






Cruise infrastructure development in Auckland, New Zealand: a media discourse analysis (2008–2016)

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ABSTRACT

The deployment of mega cruise ships is putting pressure on ports to redesign or construct new infrastructure. However, there is limited research which considers the media discourse surrounding this development over a longitudinal period. The aim of this paper is to explore how the media portrays the cruise infrastructure debate in the complex and highly contested political environment of Auckland, New Zealand. Thematic analysis was used to determine the most salient themes found in 103 published articles. Results revealed the media shaped the debate, focusing on a volatile political environment characterised by distrust, a lack of transparency and differing objectives among key stakeholders. An outcome of this research is a rich, in-depth case study of cruise infrastructure development presented through the lens of media discourse. Future research should focus on the perceptions of decision-makers, stakeholders and the community using hedging and framing to probe the media discourse surrounding cruise infrastructure development.

KEYWORDS

Cruise ships; infrastructure; media; port; cruise tourism

Introduction

The deployment of large, or mega, cruise ships has placed pressure on ports worldwide to redesign existing infrastructure or construct new infrastructure (Kerswill & Mair, 2015; London & Lohmann, 2014). Previous studies have identified the ability of a port to provide adequate and welcoming infrastructure as a key decision-making factor in destination selection (Manning, 2006), particularly for mega cruise ships. The extant literature demonstrates that the development of cruise infrastructure presents opportunities for stakeholders to promote economic growth, especially where that infrastructure is designed to attract more tourists (Schmallegger & Carson, 2010), or is intended to be a vehicle for regenerating city waterfront areas (Kotval & Mullin, 2010).

However, the development of cruise infrastructure has implications for destination communities, including the potential to stimulate vigorous debate among the constituent public. For example, such development can be the target of opposition by

specific segments of coastal communities with development viewed as a competitor for the use of finite and often environmentally sensitive waterfront lands (Korbee, Mol, & van Tatenhove, 2015). Previous studies also indicate that dissatisfaction over development can arise from perceptions that the promoters' sole focus is on short-term economic growth rather than on representing legitimate efforts to support the organic or sustainable growth of the local tourism industry (McCarthy, 2003b; McCarthy & Romein, 2012; Schmallegger & Carson, 2010).

In the contemporary world, the media plays a significant role in shaping and often fuelling the debate which inevitably surrounds large infrastructure projects (Hurliman & Dolnicar, 2012; Wilken, Kennedy, Arnold, Gibbs, & Nansen, 2015). Existing studies have utilised media discourse to understand and document stakeholder engagement and influence strategies with respect to the issues which surround infrastructure projects, with issues of perceived credibility and legitimacy prominent in the literature (Aaltonen &

Kujala, 2010). However, few studies consider the media role in shaping public perception with respect to cruise infrastructure development. In addition, whilst existing literature on cruise infrastructure development discusses the impact and perceptions of cruise infrastructure on stakeholders and the wider community (Kerswill & Mair, 2015; McCarthy & Romein, 2012; Schmallegger & Carson, 2010), little research has been undertaken to show how public perception has evolved over the course of development, especially in relation to cruise tourism infrastructure.

Consequently, the aim of this research is to explore how the media portrays the cruise infrastructure debate in a complex and highly contested political environment. Utilising the media as a barometer for gauging public perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rizk, Marx, Schrepfer, Zimmerman, & Guenther, 2009; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013), this research contributes to the academic literature by constructing a rich in-depth case study of issues surrounding infrastructure development in a tourism context which is often subject to complex political and social interests. It also shows how the media discourse intersects with public opinion with respect to proposals for public infrastructure development. More specifically, this research analyses media discourse in respect of cruise tourism infrastructure, a topic which has been identified as under-researched and arguably remains conceptually underdeveloped (Papatheodorou, 2006; Vaggelas & Pallis, 2010).

