



Please cite this paper as follows:

Salahshour, N. (2023). The referential and predicational construction of migrants in New Zealand print media. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 14(1), 77-94. <https://doi.org/10.22055/RALS.2023.18069>

## Research Paper

# The Referential and Predicational Construction of Migrants in New Zealand Print Media

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Received: 22/10/2021

Accepted: 28/04/2022

## Abstract

This study explores how migrants are discursively constructed in the years 2007 and 2008 in New Zealand's most-read national newspaper, The New Zealand Herald. This timeframe was selected to investigate how the Global Economic Recession influenced migrant representation in the context of New Zealand. Through a detailed analysis using the Discourse-Historical Approach, the paper examines the series of referential and predicational strategies, as well as the topical themes used in the newspaper discourse to discuss migrants during this period. To reduce the risk of cherry-picking the data, the study presents a detailed five-level data-sampling technique to examine the prevalent discourses. The findings indicate that metaphorical, professional anthroponyms and collective strategies were the most common referential strategies. In addition, regarding predicational strategies, migrants were presented as being a 'double-edged sword' that is benefitting the country in some instances and as a problem being which needs to be dealt with in other instances.

**Keywords:** Media Analysis; Critical Discourse Studies; Discourse-Historical Approach; New Zealand.

## 1. Introduction

This study investigated the discursive constructions of migrants in the years 2007 and 2008 in New Zealand's most-read national newspaper, The New Zealand Herald. Since the late twentieth century, New Zealand has received more migrants, relative to its population size, than most countries in the world (Bedford & Ho, 2006). According to Statistics New Zealand (2019), the country has an annual net immigration level of between 48,000 and 64,000, a high figure for a country with a total population of only five million. In the year ending October 2018, migrant arrivals were mostly from Asian countries or Oceania (especially China and India), but they also included many New Zealand citizens returning home. The country's capital city is Wellington and its most populated urban conglomeration is Auckland, which is situated in the north of the North Island. Despite the use of points schemes to deter migrants from settling in Auckland, most migrants choose Auckland as their primary destination and as a result, this has become New Zealand's fastest-growing region and is extremely diverse in its population composition. In the 2018 census, 70.2% of the New Zealand population identified themselves as European, 16.5% as Māori, 15.1% as Asian, 8.1% as Pacific Islanders and the remainder (under 2%) as Middle Eastern or Latin American (Statistics New Zealand, 2021). Given the diversity present in New Zealand, and Auckland specifically, the way the media represents this diverse national identity has implications for social cohesion.

The study of media discourse is of paramount importance from the perspective of a social constructionist approach and scholars have frequently discussed how, by shaping our opinions and points of view of the world, the media can shape people's reality (Richardson, 2007; Talbot, 2007). This is particularly worrying when we acknowledge the political nature of the media and the significant impact it can have on the democratic process (Norris, 2002). Another concern is that the declining number of media organizations is leading to a reduction in 'pluralist content' – that is, a reduction in the perspectives of different people and cultures we get exposed to (Raeijmaekers & Maesele, 2015). Media ownership entails power, and concentrating the ownership of a large number of media institutions in the hands of a few has immense implications for the way certain communities, such as the migrant community, are represented and



constructed via media discourse. This in turn means that the media play a significant role in mediating how the general public view and respond to the phenomenon of immigration and therefore, the way they treat the migrants and refugees in their host countries.

It is against this backdrop that this study analyzed New Zealand's most-read daily newspaper, The New Zealand Herald, to examine the way it constructed and represented the country's migrant population in the years 2007 and 2008. This study used a Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (one of the approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) – and adopted a moderate social constructionist theoretical framework and a weak realism approach (Reisigl, 2017) to examine the way migrant communities were being represented. Moreover, this study presents a unique five-tier data-sampling technique to downsize large amounts of data in preparation for the qualitative analysis.

## 2. Critical Discourse Studies on Immigration

Many studies have adopted a critical perspective regarding the representation of immigrants, including refugees (Baker & Benson, 2008; Del-Teso-Craviotto, 2009; Galindo, 2012; Lirola, 2014; Malmqvist, 2015; Mehan, 1997; Rheindorf & Wodak, 2018; Richardson, 2001; Richardson & Wodak, 2009; Santa Ana, 1999; Stewart, Pitts & Osborne, 2011; Van Leeuwen & Jaworski, 2002). International research has shown that immigrants are often represented as being a problem or a threat to security (Vezovnik, 2018), irrespective of where they come from or to which ethnic group they belong (Wodak & Matouschek, 1993).

Linguistic representations are important because they determine how we think and thus act towards certain objects, people, groups, phenomena etc. (Veysi, 2017). Most studies related to the representation of immigrants have demonstrated the 'positive-self and negative-other' macro strategy proposed by Rojo and Van Dijk (1997). In this strategy, the negative characteristics of the 'Other' and the positive attributes of the 'Self' are highlighted, while the positive attributes of the 'Other' and negative attributes of the 'Self' are mitigated or neglected. For example, studies have consistently shown a correlation between the topics of 'crime rates' and 'illegal immigration' (Del-Teso-Craviotto, 2009, p. 582), and migrants who are perceived to be in a country illegally are more likely to be constructed as committing criminal acts. Immigrants from Western European countries like Romania have often been represented by the mainstream Western Press as being 'deviant' and 'unruly' (Breazu & Eriksson, 2021); in online discussion forums on a Swedish website (Flashback), they have been represented as a "problem" because they "steal", "rob", "thieve" and "beg" on Swedish streets (Malmqvist, 2015, pp. 733–753).

In terms of the refugee crisis following the war and conflict in Syria and other parts of the Middle East, the representations have reflected an Orientalist discourse (Moosavinia, Racevskis, & Talebi, 2019; Said, 1978; Salahshour & Salahshour, 2012). Like the concepts of Self and Other discussed above, Orientalist discourses dichotomize Western and Eastern communities and represent one group as being culturally similar and therefore trustworthy (e.g. European, Western) and the other as being one that should be feared and cannot be trusted (e.g. migrant, Islamic, Arab) (Vezovnik, 2018; Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013). Lirola (2014) found that while sub-Saharan immigrants have generally been portrayed as being passive and inactive when they have been represented as agents of actions, they have often been described as being involved in crime. Other common representations have depicted African Muslims in Australia as being constructed as members of violent gangs (Weng & Mansouri, 2021) and those arriving in Greece via boat, as natural disasters impacting Greek's economy negatively (Serafis, Greco, Pollaroli, & Soria, 2020). The construction of migrants as 'natural disasters' or via water metaphors has been discussed extensively in numerous studies (Dempsey & McDowell, 2019; Martin & Fozdar 2022; Salahshour, 2016; Taylor, 2020).

