

3. Suburban Newspapers’ reporting of Māori news

ABSTRACT

A content analysis of editorial items about Māori issues and the Treaty of Waitangi in 14 Suburban Newspaper publications in Auckland and Northland found a low proportion of articles about these issues, despite high proportions of Māori resident in several areas served by these publications. Stories included a higher proportion of apparent news releases compared to a national sample of non-daily papers. Māori perspectives came largely from sources representing pan-Māori non-government organisations; Suburban Newspapers used a low proportion of iwi and hapū sources compared with other community papers. Use of te reo Māori was low, and there were no signs of attempts to support readers in learning or increasing their understanding of te reo Māori. This article concludes that Māori and non-Māori readers are poorly served by the poverty of Suburban Newspapers’ reporting of Treaty and Māori issues.

Keywords: cultural diversity, Indigenous local circulation, Māori representation, sources, suburban newspapers, Te Reo Māori

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THERE IS some confusion about the total number of community newspapers in New Zealand. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2007) estimates approximately 126, while the Press Reference (2007) estimates 120. The bulk of these publications cater for specific geographical populations; others address specific ethnic groups and a few are aimed at farmers, recreational and business groups.

There is little research about this sector of newspaper publishing in Aotearoa. Overseas research has documented a significant increase in the

number and circulation of community newspaper titles in Tasmania, the rest of Australia, Britain and the USA between 1970 and 2000 (McManamey, 2007). In Tasmania, almost four out of five community newspapers were established in periods of high emigration and poor economic performance, implying a relationship between their establishment and hard times (McManamey, 2007, p. 9).

The bulk of community newspapers published for geographical populations in Aotearoa are owned by two Australian-based multinational companies, Fairfax Media and APN News and Media. APN is controlled by Independent News and Media of Ireland, headed by Sir Tony O'Reilly.

Since acquiring the INL stable of 53 community newspapers in 2003, Fairfax Media has expanded its titles to 66 (Fairfax Media, 2008a). APN has also increased its titles to 'over 30' (Rosenberg, 2008). As well, the New Zealand Community Newspapers Association (NZCNA) membership stands at 47 titles, all independently-owned apart from APN's *The Aucklander* (NZCNA, 2008a). Almost all the Fairfax, APN and NZCNA publications are geographically-based, and do not include community newspapers serving specific ethnic populations, so the total is likely to be significantly higher than 126.

NZCNA membership has grown from approximately 30 publications five years ago, despite the fact that whenever Fairfax buys a member title, membership is transferred to the Fairfax-run New Zealand Community Network. The association receives regular enquiries from new papers starting up (Nancye Pitt, personal communication, 15 July 2009).

Community newspaper circulations range from a few hundred, for example on Great Barrier Island in the winter, to 465,000 for *The Aucklander*, which APN claims is the country's largest community newspaper (NZCNA, 2008b).

Fairfax Media has said that community newspapers have increased readership at a time when daily newspaper readership was declining (Moore, 2007). However, after three years of continuous readership increases to 2007, Suburban Newspapers readership dipped slightly in 2008 (Fairfax Media, 2008b). Between 2007 and 2008 surveys, 15 community newspapers recorded drops of more than 0.5 percent in readership, 13 stayed within 0.5 percent of the previous year's readership proportion, and only seven publications recorded increases (Nielsen Media Research, 2009).

Economics of independence

Most community newspapers start as locally-owned independent businesses or occasionally as co-operatives (see for example, Collins & Rose, 2004; Legat, 1985). However, the costs of publishing mitigate against independent ownership and in favour of the economies of scale achieved by large media companies. The affordability for independent publications of journalists, paper, printing, accountants and presses were canvassed after Wellington's *City Voice* folded in 2003 (Collins & Rose, 2004), the *Rodney Times* was sold to Fairfax in 2005 (Borley, 2006; Rosenberg, 2008), the *Stratford Press* to APN in 2006 (AP Worldstream, 2006, 14 March), when the *Inner City News* was competing with Suburban Newspapers' *Auckland City Harbour News* (Legat, 1985) and when earlier non-profit or collectively founded papers were sold or ceased publication (Hart, 1989).

