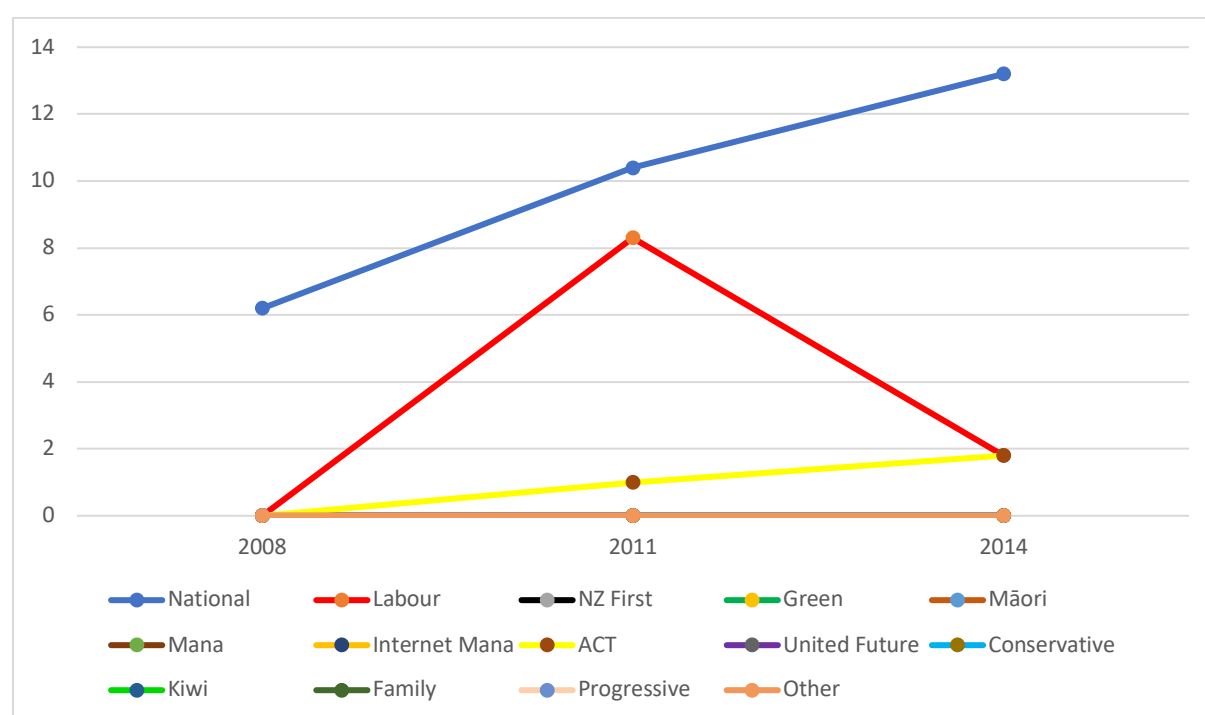
Figure 15 *– Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics Written by Party Candidates* (*Home Voice,* 2008-2014)

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[49] ACT Campaign Director Richard Prebble also wrote one article but, as he was not a candidate, was not recorded as such.

The *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 16) carried fewer articles written by candidates than any other newspaper. The only article supplied by a candidate in 2008 was from National's Pansy Wong, in which she assured readers that their vote was private and they were free to vote for which ever party that they wished to without any external pressure (Wong, 2008)[50].

In 2011 National candidates (John Key) accounted for 2.9% of all articles on New Zealand politics and Labour candidates 4.3% (1.4% from Raymond Huo and 2.9% from non-ingroup candidates[51]). In 2014 the only articles from candidates were the weekly publication of National's Yang Jian's New Zealand Health Handbook, accounting for 11.3% of all articles on New Zealand politics published in the *New Zealand Messenger* during the six-week observation period. This meant that out of all three newspapers, in two of them, Yang Jian was the only candidate that had articles published during the 2014 campaign, and of course in the one paper that carried articles from more than one candidate, Yang's columns were far more numerous than those of any other candidates.
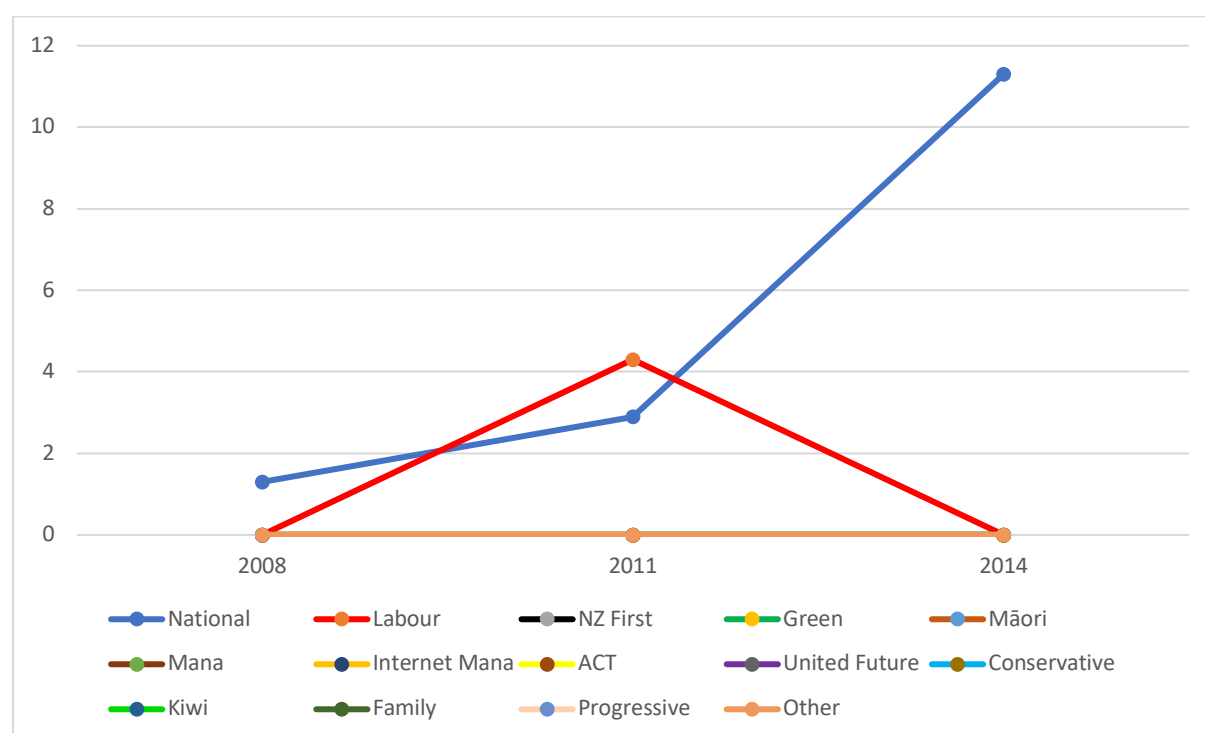
Figure 16 – *Percentage of Articles on New Zealand Politics Written by Party Candidates* (*New Zealand Messenger,* 2008-2014)

4.7 News Article Tone[52]

In news articles published in the *Chinese Herald* (Figure 17) the National Party had received its most net positive (14.5%) coverage in 2008, while in opposition. In 2011, National, then in government, was the only party with a net negative coverage in news articles (-7.6%). In 2014 the net tone of National's coverage was 11.5% - the only time that an incumbent had a net positive tone for news coverage in the *Chinese Herald*. Coverage of Labour, seeking a fourth term in government in 2008, had a net tone of -9.7%, while during the subsequent two election campaigns, the party's coverage had a net positive tone (1.8% in 2011 and 11.7% in 2014). ACT was the only party that participated in all three elections to have a net positive coverage for each campaign - 8% in 2008, 5% in 2011 and 15.4% in 2014

By contrast, coverage of New Zealand First was, overall, the most net negative (-15.8% in 2008 and -2.8% in 2014) of all parties. This was despite in 2011 having net positive coverage of 5.5%. In fact, in no other newspaper in my sample, at any election, did New Zealand First receive net positive news coverage.