Some studies have focused on the way the discursive construction of migrants and/or refugees has changed over time. The normalization of racist discourse over time has dominated both political and media discourse in recent years (Wodak, 2020). The concept of discourse shifting is an important one, given the historical nature of DHA, which encourages examining discourses over time. In addition, with the rise in the use of social media worldwide, studies have increasingly focused on the way 'hate' or 'dividing' discourse has been constructed through online social media platforms (Ekman, 2019; KhosraviNik, 2017; Törnberg & Törnberg, 2016).

More specifically and in the context of New Zealand, a quasi-quantitative collocation analysis of articles from a prominent national daily newspaper indicated an ambivalent form of representation, wherein 'liquid' metaphors have

been used both to represent migrants as both a threat and as valuable ‘commodities’ for the economic benefits they have brought the country (Salahshour, 2016). This seems to indicate a sort of love–hate relationship.

Other studies have echoed the typical representation of migrants as ‘problems’ or criminals (Baker & Benson, 2008; Ross, 1994); Asians have often been portrayed as one homogeneous group, conflating geographical, ethnic, cultural and national boundaries. A content analysis of the representation of immigrants in the controversial 2006 article entitled ‘Asian Angst’ (by Deborah Coddington) in the New Zealand magazine *North and South* showed that Asian migrants were depicted as contributing to rising crime rates in New Zealand. Later investigations found that the information provided in the magazine was inaccurate and misleading (Hannis, 2015, p. 113). According to Ross (1994), such (inaccurate) constructions of criminality and threat echo historically stereotypical representation of East Asians as the Yellow Peril: “the countless millions believed to be waiting to swarm down from Asia to the [then] thinly populated lands of the South Pacific” (p. 18). Other studies have focused on the representation in New Zealand media of Russian immigrants as a problem in two-thirds of the dataset (Maydell, 2010, 2017).

There have been few in-depth qualitative and discursive studies on the representation of ‘immigrants’ in the context of New Zealand. The available literature indicates that studies have either adopted a content analysis to offer useful (although rather limited) insights into migrant representation or examined the representation of one specific diaspora (e.g. Russians, Asians, refugees), rather than immigrants more generally. Therefore, this study used the in-depth qualitative framework, the DHA, to provide a better understanding of the way migrants were represented in New Zealand’s most prominent newspaper during the years 2007 and 2008. To address the gap in the qualitative analysis of migrants more broadly, this study asked the general research question, ‘How are migrants represented in the newspaper discourse?’ and more specifically:

- How are migrants categorized, named and labelled?
- What kind of actions are migrants commonly associated with doing?
- How is the phenomenon of immigration constructed?

### 3. Discourse-Historical Approach Strategies

The DHA (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016) is one of many approaches within CDA. The various approaches in CDA differ in the research strategies and theoretical backgrounds they draw on, as well as the level of deduction and selection of topics for research (Kendall, 2007), with DHA being one of the most inductive approaches (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). DHA also relies heavily on linguistic argumentation and its linguistic tools and strategies are especially well-developed for the study of discourses regarding minority groups (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 31). As a result, DHA has been considered “more developed” than other discourse analytical approaches (Breeze, 2011, p. 494). Despite this, an extensive body of literature has adopted and extended DHA in research on topics such as identity politics, media discourse, populism and discriminatory rhetoric (KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014; Li & Song, 2020; Mahfouz, 2018; Serefis et al., 2020; Salahshour, 2017; Salahshour & Serafis, in press; Wodak & Boukala, 2015a, 2015b ).

The DHA approach to CDA can be summarized as “an interdisciplinary problem-oriented approach which is often diachronic and places great emphasis on triangulation, history and context, and which seeks to make its findings known to the public and institutions in order to achieve its emancipatory aims” (Salahshour, 2017, p. 91). Reisigl and Wodak (2016) identified five discursive strategies within this framework and posed the following five questions for a researcher to ask when using the DHA approach:

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
4. From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated? (p. 31)

To answer the research questions stated earlier, this paper focused on the first two questions, namely referential and predicational strategies. These strategies are defined later in this article.

### 3.1. Data and Sampling

Most critical discourse studies analyze typical texts. However, defining what is typical/not typical can be problematic and can lead to criticism of partiality (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 23). To avoid ‘cherry-picking’ the data, this study used an in-depth, five-tier data-collecting and data-sampling method (see Figure 1). As it has been hypothesized that immigrants are often scapegoated during times of economic hardship (Brimelow, 1995; Hoffman, 1974), and the Global Financial Crisis affected the New Zealand economy in early 2008 (The Treasury, 2010), this study focused on the years 2007 and 2008 to investigate whether there was a shift in the discourse during this period, with migrants being represented less favourably during the recession than before it.