Literature review

Cruise tourism is considered to be the fastest growing sector within the global leisure travel industry (Chan et al., 2015). This growth is manifested not only in an increase in the number of passengers who cruise each year but also in the number of new destinations introduced (Rodrigue & Notteboom, 2013) and the number and size of ships deployed (CLIA, 2016). An increase in the number of ships greater than 320 metres in length with passenger capacities surpassing 5000 or even 6000 passengers is obliging cruise destinations across the globe to decide whether to build new infrastructure or re-design their existing infrastructure (Kerswill & Mair, 2015; Lau, Tam, Ng, & Pallis, 2014; Moore, 2016). While there is no standard definition of what constitutes a large, or “mega” cruise ship, such ships are often categorised as post- or new Panamax vessels, that is, ships

which are too long and too wide to transit the Panama Canal before its expansion.

Similarly, concise definitions of cruise infrastructure within the academic literature are also elusive, with attention focused on the infrastructure of commercial ports and point-to-point passenger ports such as ferry ports (Vaggelas & Pallis, 2010). Existing literature seeks to define cruise infrastructure in a broad sense, referring simply to the function of a passenger port as expediting the flow of passengers between vessels and the land (Di Vaio, Medda, & Trujillo, 2011; Vaggelas & Pallis, 2010) or as an intermodal transport node (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2004). At an operational level, only shelter and basic amenities are required at ports of call where passengers are in port only for the duration of their port call. However, more sophisticated infrastructure is required for turnaround ports where passengers embark or disembark their vessels at the start or end of their cruise, respectively (Marti, 1990). In the case of turnaround ports, infrastructure is required to support required services such as passenger check-in, immigration and baggage handling as well as providing shelter and basic amenities (Marti, 1990).

Notwithstanding the lack of concise definitions, the accommodation of mega cruise ships often requires substantial development or re-development of port infrastructure (Lau et al., 2014) including dredging deeper channels (Lewis, O., 2016); re-locating cruise terminals to ensure that larger ships can avoid low bridges and narrow channels (Thalji, 2014); or making changes to landside infrastructure such as constructing new, higher bridges (Sharp, 2014) to allow for the passage of ships underneath. Mega cruise ships can also place pressure on ports in terms of the provision of adequate amenities in the cruise terminal; the provision and supply of road access for both passenger and provisioning vehicles; the capacity of local labour market; the capacity of local ground transportation services; environmental impacts; and the provision of regulatory and security services (Kerswill & Mair, 2015; Lau et al., 2014; Vukonić, Bielić, & Russo, 2016).

More dramatically, the advent of mega cruise ships has required ports to construct new wharves and expand existing cruise terminals or build new ones (Kerswill & Mair, 2015). In such instances, new infrastructure is often constructed on brownfield sites which may no longer be suitable for other development but which occupy prime waterfront land

(McCarthy, 2009; McCarthy & Romein, 2012; Schmallegger & Carson, 2010). All of these considerations must be integrated into the cruise infrastructure planning process to achieve a sustainable outcome for destination communities (Garay, Cànoves, & Prat, 2014). However, the construction of cruise terminals can be a potentially emotive topic, provoking both positive and negative sentiments in destination communities (Litvin, Luce, & Smith, 2013; Schmallegger & Carson, 2010; Terry & Smith, 2015). Proponents argue that any activity based on marine transport is desirable because it can involve sustainable development and the re-use of urban land by regenerating waterfront areas and transforming them into desirable spaces, capable of attracting tourists, investors and potential residents (Campo, 2002; Doucet & Van Weese, 2011; McCarthy, 2004). Also, such development is often viewed as an indicator of a city's success and wealth, and when developed into a flagship project, as an iconic symbol of the city's destination image (Doucet & Van Weese, 2011). Cruise terminals, in particular, are often perceived by local policy-makers and planners as a means for strengthening a city's competitiveness and importance (Anttiroiko, 2009) in a global environment where competition between cities is becoming increasingly intense (McCarthy & Romein, 2012). Cruise terminal development can also attract new service industries to the wider port area (Figueira de Sousa, 2001).