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[52] This section reports solely on the tone of news articles.
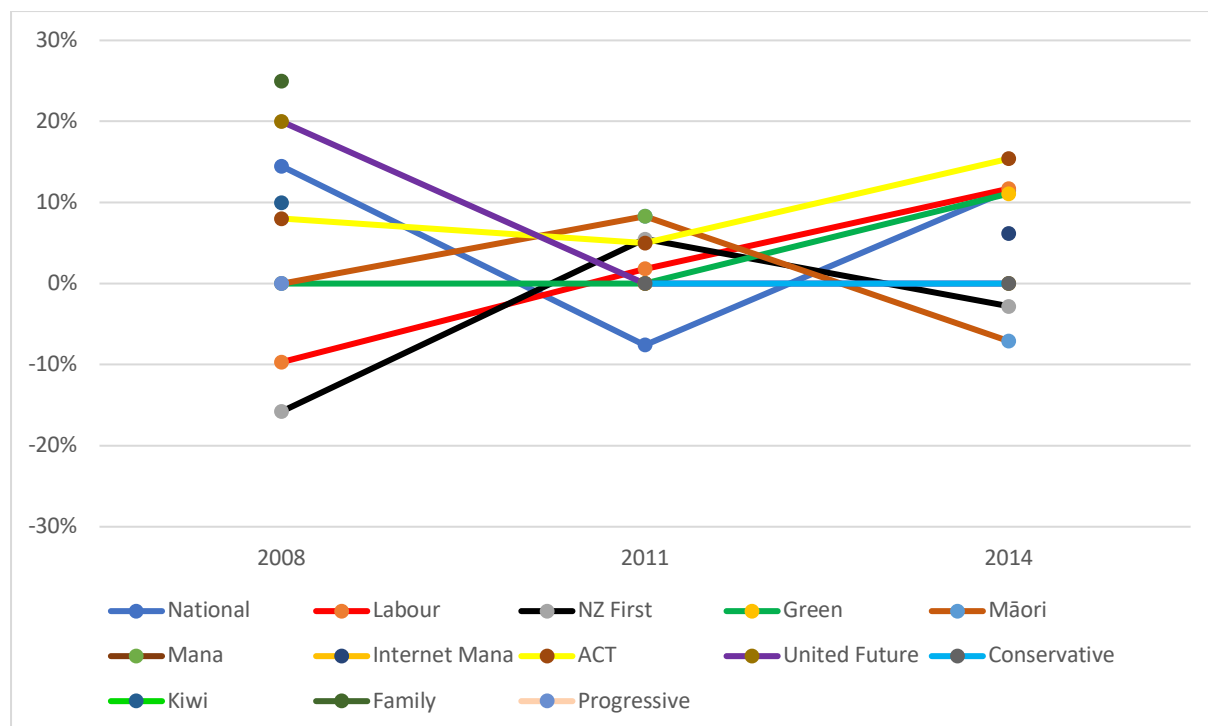
Figure 17 – *Net Tone of News Coverage Towards Parties* (*Chinese Herald,* 2008-2014)

In *Home Voice* (Figure 18), both National and Labour had a net positive coverage news for each campaign, although in 2014 coverage of National (18%) was significantly more net positive than that of Labour (5%).

The ACT Party again received generally strongly net positive coverage in news articles. ACT's coverage was net neutral during the 2008 campaign, however, in 2011 and 2014 news coverage of the party was more strongly net positive (20% in 2011 and 46.1% in 2014) than any other party.

Once again New Zealand First received the most negative coverage of any party (-11.1% in 2008 and -42.9% in 2014), and was one of only two parties that had net negative coverage in *Home Voice* (the other being the Conservative Party in 2014 with -16.7%).
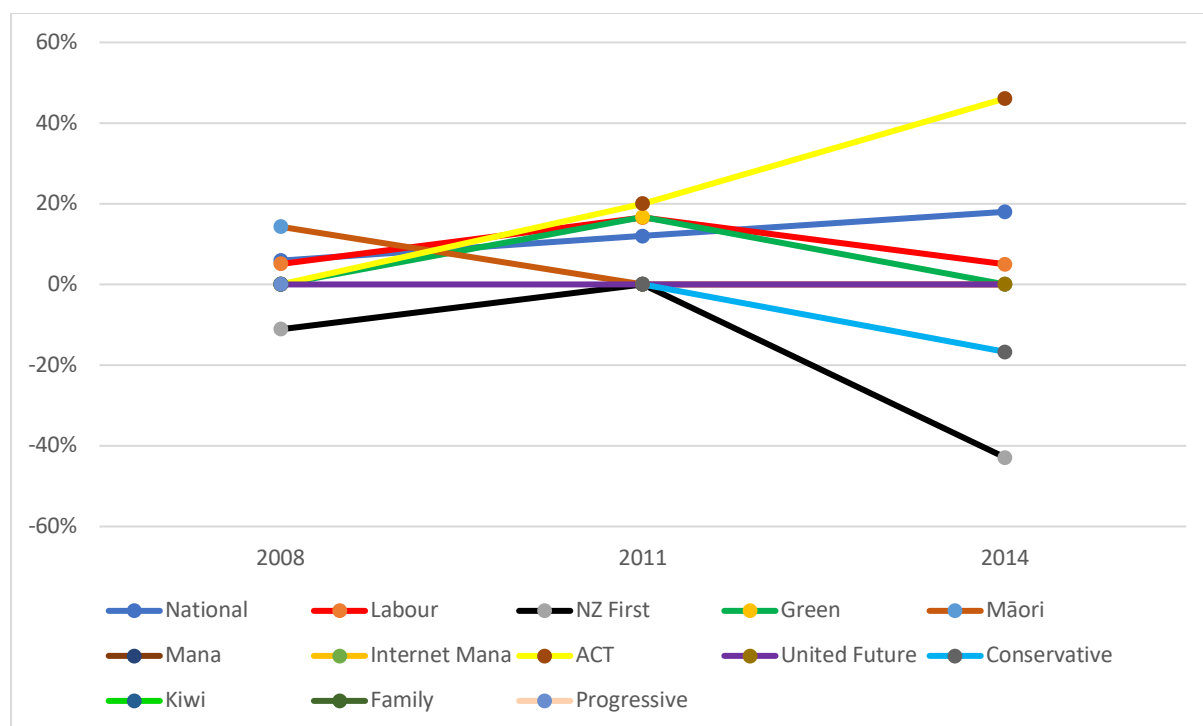
Figure 18 *– Net Tone of News Coverage Towards Parties* (*Home Voice,* 2008-2014)

National was the only party to have net positive news coverage in the *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 19) during the 2008 campaign. In 2011 National's net tone dropped to -2.5%, before rising in 2014 to 15.4%. News coverage of Labour was neutral in 2008, strongly net negative in 2011 (-16.5%) and highly net positive in 2014 (40%).News coverage of the ACT Party was more net positive than that of any other party overall in the *Chinese Messenger*. Coverage was net neutral in 2008, however, in the subsequent two elections campaigns ACT had significantly net positive coverage (50% in 2011 and 40% in 2014). By contrast, news coverage of New Zealand First, which had a net tone of -100% for both the 2011 and 2014 campaigns, was again more negative than any other party.
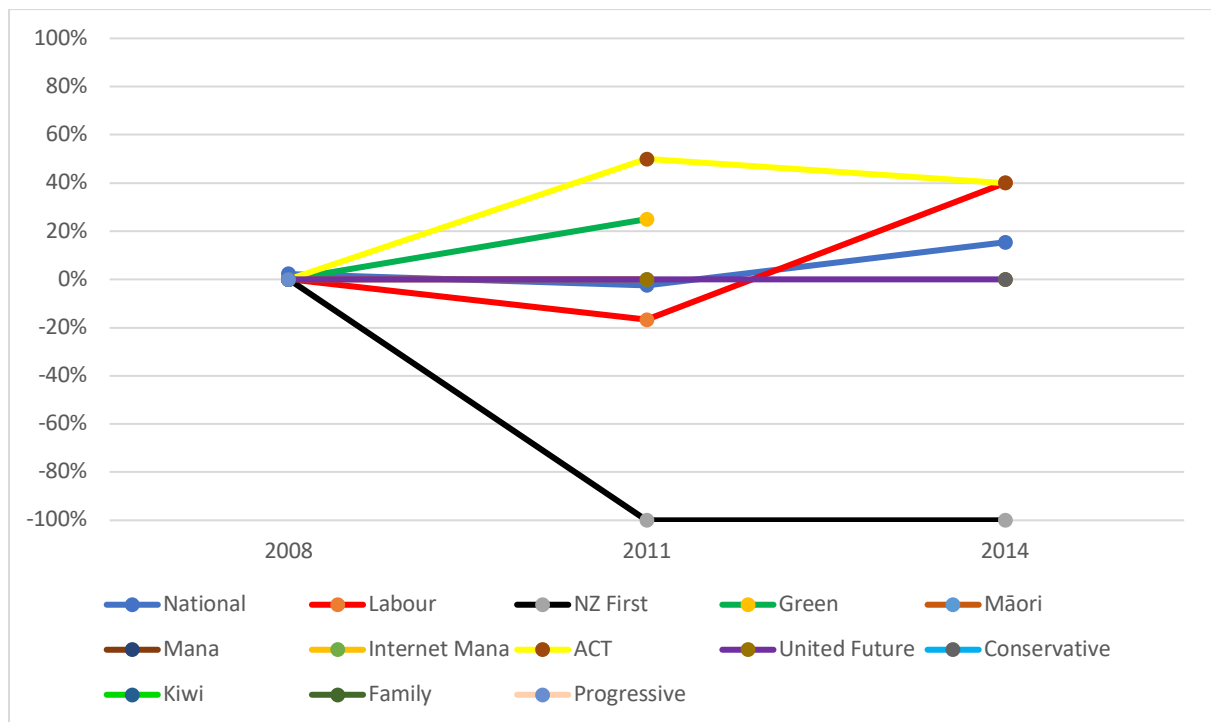
Figure 19 – *Net Tone of News Coverage Towards Parties* (*New Zealand Messenger, 2008-2014*)

4.8 Opinion Article Tone[53]

In the *Chinese Herald* (Figure 20) the National Party was the party (of those that ran in more than one election) to have a net positive tone from opinion article coverage during each campaign. During the 2014 campaign, during which National MP Yang Jian had a weekly column, and no other candidates contributed any opinion articles, National was the only party with a net positive tone from opinion articles while coverage of its main opponents (Labour, the Greens, Internet Mana and New Zealand First) was net negative. Coverage of National's coalition partners ACT, United Future and the Māori Party was net neutral.