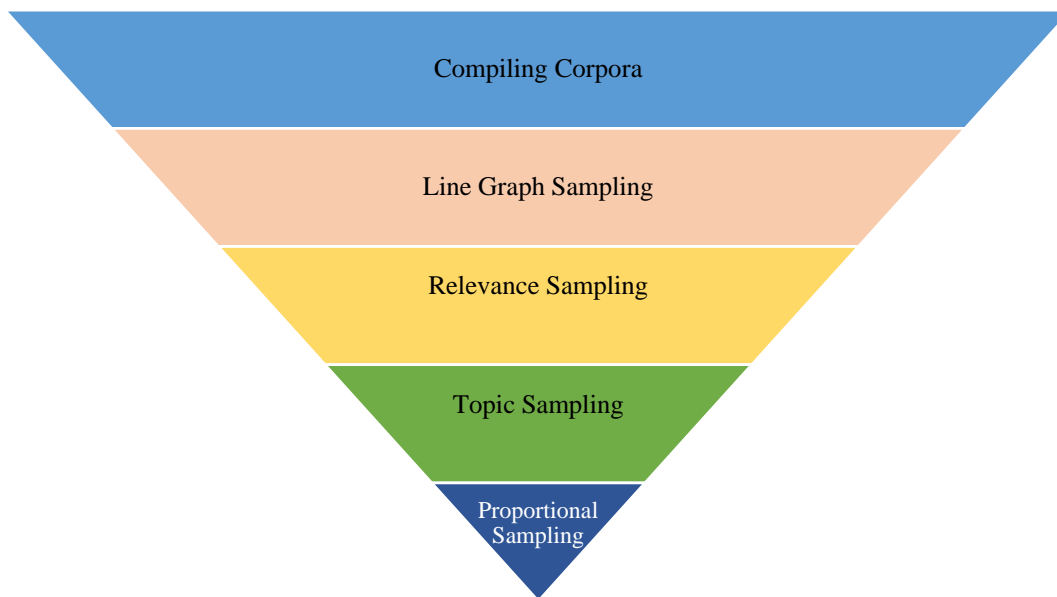


Figure 1. Five-tier Data-Sampling Technique

### 3.2. Five-tier Downsizing of Sampling

First, two corpora, consisting of news articles from the New Zealand Herald, were compiled. Following a mini trial analysis, the search words ‘migrant/s’, ‘immigrant/s’ and ‘Asians’ were used to search for the articles in NewzText Newspaper, an online database. The articles selected were from the national, international, business and features sections. This resulted in two corpora, the first relating to the year 2007 and the second to 2008. Table 1 shows the word counts involved.

Table 1. Corpora Word Count

Year	Word Count
2007	337, 040
2008	358, 590
Total number of words	695, 630

Second, a line graph was used to identify months in which there was an increase in references to the three search terms. The peaks within the line graph identified periods in which significant interest was given to issues relating to immigration or migrants. Random sampling was avoided, as this would have resulted in the elimination of relevant context and salient patterns indicating the social prominence of a topic in a particular period.

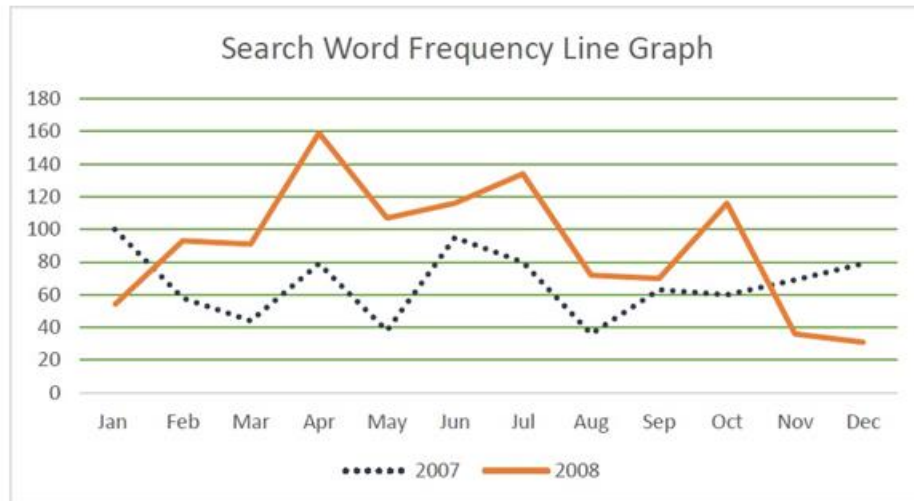


Figure 2. Search Word Frequency Graph for 2007 and 2008

This method of downsizing is used extensively in CDA studies (KhosraviNik, 2010) and here, it was adopted for its fit with the underlying purpose of analyzing the discourses within their contexts (van Dijk, 2010).

The peaks chosen for 2007 were the months January, April, June and December, and the peaks chosen for 2008 were April, July and October (see Figure 2). The articles relating to these months were selected for a third layer of downsizing, which consisted of reading the articles that appeared during those peaks and selecting those that were directly relevant to the representation of migrants. After all the articles had been read, they were categorized in terms of their relevance; only the articles that had ‘immigration’ or ‘immigrants’ as a macro topic or a major sub-topic were retained in the data set.

The fourth layer of downsizing involved conducting a topic analysis of the relevant data set, producing a series of recurring (and overlapping) topics and subtopics each year. These are listed in Table 2 in the Appendix, with a total of 12 topics, 10 of which reoccurred in 2007 and 2008.

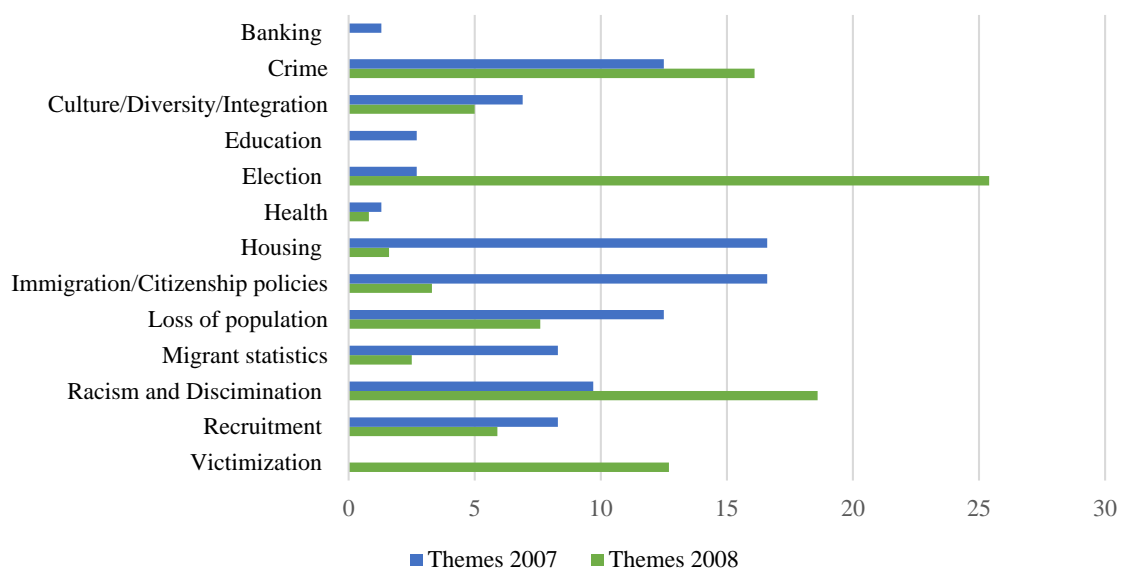
Finally, an in-depth analysis of 20 articles (10 from each year) was undertaken. A proportionate sampling of the 20 articles (based on the topic analysis) was used to identify the number of articles that would be chosen from each topic category to ensure proportionate sampling of the data. The following examples illustrate what is meant by proportionate sampling. For example, if the themes of ‘election’ and ‘immigration’ dominated 25.4% of the data in 2008, and if 10 articles could feasibly be analyzed (given the timeframes) from each year, then 3 (2.54 was rounded up to 3) would be chosen from the topic categories ‘election’ and ‘immigration’. This was applied to all the topic categories, to obtain a reasonably representative sample.