Previous studies argue that the benefits stemming from cruise terminals are economically desirable, with destinations competing to construct attractive and innovative cruise terminals that will attract cruise ships, passengers and the money they bring to the destination (McCarthy, 2003a). However, in addition to benefits, existing studies cite numerous potentially negative issues associated with cruise terminal development which can affect both the port and the destination. Among these negative impacts of cruise infrastructure development are loss of income to the port because of commercial displacement by cruise ships requiring berthing space (London & Lohmann, 2014); the prospect of environmental impacts such as crowd, air and water pollution as well as damage to natural habitats (Brida & Zapata, 2010; Hritz & Cecil, 2008; Korbee et al., 2015); the repatriation of profits derived from cruise tourism activities offshore to the cruise lines (Rodrigue & Notteboom, 2013); and competition for publicly accessible space despite intentions to position cruise terminals as a

means to link the destination's residents to the waterfront (McCarthy & Romein, 2012).

In each case, development is likely to be subjected to scrutiny by groups or individuals who either have a vested interest in cruise infrastructure development or who are impacted by it (Freeman, 1984). Often, debates surrounding the development of cruise infrastructure are intense, observable in the established rules and processes which underpin political institutions such as local councils or national governments (Dredge, 2010); in court proceedings (Smith, 2015); in the guise of public protest (Weston, 2014); and cast as editorial comment within the media (Rudman, 2011). High-profile examples of cruise infrastructure development attracting scrutiny in these fora include Charleston, South Carolina (Terry & Smith, 2015); the Gold Coast, Australia (Dredge, 2010); Venice, Italy (Roberts, 2014); and Sydney, Australia (McKenny, 2014).

Many studies have examined the relationship between the media and tourism. Television (Pan, Tsai, & Lee, 2011; Schofield, 1996) and social media (Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013) play a significant role in shaping destination image. Relevant here, though, are those studies which examine the relationship between the news media and tourism. It has been demonstrated that news reporting can affect tourists' and the broader community's perception of such topics as destination promotion linked to major events (Falkheimer, 2007; Getz & Fairley, 2004); natural disasters affecting tourism attractions (Hystad & Keller, 2008; Walters, Mair, & Lim, 2016); and the politics of tourism (McLennan, Becken, & Moyle, 2014). Studies in New Zealand have examined the role of the news media with respect to creating and shaping destination image and branding (Piggot, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2010; Scharl, Dickinger, & Weichselbraun, 2008); the availability of tourism-related weather information (Wilson & Becken, 2011); and the reporting of adventure tourism accidents (Davidson, 2008). In the specific field of cruise tourism, although there are some studies relating to the use of the media by action groups to advance their positions with respect to proposed cruise infrastructure development (Johnston & Gration, 2008; Litvin et al., 2013), there appear to be no studies which have considered the media's role in the broader political environment related to cruise infrastructure development in New Zealand or elsewhere.

In each case, though, existing studies on cruise infrastructure development only capture one point in the development process. In contrast, this research

seeks to explore public discourse on the cruise infrastructure development process over the course of a rapidly evolving public debate. The city of Auckland, New Zealand's principal turnaround port, was selected as a case study to illustrate the evolution of such a debate, using the media to gauge public perception of issues surrounding the development of cruise infrastructure over a period of years (i.e. 2008–2016). Achieving the aims and objectives of this research will contribute to the literature by providing a rich in-depth case study of the issues faced by the public over the course of the development process, rather than during a single period. Also, this research will assist policy-makers and other stakeholders understand the wider political and social context in which proposals for cruise infrastructure development are made and considered. Analysis of the media discourse embraces and reports the debate surrounding cruise infrastructure development and shows how the media shapes public awareness and understanding of that debate.