ACT was the only other party to campaign in more than one election to not have a net negative opinion coverage in any of them.

The Kiwi and Family parties, which as previously mentioned were given significant space by the *Chinese Herald* in 2008, had the most significantly net positive opinion coverage in 2008 (50% and 75% respectively), however, neither party participated in later elections.

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[53] This section reports solely on the tone of opinion articles.

The party with the most net negative opinion coverage overall, as was also the case with news coverage, was New Zealand First. Apart from during the 2011 campaign, when opinion coverage of New Zealand First was net neutral, the net tone was strongly net negative - -36.4% in 2008 and -33.3% in 2014 - and Party leader Winston Peters was often the focal point of the negativity.
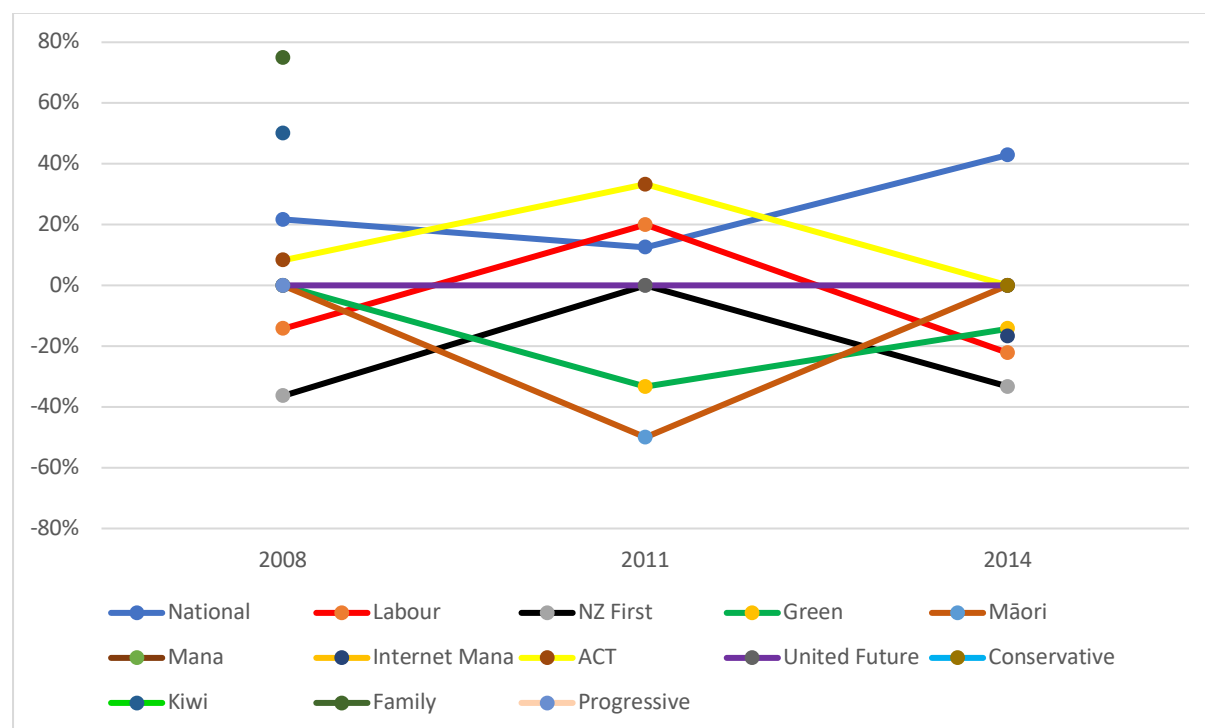
***Figure 20** – Net Tone of Opinion Coverage Towards Parties* (*Chinese Herald,* 2008-2014)

In *Home Voice* (Figure 21), National Party again had the most net positive opinion coverage and was the only party to receive net positive opinion coverage in each of the three election campaigns. Most notably opinion coverage of National was 100% net positive tone during the 2008 election campaign, during which it was the only party that had candidate written articles published.

In opinion articles, coverage of Labour was a strongly net negative in 2008 (-40%) and 2014 (-38.1%), however, in 2011, the campaign in which Labour candidates published more articles than during any period in my sample, the party's net opinion coverage had a net tone of 44.5%.

The ACT Party, which was not mentioned in any opinion articles during the 2008 campaign (nor was any party apart from National and Labour), had the highest net

positive opinion coverage in 2011 (50%) and 2014 (31.2%). Indeed, in 2014 only National and ACT had net positive opinion coverage.
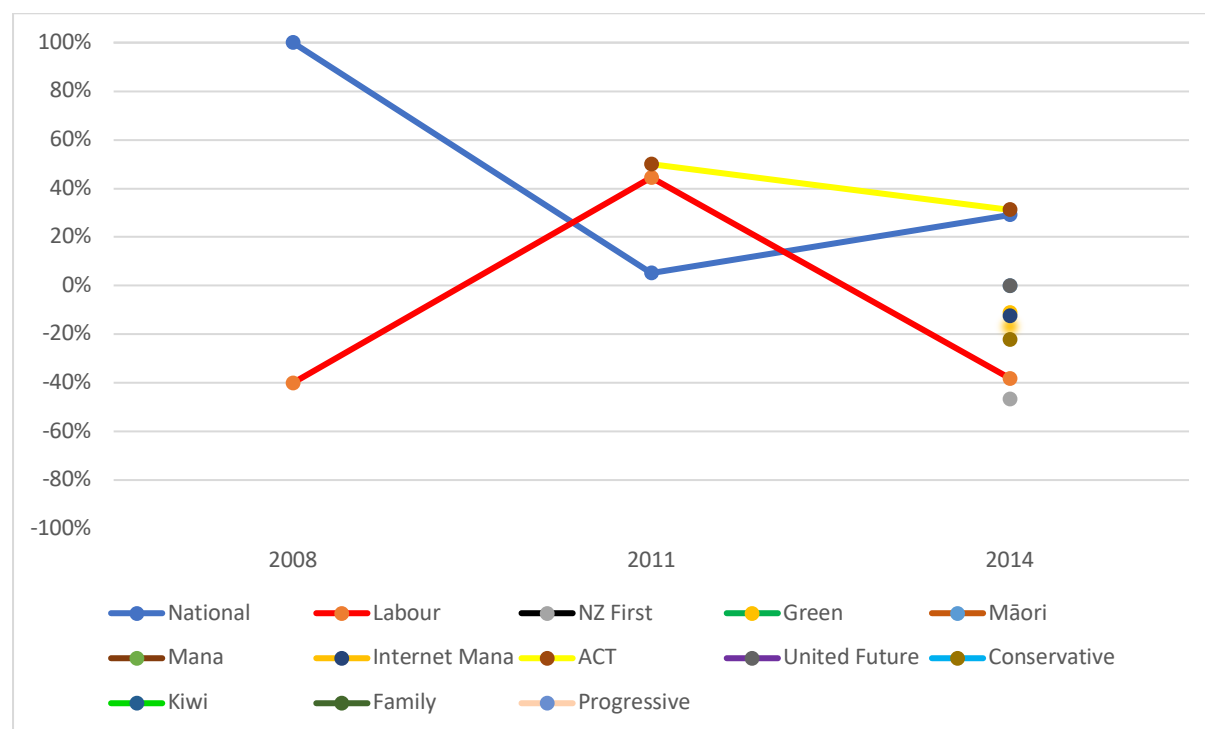
Figure 21 – Net Tone of Opinion Coverage Towards Parties (*Home Voice,* 2008-2014)

In the *New Zealand Messenger* (Figure 22), National was the only party to have net positive opinion (20%) during the 2008 campaign. In the two later elections, the net tone of National's coverage was -14.3% in 2011 and net neutral in 2014.

Opinion coverage of Labour was more negative than National during each campaign, and indeed, net neutral in 2008 and net negative in 2011 (-25%) and 2014 (-14.3%).

ACT had a net neutral opinion coverage in 2008 and 2011, however, in 2014 its net opinion coverage was the highest of all parties (12.5%).