Table 2. *Topic Analysis by Year*

Topic	Year	Subtopic
Population Loss	2007	Strategic planning to bring back emigrants living in AU vs NZ; NZ’s attrition of British police
	2008	Concerns over emigration to Australia; strategies for retaining migrants
Victimization	2007	N/A
	2008	Asian dairy owners subject to attacks; Asian vigilantes; Korean investors lose millions; Chinese workers in US victim to wage fraud
Statistics	2007	Asians fastest growing minority group in NZ; Growth of Muslim and Hindus in NZ; Ethnic minority numbers in NZ
	2008	Number of Asians in NZ; Concerns over low migrant numbers
Racism	2007	Manukau police’s derogatory remarks against Asians; Story of Chinese migrants who faced racism and paid poll tax; Asians struggle to “feel at home”; Kiwis uncomfortable with migrant or homosexual neighbors; Le Pen’s xenophobic speech in France; Citadella, the first city to outline who can and cannot live in it
	2008	a. Lockwood Smith’s racist speech regarding Asian hands and pacific islanders’ personal hygiene; Winston Peters anti-immigrant campaign speech; Mr. Brown speech with regards to Asian forming mini-societies; Racism directed at Asian living in NZ; Racism directed at

		taxi drivers in NZ; Winston Peters speech reaches Chinese newspapers; Racism directed at gypsies in Italy
Crime	2007	Philip Field case: Corruption among NZ's MP and migrants; Illegal immigrants enter NZ; Passport fraudster allowed to stay in NZ; Deborah Coddington article: Asians in NZ responsible for crime; Ethnic minority extremism in NZ; Samoan criminal allowed to stay in NZ; Lebanese Migrants pose a threat to Australian PM; Violence among Croats and Serbs in Australia; Jamaican migrant who killed 19 people convicted; Britain out of prisons
	2008	Anti-crime groups formed by Asians/triad gangs; Anti-violence Asian protests; Taito Philip Field Case
Policies	2007	Inefficiency of 6-month work to residency visa; Changes to investor migrant policy aims to draw in more wealthy migrants in NZ; Changes to skilled migrant policy aims to draw in more skilled migrants; International competition for skilled migrants; NZ immigration policies in need of a change to prevent exodus; Family sponsored immigration policies; Education regarding the treaty of Waitangi for new citizens; Australia bans the use of razor wires to sustain refugees
Housing	2007	Migration acts as a double edged sword; Migrants provide buoyancy to/underpin the NZ housing market; Lack of land and high migrant number, reason for inflation house prices; High migrant numbers in Auckland brings benefits to landlords.
	2008	Migrants beneficial to housing market
Election	2007	Winston Peter's Anti-Immigration speeches during campaign ; Shift in electorate seat in Australia due high Asian population
	2008	NZ First's stance on immigration; Asian votes during 2008 election; Asian MP candidates in electorates; Party views on immigrant numbers.
Health Funding	2007	Compulsory HIV testing of Zimbabwean migrants
	2008	Public funded health care for migrants
Banking	2007	Unique banking services for wealthy Asians
	2008	N/A
Recruitment	2007	Skilled migrants essential for skills shortage; NZ needs better recruitment strategies; Underemployment of skilled migrants; Seasonal Employer Scheme to bring in Pacific Islanders not well planned; Urban recruitment versus rural recruitment; Policy required to provide free.
	2008	Government plans to recruit police officers from Malaysia and Hong Kong; Government plans to recruit nurses from China to fill skills shortages; Difficulties faced by migrants during recruitment in NZ; NZ employers expected to check for valid work visa; Job opportunities for Koreans in NZ; Winston Peters: Need for Singaporean jockey's in NZ.
Diversity/Integration	2007	Cultural diversity in the workplace key to success; Problems integrating Samoans in NZ; Immigrant perspective on NZ culture
	2008	Asian as a vague term referring to minority groups in NZ

**Proportionate Sampling for 2007 and 2008 by Percentage**



*Figure 3. Proportionate Sampling by Themes*

Figure 3 indicates the dominant topics of the articles in each year. The topic of ‘banking’ was absent in 2008 and ‘victimization’ was absent in 2007. In 2007, the most common topics were ‘housing’ (i.e. the impact of immigration on New Zealand housing) and ‘immigration policies’ discussed in 16.6% of the articles. In 2008, the most common topic was ‘election’, as this was an election year in New Zealand and “political rivalry discourse” on immigration is common during election years (KhosraviNik, 2010, p. 15). This was followed by ‘racism and discrimination’ and (the involvement of immigrants in) ‘crime’. The initial topic analysis indicated a shift to more articles portraying immigrants negatively in 2008, when the economy had become weaker than it was in 2007.

#### 4. Analysis and Discussion: Strategies and Discursive Themes

This section presents a summary of the referential and predicational strategies used in the articles analyzed, with extracts from newspaper articles illustrating the ways the referential and predicational strategies were used during 2007 and 2008.

##### 4.1. Referential Strategies

As noted above, referential strategies are used to construct boundaries (Hart, 2010, p. 56) and can be defined as “strategies by which one constructs social actors: for example, ingroups and outgroups” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 45). An analysis of the focus articles showed that migrants were referred to via a wide range of referential strategies: proper names, deictics and phoric expressions, ideological anthroponyms, figures of speech and metaphors, economic anthroponyms and single nouns.

The most common referential strategies used were professional anthroponyms and collectives. Using collectives to refer to migrants from a wide range of backgrounds, as a means of homogenizing them, is common in newspaper discourse (Baker, KhosraviNik, Krzyżanowski, McEnery, & Wodak, 2008, p. 291; Burroughs, 2015; Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010, p. 307; Phillips, 2011). However, the use of professional anthroponyms, which was by far the most common form of referential/nomination used in the dataset, is mentioned less in the literature. See Table 3 in the Appendix for the list of referential strategies.