Case study: Auckland, New Zealand¹

Auckland's investment in cruise infrastructure has not kept pace with the growth in its cruise tourism sector (Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development [ATEED], 2015; London, 2015). Visiting cruise ships are accommodated at two dedicated cruise wharves, but share some operational infrastructure with New Zealand's largest commercial port, the Ports of Auckland Ltd (POAL). POAL is owned by Auckland's governing body, the Auckland Council. It is one of the few ports worldwide to operate within a city's central business district (Kubiak, 2015).

Neither of Auckland's cruise wharves is currently capable of accommodating the new generation of longer and heavier mega cruise ships nor more than one ship at a time. Consequently, pressure is mounting on key stakeholders to consider options for the further development of Auckland's cruise infrastructure. Building on Auckland's experiences, the aim of this paper is to help communities planning large infrastructure projects (such as cruise terminals) to understand how the media discourse shapes stakeholder and community perception of high-profile infrastructure development projects.

Auckland's first dedicated cruise terminal opened on Princes Wharf in 1998 (Auckland Council, 1961). However, by 2008, it proved to be inadequate to support the growth in the number and size of ships

visiting Auckland (COVEC, 2008). In June 2009, the nearby Queens Wharf was sold by POAL to the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) and New Zealand's Central Government. Under the agreement, Queens Wharf would first serve as the FanZone for the Rugby World Cup 2011 (RWC 2011) and then revert to use as the location of Auckland's primary, albeit temporary, cruise terminal. The sale and purchase agreement also included conditions that POAL would allow public access to the wharf and that Shed 10, a historic structure on the wharf, would be used as the designated cruise terminal (Waterfront Auckland, 2012a). Princes Wharf continues to operate as Auckland's secondary cruise terminal (ATEED, 2015). However, Queens Wharf has now also proven to be inadequate to accommodate the new generation of mega cruise ships.

In light of the need for investment in cruise infrastructure, four options for operating cruise ship services from Auckland's Central Wharves were tabled in 2014 (Auckland Council, 2014). Each of these options involves a wide range of high profile and potentially conflicting interests, including, to varying degrees, re-alignment of POAL's commercial shipping infrastructure. In February 2015, one of the *New Zealand Herald's* lead journalists uncovered secret negotiations between Auckland Council and POAL which resulted in POAL being awarded non-compliant consents in late 2014 to extend the Bledisloe cargo wharf and reclaim three hectares of the harbour. This journalist's reports led to vocal community protests and the lodging of a High Court action challenging POAL's actions. The legal challenge in New Zealand's High Court found that POAL did not comply with the process required to secure approvals for the extensions. Hence, all work on the extension and reclamation was terminated. As a result of its inability to extend Bledisloe Wharf, POAL continues to argue that it will not be able to accommodate mega ships because it cannot give up cargo space.

Method

Thematic analysis was chosen as the appropriate method to analyse the media discourse surrounding Auckland's cruise infrastructure development because of its capacity to identify and analyse common themes and recurring patterns within a dataset (McLennan et al., 2014). The approach to thematic analysis can be either inductive or deductive. An inductive coding approach was used in this study,

extracting themes from the relevant content (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990; Vaismoradi et al., 2013) rather than testing the themes against a prior theory (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis entails generating a count to ascertain the dominant themes in a dataset (prevalence) to inform the thematic analysis (Weber, 1990). Themes can be considered to be prevalent if they (a) embrace a concept which informs the core research question; (b) are articulated by more than one source; or (c) are incorporated into other themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Individually, however, themes do not take on any sense of importance (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Patton (1990) argues that themes should be coherent in relation to other themes (internal homogeneity), but individual themes should be able to be differentiated from each other (external homogeneity). The dataset can be comprised of all of the content relevant to a specific subject (e.g. cruise infrastructure development) or to one or more specific forms of content (e.g. websites, interviews or news items) within a defined time frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rizk et al., 2009).

Based on a coding process identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) to extract themes and identify patterns among them, this research used a five-stage process including (1) becoming familiar with the data; (2) generating initial codes relevant to Auckland's cruise infrastructure development; (3) establishing patterns among themes; (4) critically reviewing themes, assigning them to candidate over-arching themes; and (5) finalising, defining and naming themes.