New Zealand First was the only party with net negative opinion (-50%) coverage in 2008 and, along with the Green Party in 2011, had the most significantly net negative coverage (-100%). In 2014, New Zealand First was not mentioned in any opinion articles published in the *New Zealand Messenger*.
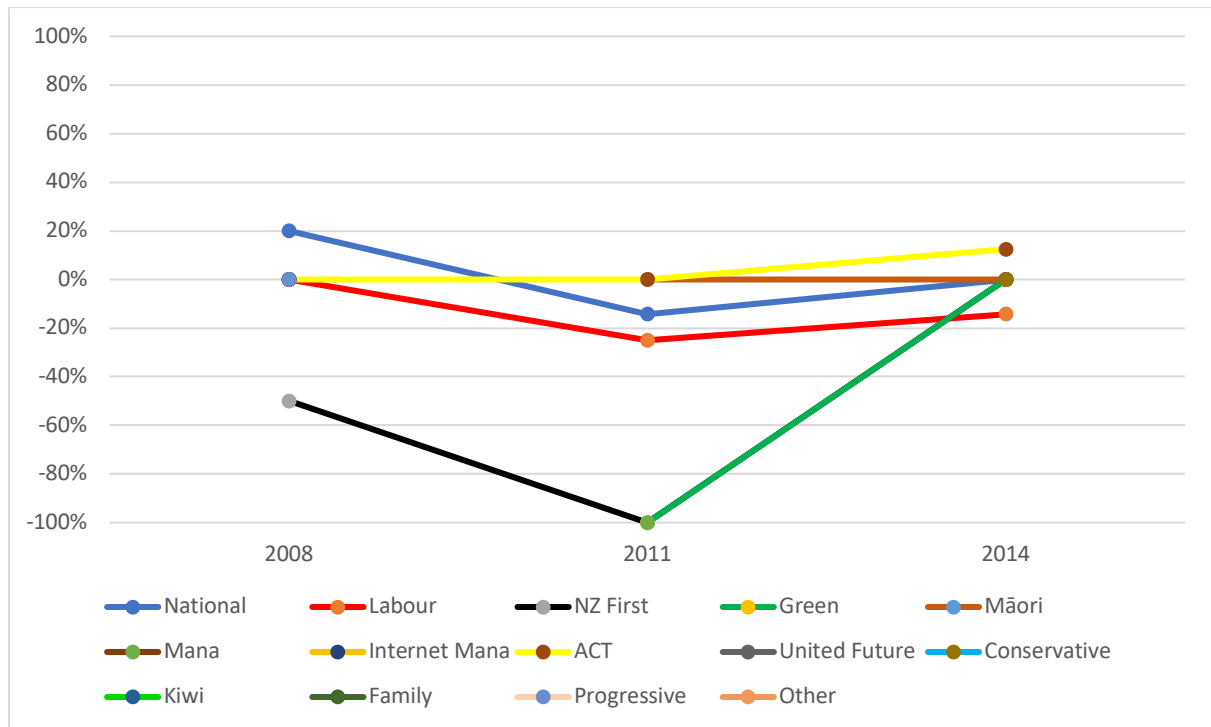
Figure 22 – *Net Tone of Opinion Coverage Towards Parties* (*New Zealand Messenger, 2008-2014*)

4.9 Summary

This chapter has summarised the key results from the content analysis of the *Chinese Herald, Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger*. From this, a number of clear findings have emerged. These include the widespread incumbency bonus and its relative strength when the National Party was in power. Also significant was the high levels of positive coverage that the ACT Party received. Conversely, and not unrelatedly, New Zealand First was subject to extensive negative coverage and many minor parties struggled to get coverage – especially of their policies. Finally, National's Yang Jian occupied a position of unique visibility through his syndicated articles, which were not balanced in any meaningful way by articles from candidates that occupied contrasting positions on the political spectrum.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this penultimate chapter I discuss the findings of my content analysis of all New Zealand politics-related articles published in the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger* newspapers in the six-weeks immediately prior to the 2008, 2011 and 2014 New Zealand general elections. These results have afforded greater insights into the civic forum provided by the ethnic Chinese language media in New Zealand than presented in the literature to date. This thesis does not seek to answer why the political coverage in the newspapers did or did not deviate from normative expectations of the ideal of the civic forum. It will however, where appropriate. present explanations proffered in the literature as to why the newspapers may have covered the elections in the manner that they did and the possible implications of that coverage. Finally, I will consider the limitations of this study and the areas that lend themselves most readily to future research.

5.2 Performance as a Civic Forum

From the results of the content analysis it is clear that there were a number of significant deviations from the civic forum norm in the way that the newspapers covered the New Zealand general elections of 2008, 2011 and 2014. Here, it is useful to briefly recall the normative concept of the civic forum employed in this study. The news media, as the electorate's primary source of political information and means of communication between the electorate and those competing for office (Bennett & Entman, 2001; Graber, 2004; Kemp, 2016b; Strömbäck, 2008) should provide a civic forum for pluralistic debate that is easily accessible to the electorate. It is crucial that within the civic forum a wide variety of voices, particularly those from the parties and politicians that hold, or are seeking to gain, elective office be heard. Participants in the civic forum should ideally be covered in a fair and impartial manner, enabling positions from across the political spectrum to be communicated to the electorate without bias (Ferree et al., 2002; Norris, 2000; Strömbäck, 2005). The purpose of the civic forum is to provide the public with easily accessible, unbiased information about those who seek to represent them (Ferree et al., 2002;

Norris, 2000; Strömbäck, 2005). This information should enable media consumers to, when casting their vote(s), make decisions that are informed by knowledge of those who seek elective office, their track record and the policies that they intend to enact if elected. Voters should also understand how this relates to their preferences and the issues that the country faces (Dahl, 1977; Ferree et al., 2002; Strömbäck, 2005).

With this in mind, the most salient ways in which the newspapers sampled in the course of my research deviated from normative expectations of the civic forum are worth discussing here. Specifically, National and ACT both benefitted from significant coverage biases (D' Alessio & Allen, 2000). The coverage bias towards National manifested itself in the form of an incumbency bonus, defined as occurring when "parties and politicians in government have more media coverage than those in opposition" (Green-Pedersen, Mortensen, & Thesen, 2015, p. 131). Although an incumbency bonus is not contradictory to the principles of the civic forum per se, the strength of National's incumbency bonuses certainly were. *Home Voice* was the only newspaper in which a similar sized incumbency bonus was present for both the Labour and National parties. The incumbent received more than twice as many mentions as the main opposition party during each campaign (and in 2011 when National was in power they received more mentions than all other parties combined), while the *Chinese Herald* and the *New Zealand Messenger* had an incumbency bonus that favoured National to a much greater degree than Labour. In the *Chinese Herald's* campaign coverage, the gap between coverage of National and Labour was around seven times higher when National was in power than when Labour was the incumbent. For the *New Zealand Messenger* the gap was about four times higher and, in both elections, National received almost three times as much coverage as Labour.

The other main beneficiary of such pluralistically unbalanced coverage in the sampled newspapers, ACT, was electorally very much a minor party,[54] finishing 4th, 8th and 8th again at the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections and receiving 3.65%, 1.07%

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[54] ACT (alongside the Māori and United Future parties) was in a confidence supply agreement with the National Party during the 2011 and 2014 observation periods.

and 0.69% of the party vote in each election respectively (Electoral Commission, 2008, 2012, 2014). Without an electoral deal with the National Party, where National signalled to its voters in the Epsom electorate to give their electorate vote to ACT, it is unlikely that they would have had a presence in parliament at all (Johansson & Levine, 2012; Levine, 2015). However, despite the party's progressively abysmal electoral performances, the quantity of coverage that ACT received was generally significantly more than other minor parties (including those with a much higher vote share such as the Green Party) and, in 2014 in *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger*, on a level similar to the Labour Party despite the Labour's party vote being 36 times higher than ACT's in that year's election. While there is considerable disagreement over how much coverage parties should get in order to ensure representative coverage (Rudd & Connew, 2007; Street, 2011), the disconnect between ACT's position in the political landscape and the amount of coverage that it was afforded was really quite remarkable.[55]

Newspapers are obviously limited by the space that they can fill with news and other articles (Street, 2011), and as a consequence, the high levels of attention given to National and ACT came at the cost of coverage of other parties and reducing opportunity for information on the opposition Labour Party to be communicated down to the electorate. This especially impacted the amount of information about Labour policy communicated through the newspapers and limited the opportunities for the readership to learn about the policy offerings of the primary opposition party and the head of a possible alternative government. Of all three newspapers, the *New Zealand Messenger* was the least balanced, mentioning Labour policy only 11 times across the 2011 and 2014 election campaigns, compared to 51 mentions of National Party policy over the same time period.

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[55] The pro-ACT bias, present in all newspapers, was most explicit in the final issue of *Home Voice* (which mentioned ACT in more than one-quarter of all New Zealand politics related articles during the 2014 campaign), prior to the 2014 election. Here ACT was mentioned in one-third of all articles, including the front-page article and a block of three full pages of positive news, and opinion articles written by party leader Jamie Whyte, Campaign Director Richard Prebble and journalist Wen Yang (文扬). A pro-ACT opinion piece by community member Yang Chuan (杨川) was also published in the issue.

In addition to this, minor parties were often marginalised in the civic forum (with the obvious exception of ACT, and also New Zealand First). This was particularly true in *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger*, where coverage of minor party policy was especially limited. The *New Zealand Messenger* provided the most extreme example of the lack of coverage given to minor parties and their policies. It did not include the Mana or Conservative parties in its news coverage of the 2011 election. In 2014, the Internet Mana, Māori and, most surprisingly, the Green Party (who held 11.06% of the vote in 2011 and 10.7% in 2014 making it the third largest party in both elections (Electoral Commission, 2011; 2014)) were excluded altogether from the newspaper's news coverage.