##### 4.2. Predication Strategies

Predication strategies can be defined as “the very basic process and result of linguistically assigning qualities to persons, objects, events, actions and social phenomena” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 46) or the “discursive qualification of social actors” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 94). Predication strategies generally answer the questions ‘how are the actors described?’ and ‘what actions or adjectives are associated with the actors?’. Predication strategies are closely tied to referential strategies. In fact, “referential expressions may simultaneously realize referential and predicational strategies” (Hart, 2010, p. 66). The predication strategies used to describe ‘migrant/s’, ‘immigrant/s’ and ‘Asians’ can be found in Table 4 in the Appendix. Collectively speaking, predications create discursive themes. Table 4 links the predications to discursive themes and the next sections expound on these discourses by presenting examples from the 20 articles sampled.

###### 4.2.1. Ambivalence

An overarching and reappearing discourse that became apparent throughout the analysis was that migrants were represented in an ambivalent way: that is the newspaper discourses identified both the advantages and the disadvantages of immigration, as shown in the following examples:

Extract 1: Immigration has also fallen to its lowest level in nearly seven years. In the year to September, the country gained only 4400 migrants, down from 8300 last year .... Richard Howard, chairman of the NZ Association for Migration and Investment, said the immigration figures were a worry, as the country was struggling to replace skilled workers. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Record numbers leaving for Australia’, 23 October 2008)

Extract 2: Mr Peters used a campaign speech in Nelson to say “when times are tough internationally, immigrants are attracted to New Zealand like moths to a neon light”. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Peters wants immigration cuts to protect jobs’, 17 October 2008)

Thus, depending on which social actor was being given the opportunity to voice their opinion on the topic of immigration, nuanced representations were evoked. On the positive side, New Zealand was portrayed as being dependent

on immigrants to alleviate its skills shortage problem and therefore, newspaper articles represented migrants as being skilled, qualified and desirable. The words “gained”, “only”, “fallen” and “lowest” indicated that a decrease in migrant numbers was negative. (The verb ‘gain’ is often used to refer to achieving something positive and beneficial: e.g. ‘gain employment opportunities’, ‘gain experience’, ‘gain support’). A look into a broader corpus such as the British National Corpus also suggests that gain has positive discourse prosody (Stubbs, 2001), with the majority of the collocates of ‘gained’ expressing a positive attitude.

On the negative side, Winston Peters (the leader of the far-right political group New Zealand First) depicted migrants as a threat to the local housing market, likening migrants to “moths”, implying they always go where they can benefit, taking away jobs from New Zealanders. This use of the moth simile dehumanized the migrants and implied that they were a homogeneous collective, travelling/moving (mindlessly) in groups. The negative connotations of the word “moth” are clearer when the nocturnal moth is compared with its more popular counterpart, the diurnal butterfly, a symbol of beauty (Brian, 2015). Further, Peters drew on immigrant-as-scapegoat discourse, in which migrants were perceived to be taking jobs away from locals, particularly during times of economic difficulty (Spoonley, 1988, pp. 14–15).

#### 4.2.2. *Beneficial/Utilitarian Representation of Migrants*

The data contained frequent references to migrants being desirable because of their skills and the significant contribution they could make to the economy (see Extract 3). However, there were few other positive benefits mentioned, which suggested a utilitarian view, with migrants being welcomed only as an economic resource and a means of profit.

Extract 3: Prime Minister Helen Clark, who appointed Mr Peters Minister of Foreign Affairs, said cutting the quota would not be sensible. “There’s never been a time in New Zealand’s history when we didn’t need to bring in skilled people”. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Peters wants immigration cuts to protect jobs’, 17 October 2008)

By using the adjective ‘skilled’, Clark identified the benefits of a certain group of migrants rather than depicting a more general positive representation of them. In this sense, the findings in this analysis confirmed those of broader socio-political studies that have argued that the Labour Government of that time furthered neoliberal principles that acknowledged ethnic diversity as part of the national identity but “in terms of its instrumental rather than intrinsic values” (Skilling, 2011, p. 81). The overall data, the utilitarian discourse in which people are valued according to the degree of benefit they bring is further accentuated by the lack of representations of the non-economic benefits that immigrants could offer, such as their role in creating cultural richness. In other words, the discourse created a hierarchy of migrants that reflected the immigration policies of the country.

#### 4.2.3. *Migrants as a Threat*

In line with the literature on migrant representation, the discourse also represented migrants as a threat: a burden to the New Zealand housing market (causing inflation in house prices), causing a job shortage for locals, or contributing to crime (cf. Banda & Mawadza, 2015; Hier & Greenberg, 2002; Rojo & Van Dijk, 1997).

Extract 4: “During times when New Zealanders’ jobs are at risk, immigration will be cut to ensure Kiwis did not have to compete with immigrants for jobs.” Mr Peters said this suggested reducing the immigration quota from 50,000 to 10,000 .... Mr Peters called the free trade agreement with China “foolish”, saying it would allow Chinese companies “to set up here and bring in their own labour”. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Peters wants immigration cuts to protect jobs’, 17 October 2008)

By giving voice to certain social actors, particularly New Zealand First Party Leader Winston Peters, the newspaper discourse portrayed migrants as groups of people who posed a significant threat to the livelihood of locals. In Extract 4, migrants are constructed as threatening because they set up companies in New Zealand but hire employees from abroad rather than locally. Deviations from this narrative or representation were also present, such as an opinion piece entitled ‘Peters blind to inconvenient truth’ (New Zealand Herald, July 2008), in which the writer argued that migrants did not contribute to crime. However, it is important to note that both discourses involved discussing immigrants within the framework of crime. While one tries to link migrants to crimes, the other disassociates the two, but the backdrop of crime from which they are being distanced is still present.



#### 4.2.4. *Migrants as Passive Beneficiaries*

The analysis also indicated that in the discourse, migrants were often associated with refugees and discussed in negative contexts. Refugees (and therefore, migrants as well) were often represented as needing a) help and support and b) to be integrated/assimilated.