The *City Voice* cooperative believed that four full-time editorial staff was the minimum 'to produce a good newspaper', while its competitor Capital Community Newspapers employed a single reporter/editor for each of its papers (Collins & Rose, 2004). 'Being independent is best, but it's just not an economic reality,' said *Rodney Times* editor Pam Tipa (Borley, 2006).

This difficulty is likely to continue in the absence of any initiatives like South Africa's Media Development and Diversity Agency, which uses government and industry funding to support new community newspapers and other media outlets serving historically disadvantaged communities (MDDA (Media Development and Diversity Agency), 2007).

Politics of independence

Corporate ownership can have a major effect on editorial policy, as illustrated by the 2006 takeover by APN of the weekly *Waihi Leader*. The paper had been owned and run by a local business couple and was unusual among community newspapers for its opposition to the effects of the large mining companies which dominated its town. As a result, it was 'detested' by the mining companies and some local business interests (Rosenberg, 2008, p. 5).

Immediately after the sale, local feeling about the more pro-mining editorial line and sacked local editorial and distribution staff led to a halving of classified advertising. 'The new *Leader* with its clear and present change in editorial policy means the town no longer has a voice prepared to investigate and highlight the iniquities of the ongoing destruction and removal of infrastructure that is part and parcel of the Martha Mine' (Hatton, 2004).

Legat (1985) compared the *Inner City News*, an independent ‘paper of issues and comment’ and outspoken content, with the more anodyne mix of recipes, kids pages and sport published by the *Auckland City Harbour News* (then owned by NZ News).

However, two former community newspaper journalist-owners questioned whether journalism quality had been negatively affected, or newspaper political leanings changed, by the gradual shift in news media ownership from wealthy local families to multinational media giants (Collins & Rose, 2004). They argued that ‘both foreign and local corporate media owners tend to want establishment news media which reflect the views of the ruling élite’ (p. 43).

They said there is a need for democratic news media committed to empowering their audiences to understand public issues and take part in debate, and that this is possible using overseas models of publicly-owned media.

News values

Hannis, Houston, Pfeifer, Cumming, Russell et al. (2006) studied community and daily newspaper reporting of an urban and a provincial district health board (DHB) and found that community newspapers published more positive stories about the DHB (26 percent) than dailies (17 percent) and fewer negative stories (11 percent compared to 20 percent). This is consistent with Canadian findings (Swoboda, 1995) that local papers tended to run more positive stories about local government budgets, while dailies tended to write more neutral stories.

An Australian report of a community newspaper start-up by a journalism school said that out of all the ‘traditional’ news criteria, conflict alone has different effects for larger media outlets compared with community papers (Ewart, Cokley, & Coats, 2004). Conflict benefits corporate publishers motivated by profit, but damages community publishers where profit is related to improved community social capital and cohesion. This newspaper played down or ignored conflict in its stories.

This is consistent with early research in Canada, which found that community newspapers frequently avoided writing about local conflict (Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1968), and assumed this was because publicising conflict may undermine local cohesion. Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1980) saw the role of weekly newspapers as maintaining community relationships, norms and institutions, partly by avoiding the reporting of local conflict.

The *City Voice* in Wellington chose to avoid negative stories about crimes and disasters, and focus instead on issues readers could do something about, such as motorways and council development plans (Collins & Rose, 2004). However, it regularly ran stories featuring conflict, such as debate about privatisation of major local assets, and by the time it folded was seen as ‘narrowly oppositional, full of carping criticism’ (p. 37).

One Canadian study found that reporting conflict with organisations outside the community area can support community cohesion (Emke, 2001). A local example was the *Gulf News*, which took on the Auckland City Council over a proposed commercial development that was later stopped (Borley, 2006).

Editors of community newspapers in the Canadian study overwhelmingly believed that their newspapers supported their community; 24 percent saw the development of community identity as part of their role, compared to only nine percent of daily newspaper editors. One Texas community newspaper saw its role after a racist murder as helping the town cope with the crisis, as well as reporting news about the event (Glascok, 2004).