Data collection

This study covers the period from 2008 until early 2016, starting with POAL's revelation that it would be interested in selling Queens Wharf for redevelopment in anticipation of RWC 2011. Both the data collection and analysis were undertaken by the first-named author of this paper. Articles were retrieved using a number of sources, including but not limited to, the online version of the *New Zealand Herald* (www.nzherald.co.nz), the *Factiva* news database (<https://global.factiva.com>), the Auckland Public Library archives (www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz) and *Google News New Zealand* (<https://news.google.co.nz>). Articles were sourced using the keywords "Bledisloe Wharf," "Ports of Auckland," "Princes Wharf," "Queens Wharf" and "cruise Auckland." Initially, 278 articles covering this period were

reviewed for potential inclusion in the dataset. However, items which did not meet the pre-determined selection criteria (e.g. duplicate articles, social media content and media releases) were rejected, leaving 103 articles which explicitly related to the development of Auckland's cruise infrastructure. Eighty-five articles were extracted from the online version of newspapers or digital publications, with transcripts of radio and television reports comprising the remaining 18 articles. The articles were extracted from 14 different news sources located in 3 countries: (Table 1).

Editorials written by in-house staff and opinion pieces written by guest authors were included because they provided valuable insights into the views of key stakeholders as well as the concerns of their readers. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the categories of the articles included in the dataset:

Figure 2 provides a representation of the data collection and analysis process:

Coding

Coding of the 103 articles comprising the dataset involved several recursive steps. As each article was read for the first time, codes relevant to Auckland's cruise infrastructure development were generated and entered directly into an *MS Excel* spreadsheet under two broad categories: (a) descriptive codes and (b) thematic codes. *Descriptive codes* included bibliographic data about each article as well as the names of individual and organisational actors, reports and major events or milestones mentioned in each. *Thematic codes* included codes relating specifically to the content of the reported topics and issues. Two hundred and ninety-seven individual candidate thematic codes were initially recorded. A review of these themes resulted in duplicate or near-duplicate themes being combined while ensuring that the semantic content of those themes did not overlap (Rizk et al., 2009). As a result of this review, 221 themes were confirmed and then grouped into 22 main themes according to the patterns which emerged from any apparent relationships between them. Six candidate over-arching themes were created, based on a further grouping of the 22 main themes. A review of these six over-arching themes resulted in further consolidation, thereby producing five over-arching themes. During the coding process, a binary value of "1" was assigned to each article which mentioned any given subordinate theme. Coding was completed when a

Table 1. Publications.

Owner	Location	Source	Type of source	Number of articles
Bauer	New Zealand	Metro Magazine	Magazine	1
Crown entity/state-owned	New Zealand	RadioNZ	Radio	11
		TVOne	TV	4
Customs Today	Pakistan	Customs Today	Digital newspaper	1
Fairfax	New Zealand	Stuff.co.nz	Online version of newspaper	10
		Sunday Star Times	Online version of newspaper	1
		The Independent (now defunct)	Online version of newspaper	1
Mediaworks	New Zealand	3News	TV	2
Multimedia publishing	New Zealand	AccomNews	Digital newsletter	1
NBR	New Zealand	National Business Review (NBR)	Online version of weekly business newspaper	1
NZME	New Zealand	NZHerald.co.nz	Online version of newspaper	66
		NewsTalkZB	Radio	1
		The Aucklander	Online version of newspaper	2
Tudor Rose UK	United Kingdom	Cruiseandferry.net	Online version of printed industry publication	1
				103

point of saturation or literal replication was reached (Miles & Huberman, 1994), while the media discourse content was analysed until no new concepts or themes were identified.