Extract 5: The Tindall Foundation has given \$450,000 to a programme, backed so far by 34 of Auckland's biggest businesses, that will provide mentors and internships to migrants seeking jobs in their skilled areas. And the ASB Trust and Lottery Grants Board are funding a smaller scheme to help refugees into work. (New Zealand Herald, 'Schemes aim to make use of rich migrant resource', 22 December 2007)

Extract 5 represents migrants as the passive recipients of jobs that are given to them through schemes and programmes. Their struggles, aspirations and endeavours are downplayed or ignored. Nuances to this representation within the data set indicated that various levels of agency were assigned to migrants, with some, at least from a syntactic perspective, represented as performing actions. However, the context of these suggested that these actions were undertaken out of desperation or obligation, rather than by choice (see Extracts 6 and 7).

Extract 6: He left his wife and three young children at home so he could find a job. (New Zealand Herald, 'Six-month permit too tough', 17 January 2007)

Extract 7: He left his homeland during the tumultuous years of that nation's civil war. (New Zealand Herald, 'Patrons adding to the painful journey', 4 July 2008)

Extracts 6 and 7 describe migrants who had to leave their families and home countries behind in order to come to New Zealand, either to find a job or to escape war. The action of leaving one's family or country is generally not one of choice but undertaken out of desperation. In the data, migrants were often represented as performing actions that could only be performed with the permission of an authority of some sort. Thus, migrants were cast in passive roles. In some cases (see Extracts 8 and 9), migrants were represented as being the agents of entering or arriving in New Zealand, even though they had to be granted residence visas, or the right to enter the country, by organizations such as Immigration New Zealand. Knowledge of the broader socio-political context clearly indicates that these actions could not have been performed without the approval of the authorities.

Extract 8: If current trends continue, a net 5000 migrants will arrive this year, well down on the average of 12000. (New Zealand Herald, 'Trickle of migrants double-edged sword', 21 June 2007)

Extract 9: Migrants managed to gain residence in New Zealand. (New Zealand Herald, 'Six-month permit too tough', 17 January 2007)

Extracts 8 and 9 hide the fact that migrants are granted residence visas or the right to enter a country by organizations like Immigration New Zealand. On the surface, viewing the syntactic position of migrants within the sentences above, one could reasonably assume that migrants perform actions and are therefore being represented as having agency. However, knowledge of the broader socio-political context clearly indicates that these actions could not have been performed without the approval of the authorities. In Extracts 10, 11 and 12, immigrants are negatively represented as performing illegal or 'problematic' actions.

Extract 10: Immigrants may have slipped illegally into New Zealand because of gaps in systems for discovering identity fraud, the Government has admitted. (New Zealand Herald, 'Illegal immigrants may have exploited lax ID screening', 27 June 2007)

Extract 11: An Auckland vigilante group is teaching members of the Asian community how to use everything from pens to perfume as weapons to fight crime. (New Zealand Herald, 'Asian vigilantes hit back against crime', 4 July 2008)

Extract 12: Like bounty hunters riding the boundaries, groups of millionaires and wealthy migrants are looking to lock away land on the city's rural outskirts for big gains. (New Zealand Herald, 'Speculators on the prowl', 23 June 2007)

Extracts above represent migrants as active agents albeit performing rather negative actions. In Extract 12, migrants are compared to bounty hunters because they are avidly seeking land for investment. Considering the broader

backdrop of extremely high property prices in Auckland and the perceived negative impact of immigration on property prices, the representation of migrants in Extract 12 as “millionaires” and “wealthy” people who “lock away” land is very negative.

#### 4.2.5. *Dehumanizing Migrants*

Within the data, migrants were dehumanized in three ways: by the use of a) ‘liquid metaphors’; b) similes and comparisons with non-human entities; and c) statistics instead of nouns.

##### 4.2.5.1. *Liquid metaphors*

Research in various fields confirms the existence of metaphors referring to large numbers of immigrants (Baker et al., 2008; Baker & McEnery, 2005; Cunningham-Parmeter, 2011; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009).

According to KhosraviNik (2009), “there is an ample use of the metaphors of large quantities such as water bodies, e.g. floods, influx or ‘exodus’ which have been found to construct a negative representation in other studies and contexts” (p. 486). He noted, “a common strategy was to quantify [Refugees and Asylum Seekers] RAS in terms of water metaphors (pour, flood, stream), which tend to dehumanize RAS, constructing them as an out-of-control, agentless, unwanted natural disaster” (p. 287). However, within the dataset, water metaphors were also used in counter-intuitive ways to indicate the positive impact of mass immigration to New Zealand (in terms of relieving skill shortages and creating a stronger economy). This has been reported as a unique feature of the New Zealand data (Salahshour, 2016). As illustrated in Extract 13, the newspaper discourse also used liquid metaphors to represent the arrival of large numbers of migrants in an ambivalent way, highlighting both the threat to the housing market and the benefits of alleviating the skills shortage.

Extract 13: The net inflow of migrants has dwindled to a trickle this year, easing pressure on the housing market but doing little to relieve labour shortages. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Trickle of migrants a double-edged sword’, 21 June 2007)

Interestingly, in one instance (see Extract 14), a natural disaster metaphor was used to represent the movement of New Zealanders (the ‘in-group’) out of the country. Although this does not appear often within the data set (certainly not as often as those which referred to migrant groups), nevertheless, Extract 14 illustrates that natural disaster metaphors, such as ‘avalanches of people’, which are also dehumanizing devices, can be used for referring to the in-group as well.

Extract 14: “The avalanche of people leaving New Zealand to go to Australia over the past year will be seen as a trickle if we don’t put our house in order” Sir Roger said. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Record numbers leaving for Australia’, October 2008)

##### 4.2.5.2. *Similes and comparisons with non-human entities*

Extracts 15 and 16 include terminology that is commonly used to refer to predators when they hunt their prey; in these cases, wealthy migrants are portrayed as actively hunting for investment opportunities.

Extract 15: Speculators are hunting Auckland’s urban fringes for land banking deals. Like bounty hunters riding the boundaries, groups of millionaires and wealthy migrants are looking to lock away land on the city’s rural outskirts for big gains. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Speculators on the prowl’, 23 June 2007)

Extract 16: Wealthy migrants from China, Taiwan, and Korea were particularly active, hunting for those opportunities, he said. (New Zealand Herald, ‘Speculators on the prowl’, 23 June 2007)

Other representations in the data contained verbs and nouns (e.g. ‘resources’) that cast migrants as commodities to be used for the financial benefit they would bring, as in the utilitarian perspective described earlier.