Many community newspapers are published weekly, which allows reporters and editors to deal with crimes and accidents and other sensitive issues ‘with more compassion without an evening deadline on their shoulders’ (Emke, 2001).

Watchdog or PR outlet?

Rodney Times editor Pam Tipa described the local paper’s role as ‘a watchdog on local government’ that informs the community and enables them to interact (Borley, 2006). One example was a *North Shore Times* campaign in 1997 about the state of the city’s sewerage and wastewater maintenance, which incensed the council (*Sunday Star-Times*, 1997).

Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor (1995) concluded that Canadian community newspapers were not watchdogs, as they relied heavily on local advertising and could not speak from a position outside local vested interests. They likened these publications to guard dogs, mostly likely to criticise roles or initiatives within existing local systems, as well as outside interference and threats.

District Health Board members and communications staff in the New Zealand DHB study described community newspaper coverage of DHBs as ‘particularly tame’; they said placing the DHB’s news agenda in community papers was ‘easy’ (Hannis et al., 2006, p. 38). One community newspaper

editor said that the paper did not have the time to attend DHB meetings, but did attend DHB launches and rewrite its news releases.

One public relations consultant described an era in the 1980s when Suburban Newspapers 'were running any sort of PR bumff (sic). You could send it and know it would be published, whether it was related to the area or not. These days, as a PR person, I can't do that anymore' (Legat, 1985, p. 154). Legat also described the 'obvious reliance' of the independent *Inner City News* 'on press release material as a substitute for originally-sourced stories'.

Coverage of issues

Hannis et al. (2006) also found that community newspapers focused on different aspects of DHBs than daily newspapers. They ran more than double the stories about elections compared with dailies (30 percent vs. 13 percent), three times as many on consultation (15 percent vs. 5 percent), and less on management issues (29 percent vs. 53 percent).

Community newspapers can play a role in the maintenance of services, and influence local perceptions about the value of community services. In one Canadian case study of two struggling rural hospitals, the one that had extensive sympathetic newspaper support survived and the one that did not was closed (McIntosh, Sykes, Segura & Alston, 1999).

Newspaper reporting of Indigenous and ethnicity issues

Major, persistent anti-Māori themes have been identified in newspaper reporting of Māori, including community newspapers (Moewaka Barnes, Gregory, McCreanor, Nairn, Pega et al., 2005; Rankine, Nairn, Moewaka Barnes, Gregory, Kaiwai et al., 2008). They include construction of Māori control of resources as a threat; of Māori as enjoying privileges denied to non-Māori New Zealanders; and of Māori as either 'good' or 'bad' depending on whether the writer or source saw them as fitting in or causing trouble.

A study of community newspaper reporting of meningococcal B found that it relied on a similar distinction between good Māori who complied with the dictates of Western medicine, and bad Māori who dissented and offered alternative perspectives on causes of the epidemic (Groot, Ngata, Hodgetts, Nikora, Karapu et al., 2007).

A study of the politically-loaded labels 'activist' and 'radical' in coverage of the foreshore and seabed debate in the four largest New Zealand newspapers

in 2003/4 found that journalists overwhelmingly applied the labels to Māori (Phelan & Shearer, 2007). The active and decisive presence of radical Pākehā backlash by conservative politicians in the debate was never labelled in this way.

In 2004, Hodgetts et al showed that media coverage of the 2003 report *Decade of Disparity* supported views that blamed individual Māori and Māori health services for Māori health status, while challenging structural explanations for health disparities and dismissing Māori models of health. Also in 2004, newspaper coverage of a stomach cancer gene discovery credited the Pākehā genetics team with the breakthrough, while the whānau that had initiated and partnered them in the research, and managed the screening service, was depicted largely as diseased and passive objects of Pākehā aid (Rankine & McCreanor, 2004).

Matheson (2007) found that newspaper journalists covering Māori issues were aware of inadequacies in reporting of Māori, but did not perceive that ‘...racialising assumptions appear not just in one story ... but throughout a journalism that speaks about a subordinated culture to a dominant culture, in that dominant culture’s language, using its interpretive resources...’