While the *Chinese Herald* did offer the most comprehensive coverage of minor parties, it was still generally more likely to discuss them in relation to the 'horserace' - the motives, tactics, polling and deal making aspect of politics (Bahador et al., 2016; Iyengar, Norpoth, & Hahn, 2004) - and as a consequence, their policy coverage suffered. While horserace coverage has been criticised for distracting from policy issues (McGregor, Fountaine, & Comrie, 2010), it can, if not excessive, play an important role in the civic forum by providing information that helps people to make decisions on how to vote tactically (Norris, 2000). This has extra importance in New Zealand's MMP electoral system where people can split their party and electorate votes between different parties. However, it does not discount the need for information on party policy. In addition, under MMP, the exclusion or marginalisation of minor parties in the civic forum is especially concerning due to the potential for minor parties to accrue considerable power (Miller, 2015; Rudd & Connew, 2007), making the communication of information about the personnel, past performance and policy positions of minor parties a crucial aspect of the civic forum. Furthermore, the privileged position that the centre-right National Party (Wood, 2003) and the right-wing ACT Party (Miller, 2015) held within the civic forum was not counterbalanced by centre-left or left-wing voices. In particular, parties left of the centre-left Labour Party (Franks & McAloon, 2016; Miller, 2015) were, by and large, not given a significant platform to present their policies in the newspapers, violating the normative requirement of balance in the civic forum.

The newspapers, by publishing candidate authored articles, provided valuable space for candidates to reach down directly to the electorate. Direct communication from candidates through channels such as columns, which unlike news articles written by journalists, allow for the construction of persuasive partisan messages that do not have to adhere to the norms of balance or reliance on expert sources (J. L. Dunaway, Davis, Padgett, & Scholl, 2015; Fogarty & Wolak, 2009). When these partisan messages are given a platform, it is important to achieve the balance that is so crucial to the concept of the civic forum in order to enable voices and opinions from across the political spectrum to be heard (Newton, 1989; Norris, 2000). However, apart from the *Chinese Herald's* opinion pages during the 2008 campaign in which columns from Labour, National, Act, and the Kiwi[56] and Family parties were published,[57] significant shortcomings were found in all three newspapers.

The *Chinese Herald*, New Zealand's highest quality Chinese language newspaper (P. H. Li, 2013), did not maintain the level of plurality in its opinion pages that had been found in 2008, or even any level of plurality - so much so that during the 2011 and 2014 election campaigns National's Yang Jian wrote all candidate written articles published in the newspaper. In all three elections *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger* also failed to offer a space in which a genuine plurality of candidates could directly communicate with the public. Indeed, the unrivalled visibility of Yang

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[56] The relatively large number of columns from the Kiwi Party (5), were embellished by Simon Kan, the party's candidate for Botany having a regular column in the *Chinese Herald* that preceded him standing for the Kiwi Party and was maintained during the election campaign.

Given Kan's low profile in the *Chinese Herald* during the 2011 campaign when standing for the Conservative Party – he was only referred to once, in a list of ethnic Chinese candidates standing at the election - it is likely that without his job as a regular columnist for the *Chinese Herald* he would have had far fewer columns published in the paper and his output would have more closely resembled the Family Party's Angela Xu who had two articles published over the course of the campaign.

[57] Although significantly more articles from National Party candidates (13) were published than from other parties

Jian[58] through both his syndicated column and New Zealand Health Handbook[59] during the 2014 campaign was one of the most significant, and remarkable, deviations from norms of the civic forum.

The fact that Yang wrote 5.7% of all articles related to New Zealand politics in the *Chinese Herald*, 13.2% in *Home Voice* and 11.3% in the *New Zealand Messenger* in 2014, is remarkable in and of itself. However, it also represents a significant departure from the civic forum's principles of balance and plurality (Norris, 2000) when one compares it to limited space given to other candidates. Yang's articles, which were the only candidate authored articles published in two of the newspapers (the *Chinese Herald* and the *New Zealand Messenger*) during that campaign, totalled thirty-two across all three newspapers. The combined total of articles from all other candidates was four, all of which were published in *Home Voice*. Two of those were authored by Labour's Raymond Huo and one each by ACT's Jamie Whyte and Kenneth Wang – clearly this was insufficient to provide any semblance of genuine plurality or balance. Further, Huo's two articles were published in the first two weeks of the six-week sample period, meaning that that no articles from Huo, 21st on the Labour party list in 2014 and a key conduit for Labour's messages to Chinese New Zealanders during the 2011 campaign, were published in the final month before the election. As Yang became the most visible opinion piece writer (including articles written by journalists), he exerted considerable force on the overall tone of the opinion sections of the newspapers. For example, in 2014 in the *Chinese Herald* only coverage of the National Party had a net positive tone, while coverage of the parties vying to form an alternative government, Labour, Green, New Zealand First, and Internet Mana parties was strongly net negative. The ability of one person to have such an impact on the discourse is a significant deviation from the expectations of the civic forum and particularly concerning given the electoral context. It is also apparent that, with National the only party that ran in more than

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[58] Yang's ubiquity in the Chinese language media, which has continued contrasts sharply with his persistent refusal to engage with the English language media following English language media discussion of his links to Chinese military intelligence (Campbell, 2018; Owen, 2020)

[59] Yang's columns were published not only in the three newspapers covered in this study but also in other media outlets such as Skykiwi and, from at least September 2014, the National Party's WeChat account. The Health Handbook was also published in other media outlets not included in this study.

one election to receive net positive coverage from opinion articles in all three elections in the *Chinese Messenger* and *Home Voice* that opinion tone favoured National. These articles came from candidates such as Pansy Wong and John Key and also journalists and other columnists, although Yang's contributions were unique in their quantity.

Furthermore, there were no columns authored by any candidates from parties such as the Green, Māori, Mana, Internet Mana, United Future, New Zealand First or Conservative parties in any of the papers across three elections – a further illustration of the marginalisation of parties other than the National, Labour and ACT parties.

In addition to the significant failings in plurality, the systematic negative bias towards New Zealand First and positive bias towards ACT was also normatively concerning. The negativity towards New Zealand First and party leader Winston Peters centred on accusations, or the presumption, that Peters[60] was racist, and most pertinently, anti-Chinese and a threat to ethnic Chinese in New Zealand.[61] Accused of 'playing the race card' (打種族牌) to enhance his political fortunes, dislike of Peters appeared to be widely assumed by journalists, politicians and other contributing writers. For example, in a front-page article on the eve of the 2014 election, *Chinese Herald* journalist Ye Tao (葉韜) stated that "although a great many Chinese people dislike, even 'loathe', New Zealand First leader Winston Peters, *we* can't escape the fact that support for the party is steadily rising" (italics added for emphasis). (雖然很多華人不喜歡，甚至「討厭」優先黨黨魁 Winston Peters，但我們無法迴避優先黨支持率節節攀升這個事實) (Chinese Herald, 2014), a statement that indicated not only her view that there was widespread dislike of Peters among many Chinese New Zealanders, but that she shared that dislike. ACT, and Kenneth Wang in particular, were major proponents of the accusations of racism directed at Peters, especially

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[60] That Peters was the focal point of the negativity, not surprising given his position as the single dominant figure in New Zealand First (Miller, 2003).

[61] The idea that Peters was a threat to Chinese New Zealanders was vividly illustrated in a full-page ACT Party ad published in *Home Voice* on the day before the 2014 election. The ad was headlined "The National Party is preparing to let the wolf in, what shall we Chinese do?" ("国家党准备引狼入室我们华人怎么办?"), a banner statement in which Peters and his party were clearly the wolf.

during the 2014 campaign, but also in the 2008 campaign.[62] Their efficient use of the newspapers as platforms to condemn Peters,[63] while simultaneously offering themselves as the most effective option to keep Peters out of power, allowed them to promote their party while attacking Peters and New Zealand First.[64] One particular aspect of ACT's self-promotion was to outline how their party values aligned with what they perceived to be the values of Chinese New Zealanders.

It is important to note that this study expands on the findings of P. H. Li (2013) who has provided the only previously published study of the New Zealand-based Chinese language ethnic media's political coverage. Although Li did not provide systematic analysis of the visibility of parties, candidates, their policies, columns or the tone of coverage, the findings of my study do align in a number of ways. P. H Li (2013) observed that coverage of ACT was so extensive that the 2005 election was effectively presented as a "three-horse race" (p. 141) between Labour, National and ACT. She also found that Labour, National and ACT were the three parties that had the most effective outreach, with frequent appearances by the ethnically Chinese candidates on Chinese

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[62] While Wang and ACT were less vocal in their attacks on Peters in 2008, Peters was still subject to similar accusations by journalists and other contributors, including National Party candidate Pansy Wong.

[63] Wang's message that "the most effective way to stop Peters is to give your party vote to ACT" ("阻止彼德斯的最有效辦法是把黨票投給行動黨 ACT") (Chinese Herald, 2014) was remarkably similar to the one that he used in 2005 (P.H. Li, 2013).