An array of the over-arching themes (level 1; $n = 5$) and main themes (level 2; $n = 22$) can be found in Figure 3, along with a summary of the sub-themes ($n = 221$):

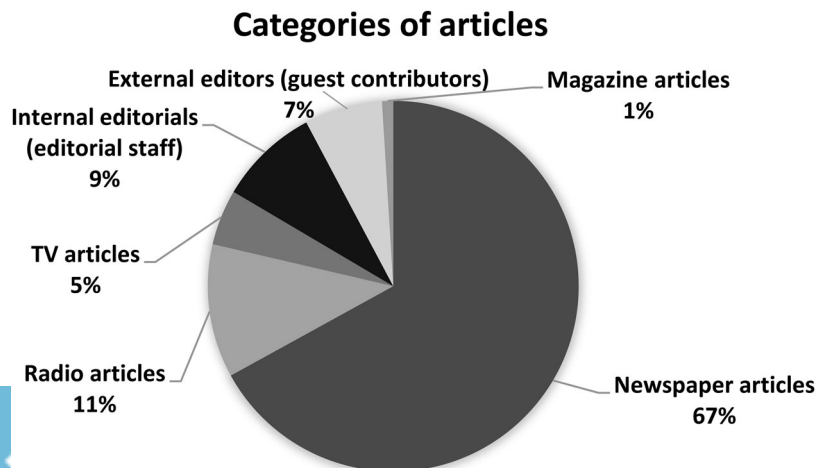
Table 2 summarises the level 1, over-arching themes and records the frequency of main themes. It should be noted that the frequency of sub-themes (level 3) is not included because of the consolidation and rationalisation of those themes during the coding process.

Significantly and not unexpectedly, the highest saturation of main themes can be found within the two over-arching themes which embody the focal debate

episodes, that is, *Shed 10/Queens Wharf* and *Commercial displacement*.

Results

The story of the development of large public infrastructure can be complex, profoundly affected by political and community debate (Dredge, 2010; Terry & Smith, 2015). The media's role can range from merely reporting on the noteworthy events relating to that development to assuming an active voice, either championing or challenging that development. The following discussion explores how the media portrayed Auckland's cruise infrastructure debate in a complex and highly contested political environment.

**Figure 1.** Categories of articles.

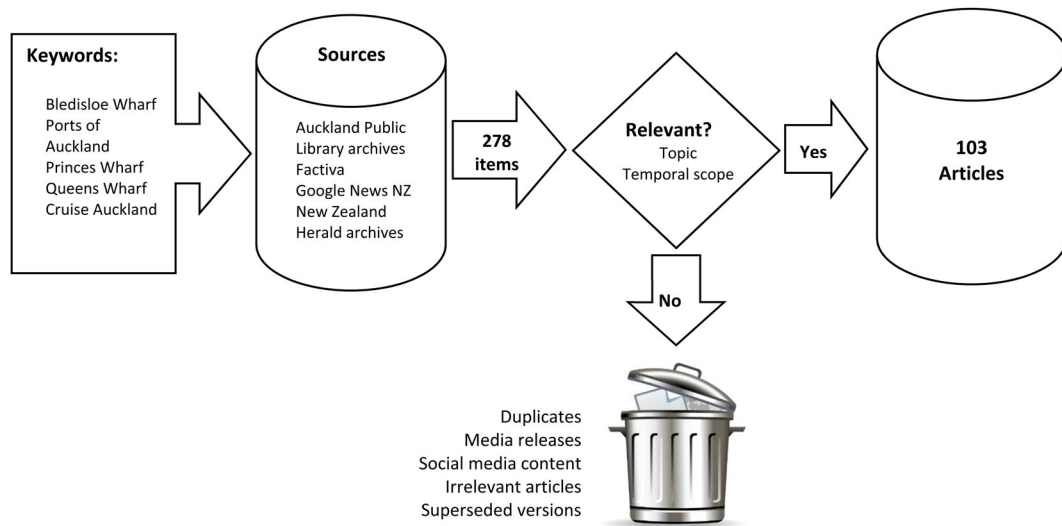


Figure 2. Data collection process. Source: Adapted from Rizk et al. (2009, p. 2).