Māori stories made up five percent of the total on mass TV and radio news channels between 1984 and 1994 (McGregor & Comrie, 1995), and had declined to 1.6 percent of news time in 2003 on TV One (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005). In 2003, there were no Māori stories broadcast on TV3 news programmes in the sample period.

Ewart (1997), writing about regional newspaper representations of indigenous Australians, concluded that race was usually mentioned where indigenous Australians were involved in negative stories, but seldom when Anglo Australians were involved in similar stories.

Journalists at these papers unanimously believed their publications did not adhere to the Australian Media, Arts and Entertainment Alliance’s code of ethics principle about not placing unnecessary emphasis on race. The paper’s editorial managers did not consider indigenous Australians as news; photos of indigenous people on the front page were seen as damaging to circulation.

One study of a Texas community newspaper response to the racist murder by white men of a black man found that the newspaper’s combination of public journalism and crisis communication helped represent the town as united across all ethnicities against this act, and support community actions to overcome tensions between ethnic communities (Glascock, 2004).

Sources

There is limited evidence about the use of sources for stories in community papers. One Australian study about newspaper use of sources defines elite sources to include officials from government agencies, law enforcement, civil leaders, professionals and experts, and those who represent major societal groups (Ewart et al., 2004). This study found that regional newspapers gave less voice to elite sources than metropolitan dailies, and that female sources in both type of paper made up less than 30 percent of the total. However, in another study they found that sources used by regional papers did not support the assumption that they were closer to readers (Ewart & Massey, 2005).

The *City Voice* was unusual among New Zealand community newspapers in that it offered under-represented community sectors editorial control over their own pages in the paper on a regular cycle (Collins & Rose, 2004). These included Māori, Pacific, Chinese, Greek, Indian and gay and lesbian communities, as well as young people, old people, and those with disabilities.

Newspaper use of Te Reo Māori

Davies and Maclagan (2006) describe early newspaper style conventions reflecting purist attitudes to the English language that decreed te reo Māori would be subject to the rules of English grammar. Subsequently, stronger social and political status of te reo Māori led to decisions by the New Zealand Journalists' Union in 1989 and Fairfax newspapers in 2001 that members would no longer make Māori words plural by adding an 's' (Davies & Maclagan, 2006; Deverson, 1991).

Kennedy (2001) described newspapers' 'conservative interpretation of what [Māori words are] familiar', giving the example of *kōhanga reo*, which newspapers continued to translate as language nurseries, 'even though this pre-school movement is well-established' (p. 62).

Moewaka Barnes et al. (2005) and Rankine et al. (2008) analysed intentional use of te reo Māori in community and other newspaper items about Māori issues in 2004 and 2007. The analysis excluded almost all proper nouns. In both years they found a per article average of just over two words in te reo Māori with an alternative in English (Rankine, Moewaka Barnes, Borell, Nairn, McCreanor et al., 2009). A majority of words in te reo appeared in items generated by a paper's own staff. There was no indication of attempts to support readers in learning or increasing their use of te reo Māori.

Analysis

This study analyses articles about Māori issues and the Treaty published in Suburban Newspapers (SN) publications in three samples collected between 2004 and 2008. Suburban Newspapers is owned by Fairfax Media and in 2009 comprised 17 titles covering Northland centres and the whole Auckland region, published between once and three times a week. Fourteen of these publications appeared in our sample: *Bay Chronicle* (BC-Kerikeri); *Dargaville & Districts News* (DDN); *Northern News* (NN - Kaikohe); *Whangarei Leader* (WhL); and Auckland regional papers *Central Leader* (CL), *Eastern Courier* (EC), *East and Bays Courier* (EBC), *Auckland City Harbour News* (HN), *Manukau Courier* (MC), *North Harbour News* (NHN), *North Shore Times* (NST), *Norwest News* (NwN), *Papakura Courier* (PC) and *Western Leader* (WL). Papers that did not publish any Māori issues stories on the sampled dates included the *Rodney Times*, bought by Fairfax in 2005, the weekly *Waiheke Marketplace*, and *Look North*, published four times a year in Kaikohe,

The first two samples were from pilot studies and methodology evolved between studies. As samples were not consistent, this analysis is only indicative. The 2004 sample included one consecutive week, August 20 to 26, and one constructed week drawn between September and October 2004. Constructed weeks are made up of coverage from seven individual days chosen ahead of time randomly from different weeks. They reproduce the systematic variations in the number of news stories across weekdays while being less affected by weekly fluctuations in story numbers or topics.