[64] The positive coverage of ACT, however, did persist in 2011 when Kenneth Wang was not a candidate and the anti-Peters strategy not utilised - however ACT did receive significantly less coverage in all three papers during that election campaign. This was in stark contrast to the coverage of ACT in the English language media during the 2011 campaign. Bahador *et al.* (2016) found that the proportion of coverage given to ACT during the 2011 campaign was almost four times higher than it was during the 2008 campaign and more than four times higher than in 2014 campaign - more significantly net negative than that of any other party. A major factor was the so-called "teapot tape" scandal which involved a journalist recording a private conversation between Prime Minister John Key and ACT Party leader John Banks in a café, becoming the major story of the campaign (Boyd, 2019) and subject to such exhaustive coverage that opposition parties complained that it was starving them of media attention (Robinson, 2012). The "teapot tape", received minimal coverage in *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger* and was only mentioned in one article in each newspaper, however, the *Chinese Herald* gave the issue significant coverage.

language ethnic radio station 936AM. These three parties were generally the most active in supplying candidate-authored columns in my sample, possibly indicating greater capabilities or willingness to engage with the Chinese language ethnic media. Due to the focus on Labour, National and ACT, Li reported that, as was often the case in the newspapers in my sample, other parties were marginalised in the civic forum. In addition to this, she also noted the antagonistic tone towards Winston Peters, and ACT's central role in its propagation, primarily through Kenneth Wang.

In finding that the characteristics Li observed in the coverage of the 2005 election were also largely present during the preceding three election campaigns, it indicates that they constitute some of the most salient characteristics of the New Zealand-based Chinese language media's election coverage. This is a significant contribution to the literature. Beyond expanding on Li's study, this thesis contributes to the literature by providing a breadth and depth of insight into the civic forum of the Chinese language ethnic media that has not been presented to date, either in a New Zealand or international context.

5.3 Reasons for failure

It is clear that the provision of political coverage by the newspapers included in this study, in many ways, deviated from the ideal of the civic forum. Consequently, it is worth considering possible explanations for these deviations, both those specific to ethnic media and to media more generally.

Many of the normatively problematic issues discussed above can be linked to the heavy resource constraints that the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand operate within. As has been noted by P. H. Li (2013) and Ip (2006), the resource poor nature of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand is the primary impediment to the provision of high-quality political coverage in these media. Similar financial concerns among the Chinese language ethnic media in Canada have led to financial concerns overriding normative goals (X. Li, 2015).[65] While the

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[65] These pressures and the resulting decline of what may be considered 'quality journalism' is not unique to the Chinese language ethnic media and is a problem that the mainstream media in New Zealand (and around the world) also has to contend with (Bunce, 2019). However, the impacts on the

coverage in all three newspapers was normatively problematic, it is telling that the two newspapers with the least resources, *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger* performed the worst as civic forums.

One particular avenue through which the usurping of normative goals by the need, or desire, to maximise profits is through the weight given to news values, defined by McQuail (2010) as "an attribute of a news event that transforms it into an interesting 'story' for an audience" (pg. 310), particularly those that are highly commercially focussed (Allern, 2002). The emphasis placed on news values, which often exist in a state of tension with normative ideals that are crucial to the civic forum such as balance (Smetko, 1996), is heavily influenced by the financial context and orientation of individual media outlets (Allern, 2002). Media outlets with limited resources and facing financial difficulty or with high degrees of profit orientation are more likely to choose stories based on news values that are expected to garner as much attention as possible (Allern, 2002) in order to bring in greater revenue (Allan, 2010; Matsaganis et al., 2011). The news value ascribed to the elite status and power of actors, seen as not only important in holding the powerful to account, but also attractive to audiences (Allern, 2002), has been recognised as the major contributor to incumbency bonuses (David Nicolas Hopmann, Van Aelst, & Legnante, 2011; van Dalen, 2012) and may offer an explanation for the differences in the size of the incumbency bonuses that National and Labour enjoyed. At both the 2008 and 2011 elections, the National Party received the highest proportion of the party vote ever recorded under the MMP electoral system, giving it a more commanding position relative to other parties than Labour had following their win in the 2005 election. This greater concentration of power may have been reflected in the size of the incumbency bonus afforded to Labour during the 2008 campaign and National in 2011 and 2014. Similarly, National, which was widely expected to remain in government following the 2011 and 2014 elections (Johansson & Levine, 2012; Levine, 2015)[66] was an attractive news subject due to its high levels of public support

Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand are severe due to the small market size and their extreme reliance on advertising money (P.H. Li, 2013).

[66] The reasons behind *Home Voice* giving roughly the same sized incumbency bonus to Labour in 2008 as it gave to National in 2014 are unclear, however, what is apparent is that *Home Voice* gives by far the most extensive coverage to the main governing party, regardless of who is in power.

nationally (Hopmann, et al., 2011). Among Chinese New Zealanders this level of support was reportedly even higher. A Trace Research poll found that 74.1% of Chinese voters cast their vote for the National Party at the 2014 election and 73.5% intended to vote for National in the 2017 election (Trace Research, 2017). This widespread support among Chinese New Zealanders may have influenced the newspapers' decision to give National the broad coverage that they did.

It is interesting to note that consumers and producers of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand - primarily recent migrants from the PRC (P. H. (Li, 2013) - are often from the middle-class backgrounds that have been targeted by New Zealand's neoliberal immigration policies (Simon-Kumar, 2015), and have, according to P. H. Li (2013), shown a preference for parties on the right of the political spectrum. This preference in part, may be inspired by their experience of relative economic privilege in China, which contextualised within China's economic liberalisation, have, P. H. Li (2013) argues, caused significant opposition to New Zealand's welfare state and the taxation required to support it. In addition to often sharing the middle-class backgrounds of their readership, which as X. Li (2015) found, can cause a narrowing of the areas of perceived to be of interest to their readership, the owners of Chinese language ethnic media, in running businesses that struggle to turn a profit (P. H. Li, 2013), may be inclined to support political parties that are perceived as offering the most benefits for small businesses.

These factors may lead to the favouring of political parties such as National and ACT that are on the right of the political spectrum (Miller; 2015; Wood, 2003) and the relative neglect of those on the left. Further, a major factor in the ACT Party's high level of coverage in the *Chinese Herald* and the *New Zealand Messenger* in 2008 was the competition between Wang and two other ethnic Chinese candidates, National's Pansy Wong, and Simon Kan of the Kiwi Party in the Botany electorate. This and the ensuing dispute between Wang and Wong, known as "ad-gate" (廣告門) over Wang's use of Wong's name in promotional materials,[67] fulfilled a number of

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[67] Wang's use of the slogan, "Vote Kenneth Wang, get Wang + Wong" as part of his strategy of asking the Botany electorate – which is home to a large Asian population - to give him their electorate vote so that, with Wong highly likely to return to parliament due to her list ranking of 20, they could have two MPs. Wong took issue with Wang's use of her name and threatened to and then lodged a

news values such as conflict, proximity and cultural specificity (Allan, 2010) and attracted significant attention especially in the *Chinese Herald* – where almost one quarter of all stories mentioned ACT and one in five mentioned Wang – and, to a lesser extent, the *New Zealand Messenger*. Interestingly, *Home Voice*, which gave Wang such fulsome coverage during the 2014 campaign, mentioned Wang only once in 2008 and did not cover 'ad-gate'.

The financial constraints of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand have debilitating effects on their capacity to recruit qualified staff, that is, those that have professional training in journalism, strong bilingual capabilities and a comprehensive understanding of both the audience and New Zealand mainstream society in which they operate (P.H. Li, 2013; Liu, 2009). If there is a deficit of in-depth knowledge about New Zealand among journalists at Chinese ethnic media outlets as P. H. Li (2013) and Liu (2009) claim, then one may assume that this extends to the New Zealand political system, which is vastly different to the PRC's (Ip, 2003; Miller, 2015) and perhaps also the attendant journalistic norms which contrast greatly with those promoted in the training of journalists in the PRC (Dombernowsky, 2016; Kemp, 2016a). If journalists are lacking in their understanding of the normative expectations of the media in a democracy like New Zealand, then it is not surprising that their coverage deviated from the normative expectations of the civic forum (Schudson, 1995).

Another manifestation of the financial pressures that ethnic Chinese language media operate under are their lack of news gathering capabilities (P. H. Li, 2013; Liu, 2009). [68] This may make them more willing to republish content provided to them by political parties (Allern, 2002; Edwards, 2016). Within ethnic media literature, the outreach efforts of the Conservative Party of Canada during the 2011 Canadian federal election, which involved providing free content to resource-stretched ethnic

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complaint with the Electoral Commission which ultimately ruled in Wang's favour. Wang made use of the Chinese language ethnic media to publish a number of opinion pieces defending his position.

[68] The Chinese language media in New Zealand often rely on translations of news published in the mainstream media (P. H. Li, 2013), as was regularly the case in the newspapers included in my sample.

media outlets, are perhaps the most studied (Kwak, 2017; Lindgren, 2014).[69] Lindgren (2014) notes that these outreach efforts were especially attractive to smaller ethnic news outlets with fewer resources by reducing the amount of work and resources required to put together their newspaper.