The media landscape

Two major news conglomerates dominate the non-Crown-owned media sector in New Zealand. The *New Zealand Herald* (considered to be Auckland's paper of record) and its online version, *NZHerald.co.nz*, are owned by the Auckland-based NZME while Fairfax Media owns the Wellington-based *Dominion Post* and *Stuff.co.nz* (Myllylahti, 2015). Other commercial and non-profit providers operate a wide variety of media services in New Zealand in addition to the Crown-owned television and radio station (Myllylahti, 2015). Much of the news content in New Zealand is syndicated through media release providers such as *Scoop.co.nz*, thereby allowing for the efficient distribution of content to news providers in what is a small and dispersed market. However, in this study, the majority of articles ($n = 66$, or 64%) were extracted from *NZHerald.co.nz*. Twenty-four of those articles (23%) were written by one of the newspaper's leading reporters and largely related to what are local debates, that is, the development of Queens Wharf ($n = 12$), the Bledisloe Wharf extension ($n = 7$) and the use of other commercial wharves ($n = 5$).

Profile of articles

Figure 4 shows the distribution of articles over the period of this research (2008 to February 2016). The majority of articles ($n = 66$, or 64%) were extracted from *NZHerald.co.nz*. Twenty-four of those

articles (23%) were written by one of the newspaper's leading reporters. Two periods of concentration are particularly prominent, notably 2009–2011 and 2015. It is during these two periods that events external to Auckland's cruise sector had the greatest impact on proposals for the city's cruise infrastructure development and therefore attracted substantial media attention. From 2009 to 2011, media discourse focused on the purchase and redevelopment of Queens Wharf in anticipation of RWC 2011 and its subsequent use as Auckland's primary cruise terminal. In 2015, the controversy surrounding the proposed extensions to Bledisloe Wharf was central to the media discourse. Both episodes were characterised by political divisiveness and significant community opposition. However, it was the discourse surrounding the Bledisloe Wharf controversy in 2015 which attracted the most attention, attributable to the investigative, frequent reporting by the *New Zealand Herald's* journalist who first uncovered the secret negotiations between POAL and the Auckland Council:

Notably, more than three-quarters of the articles ($n = 80$, or 77.7%) were published during New Zealand's cruise season (September–April), when cruise is in the media consumers' consciousness.

The over-arching themes

Five over-arching themes emerged during the coding process, as presented in Table 2, above.