International best research practice for a representative sample from particular media is to sample two constructed weeks from each year (Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin, & Chang, 2001). The 2007 sample used two constructed weeks chosen between February and March, and the 2007/2008 sample used three constructed weeks chosen between November 2007 and April 2008. At least three Suburban Newspaper publications and often more were produced each Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of these seven weeks. Taken as a whole, we view this collection of stories as representative of Suburban Newspapers' coverage of Māori issues during the years sampled.

In 2004 and 2007, Chong Newztel Ltd was contracted to provide copies of all newspaper editorial items that included any of the following words or phrases:

- Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Māori-Pākehā relations
- Disparities between Māori and non-Māori/mainstream
- Sovereignty
- Land Rights
- Foreshore and seabed
- Waitangi Tribunal
- Māori development
- Constitutional change
- Iwi/hapū/whānau
- Māori health.

In 2008 the word Māori on its own was added, which in daily newspapers had the effect of increasing the number of crime stories compared to previous samples. Because of sample differences, some analyses were carried out using particular samples.

Journalists describe items about the Treaty and Māori/Pākehā relations as Māori news. While we believe these items are equally relevant to non-Māori New Zealanders, for this research we also called them Māori items. Items were defined as Māori news if they focused on:

- Treaty of Waitangi issues or Waitangi Day
- Māori control of resources
- Legislation and protest about this
- Māori arts, cultural, religious and sporting activities
- Māori health and education
- Iwi and other Māori organisational and business activity
- Māori involvement in political processes
- The history of Māori occupation
- Historical or current relations between Māori and Pākehā
- The socio-economic status of Māori
- Individual Māori with one or more of the above criteria.

There were 115 Māori stories across the Auckland (105) and Northland (10) titles. Eight SN items were collected in 2004; 30 in early 2007 and 77 in the 2007/08 sample. The Manukau Courier published the most items (22), while the *Dargaville & Districts News* and *Whangarei Leader* each had one item. The average number of items per publication was eight and the median was seven.

MEDIA, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY

To determine an approximate count of the total number of news stories in SN publications, we counted issues from two different days for the 10 Auckland-based publications in April 2008 and averaged them (Table 1). As these papers vary significantly in size on different publication days, this total can only be an estimate. Different aspects of analysis were based on certain groups of newspapers because this count could be done only for Auckland papers.

Using this average, we calculated a total estimated number of stories across the 10 papers for the constructed week samples in 2007 and 2007/8. Māori stories averaged 2.6 percent of the total number of stories, ranging from a low of 0.4 percent to a high of six percent.

Table 1: Total and average stories in April 2008

Paper	Date	Day	Pages	Stories	Total	Average	Published
AC Harbour News	2 Apr 08	Wed	20	49	67	33	Wed/Fri
	4 Apr 08	Fri	12	18			
Central Leader	2 Apr 08	Wed	40	67	95	47	Wed/Fri
	11 Apr 08	Fri	20	28			
East & Bays Courier	2 Apr 08	Wed	32	17	36	18	Wed/Fri
	4 Apr 08	Fri	12	19			
Eastern Courier	2 Apr 08	Wed	28	39	62	31	Wed/Fri
	4 Apr 08	Fri	16	23			
Manukau Courier	8 Apr 08	Tue	32	20	69	34	Tue/Thu/Fri
	10 Apr 08	Thu	40	49			
North Shore Times	3 Apr 08	Thu	40	32	59	29	Tue/Thu/Fri
	26 Apr 08	Sat(Fri)	16	27			
Northern News	3 Apr 08	Wed	32	29	61	30	Wed
	9 Apr 08	Wed	32	32			
Norwest News	3 Apr 08	Thu	28	40	91	45	Thu
	10 Apr 08	Thu	28	51			
Papakura Courier	16 Apr 08	Wed	40	40	78	39	Wed
	23 Apr 08	Wed	36	38			
Western Leader	3 Apr 08	Thu	32	50	79	39	Tue/Thu/Fri
	29 Apr 08	Tue	28	29			

Note: Statistics for available papers for two publication days in April 2008. If the date of publication was a public holiday, the paper was published the following day.