Additionally, for the Chinese language ethnic media, often desperate for advertising revenue, the influx of party and candidate advertisements which can occur during election campaigns provide a welcome boost to their bottom lines (P.H. Li, 2013). It is possible that, as has been shown in the ethnic media overseas (Lindgren, 2014), the newspapers sampled in my research may similarly have given favourable coverage to large spending candidates and parties.

One should also consider potential bearing of ownership, which has been identified as having an impact on the content published by the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand (Brady, 2017, 2018; P. H. Li, 2013) and around the world (Sun, 2016; Sun et al., 2011; To, 2009).[70]

For under-resourced Chinese language ethnic media outlets, as Sun et al. (2011) note in the case of the Australian Chinese language ethnic media "there is little to lose and everything to gain by cultivating close relationships with Chinese government bodies" (p. 525). Such relationships can provide benefits such as securing much needed advertising revenue, business opportunities for newspaper owners' PRC-based or oriented businesses, access to free content from PRC media outlets and admittance to community cultural events (Brady, 2017, 2018; Pál, 2016; Sun & Sinclair, 2016; Sun et al., 2011; To, 2009, 2014), however, such arrangements are not without strings and can inform what is deemed appropriate to publish for associated outlets (Brady, 2017; Chong, 2016; To, 2009, 2014). Whether or not such a context influenced coverage of the elections in my sample is not clear, although there was a noticeable increase over time in the number and proportion of stories on New

[69] For a broad overview of the Conservative Party of Canada's targeting of ethnic minority groups see (Marwah, Triadafilopoulos, & White, 2013).

[70] This is, of course, also the case for other types of ethnic media (Matsaganis et al., 2011) and also the mainstream media (Allan, 2010; J. Dunaway, 2008).

Zealand politics sourced from PRC sources, particularly in *Home Voice*.[71] Such concerns may be more acute during elections in which issues relating to China and the relationship between New Zealand and China are more salient.

It is also important to consider the tensions that exist between the normative expectations of media providing a civic forum and the role of ethnic media as resources to be mobilised to manage and overcome difficulties faced by marginalised communities (Abrajano & Singh, 2009; Kim, 2011). One of the most salient functions of ethnic media is to act as an advocate for the communities that they serve (Abrajano & Singh, 2009; Branton & Dunaway, 2008b). This can lead them away from the type of balanced and inclusive coverage that characterises the ideal of the civic forum (Matsaganis et al., 2011). The persistently negative coverage of New Zealand First and its leader Winston Peters, and the discourse around Peters being a threat to Chinese New Zealanders is an example of this, and in particular, exemplifies the ethnic media acting as a community sentinel. When fulfilling this role, the media serve to warn the community of potential and existing external threats (Viswanath & Arora, 2000; Wright, 1960). As one of the primary disseminators of the anti-Peters message during the 2008 and 2014 election campaigns,[72] ACT may have benefitted from the prioritisation of this message in terms of both the quantity and tone of their coverage. The anti-New Zealand First message was so central to ACT's campaigns that their party candidate for Epsom, David Seymour, was quoted in *Home Voice* saying that alongside being tough on crime, opposing discrimination and lowering taxes, one of the main tenants of ACT's

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[71] Articles sourced from PRC state news agencies Xinhua News Agency (新华通讯社) and China News Service (CNS) (中国新闻社) made up an increasingly large proportion of the body of stories about New Zealand politics published in *Home Voice*. In 2008, 4.6% of all stories about New Zealand politics were sourced from Xinhua, in 2011 Xinhua 10.4% were from Xinhua and 3.1% from CNS. In 2014, 14.9% came from Xinhua and 0.9% from China News, a website run under the auspices of CNS (由中国新闻社主办) (China News, 2020). Articles were also sourced from a number of other sources such as Chinesetown (新西兰中国城 - literally New Zealand Chinatown) from which 3.5% of articles in 2014 were sourced. *Home Voice* was not the only newspaper that sourced stories on New Zealand politics from Chinese state news agencies, however, it was the newspaper that published the greatest proportion of articles from them.

[72] When Kenneth Wang was standing as a candidate for the ACT Party.

platform was to "resolutely resist anti-Chinese forces headed by Winston Peters" ("坚决抵制以 Winston Peters (温斯顿·彼得斯)为首的反华势力") (Home Voice, 2014). Other candidates such as National's Pansy Wong in 2008 and Yang Jian in 2014 also criticised Peters along similar lines - although attacks on Peters did not constitute such a central feature of their campaigns as it did for Wang and ACT.[73]

The coverage afforded to political parties was also influenced (often positively) by their inclusion of ethnic Chinese candidates. These MPs, a number of whom frequently published columns in the newspapers, were interviewed far more often than their non-ethnic Chinese colleagues, and regularly had their attendance at community events reported on. While this can be viewed as skewing coverage in ways that do not conform to the norms of the civic forum, it does correspond to a number of other expectations. Firstly, such coverage can be associated with the fulfilment of certain news values, as mentioned above, such as proximity and cultural specificity (Allan, 2010). Secondly, it can be viewed through the lens of social capital (Fleras, 2009; Putnam, 2000). By covering the achievements of ethnic Chinese candidates and emphasising their attentiveness to Chinese New Zealanders,[74] which often comprised a key part of their pitches to the readership, the newspapers were generating bonding social capital (Fleras, 2009; Lindgren, 2014). This focus on in-group candidates is consistent with studies overseas on the political coverage provided by ethnic media (Ahadi & Yu, 2010; Lindgren, 2014) and a focus that

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[73] The discourse was not limited to candidates, ACT Party Campaign Director Richard Prebble authored an opinion piece in *Home Voice* titled Make Peters History (让 Peters 成为历史) in which he criticised not only Peters, but also Conservative leader Colin Craig and Labour leader David Cunliffe and their parties for attacking Chinese people (攻击华人) in their pursuit of votes.

[74] In 2014, the election with the highest profile ethnic Chinese candidates in my sample, National's Yang Jian, Labour's Raymond Huo, ACT's Kenneth Wang and Paul Young of the Conservative Party were reported on in all three newspapers appearing together at an event to encourage ethnic Chinese participation in the election. Their presence at community events was also covered, and they were each interviewed at least once. Two-part interview carried on the front page of the *Chinese Herald* gave all four candidates the chance to sell themselves and their parties to the readership in a way that was not afforded to non-ethnic Chinese candidates during that election.

provides information that is unavailable to consumers of mainstream sources of news (Lindgren, 2014).

5.4 Consequences

It is worth briefly examining some of the consequences of the deviations from normative expectations of the civic forum already mentioned. The high levels of coverage given to National and ACT (and Labour in *Home Voice* in 2008), at the cost of coverage of other parties, lessened the potential for learning about alternative options. This is problematic in any democracy, but even more so in one such as New Zealand with its MMP electoral system, under which even minor parties are potentially able to accrue considerable power (Miller, 2015; Rudd & Connew, 2007). Making the communication of information about the personnel, past performance and policy positions of a variety of parties is a crucial aspect of the civic forum. Furthermore, the statement bias towards National and ACT had the potential to allow those parties to dominate the agenda, that is, have the issues and policy areas (and frames) that suit them predominate in the civic forum (Brandenburg, 2005). This was particularly so of the news and opinion coverage of both parties (and especially impacted by Yang Jian's ubiquitous columns). As, is often the case, the greater the attention an issue receives in the media, the higher the level of importance the public attach to the issue (Iyengar, & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar & Simon, 2000; Strömberg, 2015), with the consequence of possibly priming the public to keep those issues in mind when assessing parties and candidates (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Rudd, 2016a). This may have benefitted National and ACT electorally. In addition, the bias in relation to coverage ACT and New Zealand First may have been persuasive to the readership due to their lack of experience with New Zealand politics and consequent lower levels of knowledge (Ishiyama & Breuning, 2011; Zaller, 1992). More broadly, these biases have the potential to diminish the civic forum's ability to provide the electorate with what Dahl (1977) termed an "adequate understanding" (p. 19) of the political options available to them and to connect their own social and political preferences to those options (Norris, 2000; Schudson, 1995). The absence of such an understanding may result in misconceived political decisions and actions by an individual and, on an aggregate level, by society (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Street, 2011). An insufficient understanding by the readership, many of

whom do not have access to the English language mainstream media and are thus reliant on the Chinese language ethnic media can be a barrier to their electoral participation Barker and McMillan (2017).

This study has a number of limitations, both methodological and theoretical. The Chinese language ethnic media do constitute a crucial civic forum for the large number of Chinese New Zealanders that depend on the media content to inform them politically. However, as these media cater to a minority population, they may also face pressures to act as advocates on the behalf of their readership. The civic forum as a normative concept does not take this into account and contradictions between the expected norms of the civic forum and the other roles of the ethnic media, for example as advocates (Abrajano & Singh, 2009; Branton & Dunaway, 2008) and providers of bonding social capital (Fleras, 2009) need to be acknowledged. Behaviours that may be criticised as deviating from the norms of the civic forum, may, when examined through the lens of a media outlet advocating on behalf of its readership, be seen as entirely appropriate. This highlights the potential normative contradictions that exist when the ethnic media constitute an important source of information in a democracy.