In Extracts 15 and 16, migrants in general, and Asian ‘migrants’ (from ‘China’, ‘Taiwan’ and ‘Korea’) specifically, are placed as the agents of the act of ‘hunting’. The adjective ‘active’ further accentuates the action. Other metaphorical constructions became apparent in the choice of verbs and nouns when talking about migrants. There are phrasal verbs and nouns, such as ‘resources’, which index a perception that migrants are mere commodities to be used for the financial benefit they bring. Moreover, these dehumanizing instances further endorse the utilitarian perspective outlined above.

#### 4.2.5.3. *Migrants as statistics*

Migrants were often referred to as mere numbers or statistics, omitting the nouns that could have followed the numbers, as illustrated in Extract 17.

Extract 17: If that rate is sustained for the rest of the year the gain will be only 5000, compared with the average gain of more than 12,000 for the past 16 years. (New Zealand Herald, 'Trickle of migrants double-edged sword', 21 June 2007)

#### 4.2.6. *Immigration Policies*

Frequently, the New Zealand Herald discourse argued for changes to current immigration policies and systems. The discourse represented New Zealand as being in global competition for wealthy and skilled migrants (particularly the contributions they could make to the economy through their skills and investments) and argued that New Zealand needed policies that were more migrant-friendly. At the same time, the discourse often argued for stricter and exclusionary immigration policies, often quoting and paraphrasing Winston Peters. It is possible that the newspaper was strategically using Peter's opinions on immigration policies to attract a right-wing readership while at the same time avoiding criticism of being right-wing itself. As Peters' opinions were considered to sell newspapers, he was frequently given the opportunity to voice his views on the topic of immigration. Extract 18 highlights the benefits of the change to more lenient 'investor' migrant policies and the drawbacks of the previous strict investor policy.

Extract 18: Mr Walsh, an adviser who specialises in business and investor migrants, said the new policy did remove many of the flaws of the existing policy by allowing investors to make a commercial return on the money, rather than handing it over to the Government. Other incentives were the dropping of the language and age requirements. (New Zealand Herald, 'New Zealand on hunt for more millionaires', 6 June 2007)

The old policy, which resulted in fewer investor migrants entering the country, is described as having many 'flaws'. The new policy on the other hand, is presented as compensating for these flaws. In the co-text of this extract, Bernard Walsh, the chairman for the Association of Migration and Investment, refers to New Zealand being in a competition for investors and reiterates the importance of having more relaxed and investor friendly immigration policies if New Zealand is to become successful in this global competition. A final discursive construction is that of migrants as passive victims.

#### 4.2.7. *Migrants as Victims*

In the data collected for this study, migrants were sometimes portrayed as the passive victims of physical abuse or gambling addiction, or as individuals who required services to protect them: that is, weak and incapable people.

Extract 19: Abuse, racism and violence are part of life for immigrant taxi drivers, writes Christopher Adams. Yousef, an Ethiopian, arrived in New Zealand 10 years ago after spending years as a refugee in Sudan. He left his homeland during the tumultuous years of that nation's civil war. (New Zealand Herald, 'Patrons adding to the painful journeys', 4 July 2008)

Extract 19 came from an article that highlighted the "abuse", "racism" and "violence" that migrants living in New Zealand were experiencing. It created a sympathetic discourse by detailing the background of a migrant who had fled his war-torn country to live a better life in New Zealand. While the representation of migrants as people who require services may be considered beneficial for refugees, it strips migrants of their agency and portrays them as being powerless. It is important to note that refugees are not necessarily people who have just fled their home country for a better life; but they are very likely to have resisted and struggled with difficulties and hardships before making the decision to leave, which indicates their agency in the process. This aspect of refugee agency is often overlooked in their representation, but it deserves attention.

## 5. Conclusion

The study presented a five-tier data-sampling technique that can be used in qualitative discourse analysis studies. Care was taken to ensure the sampling of the data for the qualitative analysis was as systematic as possible. While typical discourse studies have often faced criticism of partiality (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 23), the elaborate technique presented

reduces researcher bias and downsized the data, while ensuring the data selected was representative and did not eliminate the salient patterns showing the social/contextual prominence of the topic in the particular period studied.

The findings from the analysis suggested an ambivalent representation of migrants in the New Zealand Herald, with positive representations of the migrant diaspora co-existing with negative representations. On the positive side, the analyses showed that migrants were depicted as being skilled, qualified, wealthy and necessary for the success of New Zealand's economy. This was particularly obvious in the use of liquid metaphors that clearly pointed to the positive effects of large numbers of immigrants – unlike the results of previous studies on this topic. The newspaper generally rationalized arguments for increasing the number of immigrants by focusing on the economic benefits, such as alleviating skill shortages, bringing innovative ideas to business enterprises, or replacing New Zealanders who had emigrated to other countries. This utilitarian discourse, in which people are valued according to the degree of benefit they bring, was further accentuated by the lack of representations highlighting the non-economic benefits that immigrants could offer, such as their role in creating cultural richness. As a result, the discourse created a hierarchy of groups of people and even migrants (those who would 'benefit the economy' versus those who would 'be a burden on the economy'), which was, to an extent, a reflection of New Zealand's immigration policies.

On the negative side, the analysis indicated that migrants were represented as putting pressure on the housing market, being involved in criminal activities or being passive victims in need of help and services. The construction of migrants as passive beneficiaries ignored their endeavours to find jobs and the challenges they faced in the job-hunting process. In these instances, immigrants were collocated with refugees. Moreover, empowering representations of immigrants as being successful in both their adopted and home countries were rare; there were few representations of immigrants as influential academics, world-famous physicians or acclaimed community workers who try to make a difference wherever they are. Further, there were few references to immigrant members by their titles (e.g. Dr) or to their workplace affiliations denoting their status in society. This is a marked feature of the news discourse. Considering the numerous migrants who hold influential positions in various institutions, the question is why the newspaper did not provide representations or draw on the opinions of these migrants.