Table 2: Suburban newspapers by proportion of Māori stories

Paper	Māori Stories	Percent of total Māori stories	Issues in our sample	Average Māori stories per issue	Estimated average total stories	Māori stories as percent of estimated total
East & Bays Courier	12	10.4%	12	1	216	5.0%
Northern News	9	7.8%	6	1.5	180	5.0%
Manukau Courier	22	19.1%	16	1.4	544	4.0%
Harbour News	12	10.4%	12	1	396	3.0%
Western Leader	18	15.6%	16	1.1	624	2.9%
Eastern Courier	11	9.6%	12	0.9	372	2.9%
Papakura Courier	4	3.5%	6	0.6	234	1.7%
Central Leader	10	8.7%	12	0.8	564	1.7%
Norwest News	2	1.7%	4	0.5	180	1.1%
North Shore Times	5	4.3%	16	0.3	464	1.1%
Totals	105		112	0.84	29	Ave 2.6%

Note: Suburban newspapers Auckland publications.

Among the Auckland papers, the *East & Bays Courier* and the *Northern News* had the highest proportion of Māori stories from the estimated story total, while the *North Shore Times* had the lowest (Table 2).

Many stories were shared across Auckland Suburban Newspapers (Table 3). To determine each newspaper’s proportion of original stories, we counted shared stories and allocated them to the paper of the reporter or the story location. The company’s Northland papers originated all their Māori stories during this sampling period, as did two of the Auckland papers.

We categorised stories into topic groupings arising from the material, rather than preset categories (Table 4). The biggest clusters of stories were in education and arts. Education stories concentrated on mainstream schools; kura kaupapa Māori were the subject of only two stories. Arts stories included written, visual and performing arts and television programmes. Māori and Pākehā relations items included a commentary on a land wars battle commemoration in Russell and negotiations about a sporting event crossing tapu iwi land. Treaty stories included the Treaty 2U exhibition; Treaty courses and Waitangi Day events. Political representation items included local body and national elections and coverage of political parties. Social status included items about social issues and social statistics.

Table 3: All Suburban Newspaper titles

Paper	Shared	Original	Total Māori stories	Proportion of original Māori stories
North Shore Times	2	3	5	100%
Bay Chronicle		5	5	100%
Dargaville & District News		1	1	100%
North Harbour News		3	3	100%
Northern News		9	9	100%
Norwest News		2	2	100%
Whangarei Leader		1	1	100%
Western Leader	2	16	18	88%
Manukau Courier	5	17	22	77%
Papakura Courier	1	3	4	75%
East & Bays Courier	4	8	12	66%
Eastern Courier	5	6	11	54%
Harbour News	7	5	12	42%
Central Leader	6	4	10	40%
Totals	32	83	115	

Note: All Suburban Newspaper titles in all samples by proportion of original Māori stories.

Māori business stories were rare. Fisheries and foreshore and seabed items were also rare, the only one being published by a Northland paper. There were no items in Auckland papers about the Waitangi Tribunal Tāmaki Makaurau hearing, which had been running for two days before one of the dates of our sample.

In 2007, content analysis of other newspaper items was carried out only for those about the Treaty and resource topics. Of the 46 non-daily items, 18 were about the Treaty, 13 about land, nine about business, four about fisheries, and two about financial management. This sample of community papers around the country, therefore, showed much greater coverage of Māori business, land and Treaty stories than Suburban Newspapers publications.

Crime items were published only in the first five pages of SN publications; arts and social status stories were largely in the first five pages; education and health stories were more evenly spread through news pages.