In addition, I acknowledge that while the *Chinese Herald* (especially considering its online and social media presence) is one of if not the major Chinese language ethnic media outlets in New Zealand, *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger* are small publications primarily read by people located in the regions in which the newspapers are based and increasingly of lesser importance as the digital consumption of news has become more common among Chinese migrants (Sun & Yu, 2020). They do however, provide useful insight into the informational environment that Chinese migrants are exposed to, and given Li's (2013) findings there is reason to believe that some of the results from this study may be generalisable to other media outlets, although that is not a claim that I can confidently make. It must also be acknowledged that my inability to obtain a copy of *Home Voice* from the 3rd of September 2008, despite repeated efforts to do so, has affected my results. While this issue was the earliest one in my six-week sample, and as a consequence likely had fewer articles on New Zealand politics than the issues of *Home Voice* that proceeded it, this has no doubt impacted on my results.

Another limitation is the absence of a measure for article size. While it is common for content analyses that look at the media's performance as a public sphere or civic forum to not collect data on article size or their location within the newspaper - for example Boyd and Bahador (2015), Lindgren (2014) and Rupar et al. (2015) - including these measures would add more nuance to the analysis and understanding of the weight given to the ways that parties, leaders, candidates and their policies were covered.

5. 5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of my content analysis in relation to the civic forum, examined possible reasons for the major normative deviations uncovered by the content analysis and looked briefly at the possible implications of those deviations. The most significant deviations from the norms of the civic forum included the high levels of attention given to the National and ACT parties, the marginalisation of many minor parties and also at times the Labour Party. In addition to this, there was a severe lack of balance when it came to providing candidates with a platform to communicate directly with the audience, which enabled National's Yang Jian to occupy an unrivalled position of privilege within the civic forum.

The persistent slant with which the ACT Party and New Zealand First were covered was also problematic and diverged significantly from the principle of balanced coverage which should predominate in the civic forum. Many of these normative failures can be linked to the financial and human resource constraints that New Zealand's Chinese language ethnic language media are forced to deal with, forcing normative goals to be usurped by financial ones. In addition to this, the contradiction between the role of these media as those that serve minority communities, and are often expected to advocate for them and provide bonding social capital, and the normative requirements of the civic forum may have been a factor in their political coverage diverging from the norms of the civic forum. These failings had the potential to advantage those parties and candidates who benefitted from the biases within the civic forum and reduce the effectiveness of the readership's electoral participation.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Thesis

This thesis examined the civic forum that the three main Chinese language ethnic newspapers in New Zealand – the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice*, and the *New Zealand Messenger* – provided during the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections.

The relative ease with which recent arrivals to New Zealand are able to vote and the potential of an MMP electoral system that is utilised to amplify the electoral impact of minority groups means that informing recent migrants is of great importance. This is especially so for the Chinese language ethnic media which primarily serves recent migrants – many of whom often have difficulties accessing English language news sources (Barker & McMillan, 2017). Because of this it is crucially important that these media provide of a civic forum for pluralistic debate to enable this segment of the New Zealand population to cast a vote in a manner which is consistent with their values and personal circumstances, and more broadly, for the integrity of New Zealand's democracy. Despite this, and concerns raised in the literature over the quality of the political information that these media publish, very few studies on the Chinese language ethnic media's political coverage have been undertaken.

In response to these concerns, this thesis utilised content analysis to examine all articles – a total of 980 – written on New Zealand politics and published in the *Chinese Herald*, *Home Voice* and the *New Zealand Messenger* in the six weeks preceding the 2008, 2011 and 2014 elections, through the normative lens of the civic forum. From the results, it is clear that the political coverage provided by these newspapers deviated from the normative expectations of the civic forum in a number of significant ways. The National and ACT parties benefitted from high levels of coverage. This reduced the space within the civic forum available for coverage of other parties and resulted in the marginalisation of many minor parties and even the main opposition Labour Party. In addition to this, the ACT Party also benefitted from a widespread statement bias which saw the party regularly receive more positive news coverage than any other party. National Party candidate Yang Jian, through the publication of his syndicated columns and articles, occupied a position of unique visibility in the newspapers which afforded him a remarkable level of impact on the political discourse. Concerningly, Yang's ubiquity was not sufficiently balanced by

columns provided by other parties or candidates occupying different positions on the political spectrum.

More broadly, the advantages in the civic forum that the right of centre National (Wood, 2003) and right-wing ACT Parties (Miller, 2015) enjoyed, particularly in terms of the amount of coverage that they were given, was not offset by similar coverage of parties on the other side of the political spectrum.

In addition to this, the New Zealand First Party was subject to strong negative bias. The party, and their leader Winston Peters in particular, were frequently insinuated, or openly declared, to be racist and, most pertinently for the readership, anti-Chinese. The ACT Party, as one of the most vigorous disseminators of this message, used it to position themselves as the party that would defend Chinese New Zealanders from Peters and to express the alignment of their values with those of Chinese New Zealanders.

Possible explanations for these normative failings include resource constraints which may encourage or demand the use of highly commercial news values, shortages of professional staff, a susceptibility to alter coverage to suit advertisers, political parties or government bodies that help relieve the financial burdens under which these outlets operate and the political orientation of owners. In addition to this, the role of ethnic media as advocates for their community and providers of social capital can influence news and opinion output in ways that contradict the normative expectations of the civic forum.

The deviations from the normative ideal of the civic forum are, nonetheless, concerning and this failure to fulfil one of the central roles of the media in a democracy (Norris, 2000) is not without consequence. The range of parties catering to views from across the political spectrum that are able to have a meaningful impact on the governance of New Zealand under the MMP electoral makes this role even more crucial. Without knowledge of the parties competing for elective office, their personnel, track records, future intentions and promises, and electoral participation may be diminished to the point that voter decisions are not consistent with their social and political preferences, or that the lack of knowledge is such that voting is deemed to be without value. These impacts are potentially particularly acute for the readership of the newspapers in my sample who are predominantly recent migrants

and often at an informational disadvantage due to not having stores of knowledge about New Zealand politics which have been built up over a long period of time.

6.2 Contributions and Direction for Future Research

This thesis, in engaging with an area which is both broad and understudied has filled a number of gaps, but also raises a number of questions for future research. This is the first study to examine the political coverage of Chinese language ethnic media outlets over time. As such, it is the only study to examine the effects of incumbency on political coverage and to be able to identify characteristics of these media that are longitudinally salient. In addition, the identification of the impact that certain candidates can have on the way in which a political party interacts with the Chinese language ethnic media is also a significant contribution, and one that has no parallel in the literature. It is also the first published study on the political coverage of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand that has utilised content analysis. Furthermore, by extending the methodology used by McMillan and Barker (2017; 2018) in their forthcoming examination of the Chinese language ethnic media's coverage of the 2017 New Zealand general election, this study will play an important role in facilitating an understanding of how ethnic language media covered four general elections.

The areas for possible future research are numerous and constraints mean that only a small number will be outlined here. One such area is how the Chinese language ethnic media cover New Zealand politics outside of election periods. The political information published during non-election periods comprise the vast majority of the political coverage that these media produce and knowledge of what form that coverage takes is important to the understanding of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand. The large incumbency bonus identified in this thesis could provide a useful point of departure for a study of non-election campaign political coverage. Non-election coverage often features larger incumbency bonuses than campaign coverage due to the watchdog function of the media predominating (Green-Pedersen et al., 2015) therefore an even larger incumbency bonus would be significant for the quality of the civic forum that these media provide.

In addition to this, it would be extremely valuable to understand the ways in which political parties and their candidates engage with the Chinese language ethnic media. For example, answers as to how National's Yang Jian achieve such a remarkable level of visibility and why no other party or candidate was able to attain a level of visibility that was even close to Yang's would be instructive. So too an understanding of why, after Yang's election, National Party leader John Key, who was nationally the party's most valuable electoral asset and previously a frequent columnist in the Chinese language ethnic press, no longer had any columns published in any of the main Chinese language newspapers.

More research is required to understand the ways in which the ethnic Chinese language media in New Zealand are operated and how this affects their political coverage. It would be especially useful to examine the objectives and values of the owners and their staff, the pressures that they face, and how these factors impact their news and opinion content. This would also potentially enable the triangulation of the results from this study. Future study of the Chinese language ethnic media in New Zealand should also include political news and opinion coverage that is published through WeChat, now a critical channel for news consumption by Chinese migrants (Sun & Yu, 2020).

Finally, the contradiction between the normative expectations that accompany the Chinese language ethnic media being the primary source of political information for many Chinese New Zealanders and these media's role as advocates for a minority group or groups needs to be explored in detail, using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Greater understanding of the Chinese language ethnic media's performance in their normative democratic roles and the ways in which these are balanced with their identity as ethnic media is critical and crucial to ensuring that Chinese New Zealanders are adequately equipped to exercise their democratic rights to enrich their own lives and enhance New Zealand's democracy as a whole.

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