Finally, the findings indicated that the representation of migrants in 2007 was more positive than in 2008, indicating a shift in the discourse surrounding immigration and immigrants as the effects of the Global Economic Recession began to affect New Zealand. This finding confirmed, to an extent, the hypothesis that migrants tend to be represented in more derogatory ways during hard economic times. The DHA showed that collective, metaphorical and professional anthroponyms were regularly used as nomination/referential strategies to construct a portrait of migrants. In terms of predication strategies, the broad categories of migrants are problematic and migrants are beneficial were frequently used in the depiction of migrants.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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## Appendix

Table 1 *Referential Strategies*

Strategy type	Examples from data
Proper names	Odetta Ntezicimpa, Pansy Wong, Roberto Barrion, Yousef, Raju, Ahmed, Treagus, Arthur Anae, Mrs.Wong, Mr Wang, Wang, Wong, Mrs Wong, Mr Low, Johnny Tian, Ms Chow, Peter Low
Deitics and phoric expressions	He, She, I, They, He, Many, We, It,
Professional anthroponyms	Migrant job hunters, Migrant talent pool, Migrant talent, Interns, Island ex-MP, National’s First Pacific Island MP, Pacific Workers, Workers, Manakua city councilor, National’s Pacific Island list MP, Peseta Sam Lotu-liga, Victoria University senior lecturer and programme director for Samoan studies Galumalemana Alfred Hunkin, MP Pansy Wong, Skilled workers, People with skills, Skills, Skilled workers, Facilitator, Candidates, Chinese candidates, China-Born Candidates, Facilitator Loyd Wong, Pansy Wong, Kenneth Wang, Simon Kan, Café worker Shea Catermoul, Russian immigrant, language teacher Katia Kozlova, Skilled people, AAG founder Peter Low, Chinese students, Asian Council on Reducing Crime chairwoman Rosa Chow, Feral Leader
	Taxi Drivers, Skilled immigrants, Engineers, Filipino Society President Agnes Granada, Immigrant Talent pool, Talent pool, Those skills, Good Skilled migrants, Candidates, Highly skilled professionals, Talent
Ideological anthroponyms	Muslim community, Chinese voters, Voters born overseas, Triads, Chinese triads,
Collectives including metonymic toponyms	<b>Collective groups:</b> Immigrants, Migrants, People, Number of unassimilated migrants, People, Record numbers, Would-be-migrants, Vigilante group, Asian vigilantes, Vigilante groups, Group, Citizens, Asian anti-crime group, Bogeymen, Crowd, Victims, Families of victims, Newcomers, Migrants, Refugees,



Immigrants, Clients, People, Migrants' groups, Communities, Ethnic groups, Illegal immigrants, Refugees, Prospective migrants, Expats

**Collective Numbers/Statistics:**

2100 (migrants)  
 60 (migrants),  
 5000 (migrants),  
 12000 (migrants)  
 1300 Immigrants,  
 47,000 (migrants),  
 52,000 (migrants),  
 617,  
 19,  
 (3 percent),  
 300 people,  
 3000 members  
 8/10 migrants  
 Numbers,  
 Immigration quota  
 47,200 people,  
 13,200,  
 4400 migrants

**Geographical collectives:**

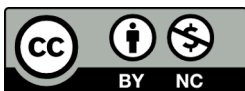
Pacific people  
 Pacific community  
 Pacific Islanders,  
 Asians,  
 Asian migrants  
 Asian Immigrants,  
 1/3 Asian,  
 these Chinese,  
 People born overseas,  
 Chinese companies,  
 Asian community,  
 Asian Anti-crime group,  
 Asian anti-crime organization  
 AAG,  
 Asian senior citizens  
 Polynesians,  
 Criminals of Polynesians descent  
 Chinese,  
 The Chinese (migrant) Communities  
 Asians, Residents born over seas

Figures of speech, Metaphors etc	Flow of immigrants, Net outflows, Flow of migrants, An avalanche of people, Asian crime wave, Trickle of migrants, Inflow of migrants, Arrivals, departures, Net inflow, Migrant inflow, Migration inflows, Incoming migrants, Influx of migrants, Influx of tens of thousands of immigrants
Economic anthroponyms	Job seekers, Cases, Millionaires, millionaire migrants, 300 investors, non-European Workforce, 300 millionaires, flood of millionaires, investor migrants, entrepreneur, Speculators, Bounty-hunters, Land bankers, Savvy Investors, Wealthy migrants
Single nouns	Person, A foreign company, A 63-year-old immigrant from Malaysia, Vigilante crime fighter Peter low, Migrant, A refugee, migrant, Pacific Islander, Immigrant, A person



Table 4. *Predication Strategies*

Discourse	Predication
Migrants are a double-edged sword (ambivalence) Migrants are beneficial or immigration is a positive phenomenon OR migrants are commodities and need to be capitalized.	Migrants offer benefits and drawbacks. Migrants have skills and experience which are in high demand in NZ; migrants need to be capitalized. Migrants have money and can invest/create jobs. Migrants are law abiding. Migrants bring diversity which is beneficial to NZ.
Migrants are a threat or the source of our problems (e.g. contribute to crime, cause inflation in housing, contribute to insecurity)	Immigrants are a burden/immigrant put pressure on our country's resources. Immigration is a threat to our country/immigrants commit crimes/act unlawfully. Immigrants do not assimilate to NZ culture. Immigrants look or are different and this is a threat. Immigrants are a threat to NZ jobs. Immigrants only want to make profits and do not consider New Zealander's interests.
Migrants are passive beneficiaries i.e., in need of help Migrants are natural disasters, are animals (prey, predators); dehumanizing migrants Migrants are mere statistics; dehumanizing migrants	Migrants need schemes and programmes to help them into jobs. Animal metaphors Liquid metaphors Migrants are merely statistics. Migrants are statistics which need to be reduced. Migrants are statistics which should not be reduced because NZ needs them.
Immigration policies need to be amended/immigration visas have caused problems	Immigration policies in NZ need to be re-evaluated/amended. Immigration policies are the source of migrant problem. Immigration policies set a limit to what investor migrants can do.
Migrants are disadvantaged/discriminated against OR migrants face a lot of difficulties	Migrants are disadvantaged because of their background experiences. Migrants are victims. Migrants are disadvantaged because they face discrimination daily. Are discriminated against during recruitment. Migrants are critical of racism/and NZ governments approach. Migrants fight back.
Personal information about migrants	Nationality Experience/feeling/beliefs/other Feel disappointed Jobs Qualifications/skills Personal info
Migrants move around (in large numbers)/duration of stay	Migrants are leaving NZ. Migrants are coming to NZ.



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