Ninety of the 115 Suburban Newspapers Māori stories were news articles. Eighteen were columns, 14 columns by invited columnist Willie Jackson, and four by SN consulting editor Pat Booth. Jackson’s two columns were repeated

Table 4: Māori stories by topic in all Suburban Newspapers across samples

Paper	Educ	Arts	Social Status	Crime	Politic Reprn	Health	Sport	Land	M/P reins	Fish-erries	Fore-shore & sea-bed	Busi-ness	Finan-cial Mgmt	Treaty	Total
Harbour News	4	3	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	12
Bay Chronicle	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	5
Central Leader	4	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10
Dargaville & District News	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
East & Bays Courier	5	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	12
Eastern Courier	3	2	2	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	11
Manukau Courier	5	6	4	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	22
N Harbour News	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Northern News	1	3	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	9
NS Times	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	5
Norwest News	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Papakura Courier	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Whangarei Leader	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Western Leader	4	2	1	3	2	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	18
Grand Total	29	21	12	9	9	6	5	4	4	2	2	1	1	10	115

across seven Auckland papers, making up 12 percent of the Māori stories. There were also three feature items, two obituaries, one editorial, and one review.

Sources

Writers of opinion pieces were counted as the first source of their item, with other quoted sources counted subsequently. For news items, only the sources quoted in the item were counted.

Table 5 indicates that Suburban Newspaper items had a higher proportion of items with no stated sources than other non-daily newspaper items about Treaty and resources. This proportion was more than three times that counted in all newspaper items about the Treaty and resources in 2007 (six percent).

Twenty of the 26 items with no sources were announcements of events, awards, courses, scholarships, or television programmes, which are usually supplied by the organisation concerned and sometimes rewritten by journalists. Some appeared to be news releases made into articles, such as an item published in four Auckland papers on 4 December 2007, about scholarships to study at a natural therapies college, accompanied by an uncaptioned photo of a building.

Suburban Newspaper items averaged 1.7 sources per story. In 2007, items about the Treaty and resources in other non-daily papers had an average of two sources per story and the average was three over all newspapers.

Table 5: SN and other non-dailies by number of sources

Sources/Item	SN items	SN Total	2007 Non-daily Treaty and resources items	Non-daily total
0	26 (23%)	-	7 (15%)	-
1	29	29	14	14
2	38	76	11	22
3	15	45	5	15
4	2	8	4	16
5	1	5	2	10
6	0	-	2	12
7	1	7	1	7
8	3	24	-	-
Totals	115	194	46	96

Role of sources

We were unable to identify the ethnicity of almost a quarter of Suburban Newspapers sources, so we have focused on the role of sources. We analysed roles within a Treaty framework, comparing the number of iwi and Crown sources, and dividing non-government and non-iwi groups into Māori and Taiwi NGOs. However, non-government MPs made up such a large proportion of newspaper sources that we counted them as another category. Those who did not represent any group were categorised as individuals. Crown sources in community papers were largely local government councillors or staff, and national government agency representatives.

Suburban Newspapers (seven percent) used fewer than half the number of iwi or hapū sources of other non-dailies in 2007 Treaty and resources stories (19 percent). In all the 2007 sample newspapers, iwi and hapū representatives made up 23 percent of sources in Treaty and resources stories.

Suburban Newspapers used a slightly lower percentage of Crown sources (24 percent) than other non-dailies (29 percent). Crown sources made up 31 percent of sources for all 2007 newspapers in Treaty and resource items. Suburban Newspapers used twice the proportion of individual sources (18 percent) as other non-dailies did in 2007 (9 percent), often in picture-stories about community festivals and Waitangi Day events.

As first sources, SN used less than half the proportion of Crown sources (17 percent) as other non-dailies covering Treaty and resources (38 percent); a lower proportion of iwi (8 percent vs 13 percent); four times as many Māori NGO sources (22 percent vs 5 percent); the same proportion of Taiwi NGOs (30 percent vs 31 percent); and more than twice as many individuals (21 percent vs nine percent).

SN papers quoted iwi or hapū representatives half as often as Crown sources, while other non-dailies in their Treaty and resource items quoted iwi representatives one-third as often as Crown sources.

Intentional use of Te Reo Māori

Māori sources often use words in te reo Māori such as kaitiakitanga and mana about land and other issues. These convey different meanings to English words such as ownership. Media use of te reo Māori can help convey some of these indigenous meanings.

One goal of the government's Māori language strategy is that 'The Māori language will be valued by all New Zealanders and there will be a common

awareness of the need to protect the language’ (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2003). Mass news media are major language users, and their use of te reo Māori will play a major role in reaching that goal.

For these studies, we defined a unit of te reo Māori as a word or phrase which has an alternative in English. For example, we counted whānau but did not count paua or Rotorua.

The average number of Māori words per item with an alternative in English was two, the same as other non-daily papers and all newspapers in the 2007 sample. Almost half the items (55–48 percent) included no words of te reo Māori with an alternative in English. Suburban newspaper stories with at least one Māori source included 59 percent of the words in te reo Māori with English alternatives. Stories without Māori sources included 27 percent of words in te reo Māori.

The *Manukau Courier* had the most words in te reo Māori with an alternative in English (73; 31 percent of the total). The *Bay Chronicle* included words in te reo in all five of its articles in the sample.

When compared to SN stable-mates on the number and proportion of original Māori stories and use of te reo Māori, one of the smaller SN papers, the *Northern News*, had the highest proportion of Māori stories, and one of the biggest, the *North Shore Times*, had the lowest proportion of items with words in te reo and the lowest number of words.

Conclusion

Some Suburban Newspapers titles cover areas with high proportions of Māori residents. Forty percent of the population of the Far North District, where the *Northern News* and the *Bay Chronicle* are based, are Māori, as is 26 percent of the Papakura District, where the *Papakura Courier* is distributed, and 22 percent of the Kaipara District, served by the *Dargaville & District News* (Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

Māori stories made up 1.7 percent of the estimated total in the *Papakura Courier* compared to an estimated three percent in the *Auckland City Harbour News*, which is distributed in an area where seven percent of the population is Māori. The proportion of Māori stories in Suburban Newspapers titles does not seem to be related to the proportion of Māori in the population being served.

The estimated average proportion of Māori stories (under three percent) published by Suburban Newspapers is less than that recorded in a mass TV and

radio news sample between 1984 and 1994 (McGregor & Comrie, 1995), but more than that found on television news in 2003. All are significantly lower than the Māori proportion in the whole population. Māori and non-Māori readers are poorly served by the poverty of Suburban Newspapers' reporting of Treaty and Māori issues.

Auckland is the country's major business centre, and Māori-owned small business is a fast-growing sector of this commercial activity. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of Māori self-employed people grew by more than 20 percent, more than double the increase in non-Māori self-employed (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2007). Another study found that Māori ranked third in the world for total early-stage entrepreneurship (Frederick & Chittock, 2006).

Māori business had the potential to supply more of the sense of positive local achievement captured by the only business story, about a Papatoetoe florist who won a major export order using Māori flax weaving techniques.

The high proportion of announcements and apparent news releases in the stories with no sources indicates that many organisations still find Suburban Newspapers a supportive audience for public relations items.

Māori perspectives came largely from sources representing pan-Māori non-Government organisations rather than iwi. Suburban Newspapers used a low proportion of iwi and hapū sources compared to other community papers and dailies. SN editorial staff reported difficult relationships with local hapū in two newspaper areas (personal communication, 4 September 2008), but this post-dated our sample and was insufficient to account for this low proportion.

Traditionally, community newspapers have relied on a transient population of young, often inexperienced, reporters newly out of journalism school to develop contacts with iwi and other Māori organisations. In Māori terms, it would be more appropriate for community newspaper editors to develop face-to-face relationships (Cram, 2001) with kaumātua and leaders of these organisations, and to introduce the reporters within that relationship.

Suburban Newspapers reported no policy for use of te reo Māori in its papers. Given the centralisation of subediting across its Auckland titles, this would be relatively easy to implement. Use of te reo Māori was low, and there were no signs of attempts to support readers in learning or increasing their understanding of te reo Māori. However, our keyword search methodology may not have picked up small, stand-alone items promoting te reo Māori, if any were published. Suburban Newspapers demonstrates a similar indifference to

the indigenous official language as do other community and daily newspapers. The *North Shore Times*, a title serving some affluent areas, showed the lowest estimated proportion of Māori stories and the lowest use of te reo.

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