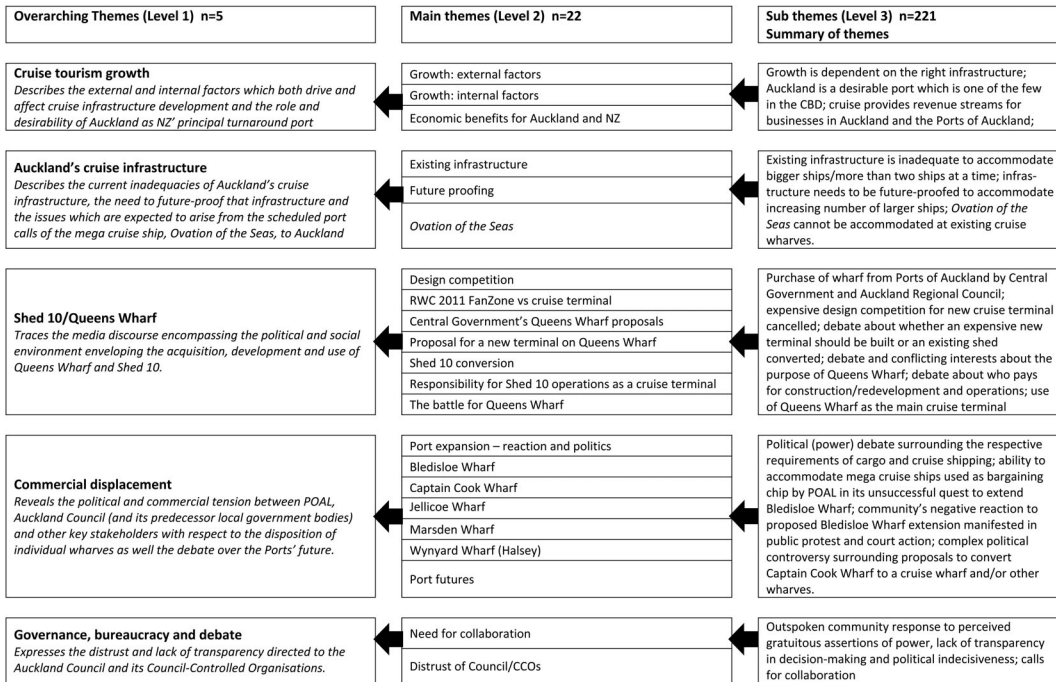


Figure 3. Array of over-arching and main themes and summary of sub-themes.

Cruise tourism growth and Auckland's cruise infrastructure: motivation for cruise infrastructure development

It is evident through the media discourse that key stakeholders recognise the need for the development of Auckland's cruise infrastructure. Investment in cruise infrastructure has been identified as a way "[f]or Auckland to gain maximum economic benefits from cruise" (Accomnews.co.nz, 2011). Justifications for investment identified in the media include the potential for more jobs and business opportunities for the city and securing Auckland's position as the primary cruise hub for the South Pacific to accommodate the growth in the number of ships which potentially could be repositioned in the South Pacific during the Asian winter.

The need to expand Auckland's cruise infrastructure is considered to be urgent, with Auckland being labelled by one key tourism sector stakeholder as being at a "critical point" in terms of cruise infrastructure development (Wade, 2012). This issue is a recurring theme which came to the forefront in 2015 when POAL lost its bid to extend the Bledisloe Wharf and subsequently announced that it could not accommodate the mega cruise ship, *Ovation of the Seas*, forcing the ship to be moored in the harbour. This

story was widely reported in the national media, with reports focusing on the size of the ship itself, the economic benefits which it is expected to generate and, in the context of this study, serving as an exemplar of the tensions between POAL and Auckland Council.

Thus, there seems to be agreement amongst key stakeholders that further investment in cruise infrastructure is urgently required to enable Auckland to realise its dual goals of increasing the economic value of its cruise sector and growing its status as a competitive cruise destination. Media support for this position is evident in the attention paid to the risks which could arise if no investment were to be made. For example, the prospect of cruise ships shunning Auckland because of inadequate port facilities has been viewed as a potential threat to the economy:

I think the business case has been proven and if Auckland is going to be globally competitive going forward, then we have to have world-class infrastructure to make the most of the opportunities in those two key sectors [i.e. a national convention centre and cruise terminal]. (Hembry, 2010)

Figure 4 demonstrates that the period from 2009 to 2011 was a time of concentrated reporting on the

Table 2. Frequency of main themes.

Level 1 – Over-arching themes	Level 2 – Main themes	Frequency of themes	Total
<i>Cruise tourism growth</i> Describes the external and internal factors which both drive and affect cruise infrastructure development and the role and desirability of Auckland as New Zealand’s principal turnaround port.	Growth: external factors	37	139
	Growth: internal factors	63	
	Economic benefits for Auckland and NZ	39	
<i>Auckland’s cruise infrastructure</i> Describes the current inadequacies of Auckland’s cruise infrastructure, the need to future-proof that infrastructure and the issues which are expected to arise from the scheduled port calls of the mega cruise ship, <i>Ovation of the Seas</i> , to Auckland.	Existing infrastructure	46	223
	Future proofing	147	
	Ovation of the Seas	30	
<i>Shed 10/Queens Wharf</i> Traces the media discourse encompassing the political and social environment enveloping the acquisition, development and use of Queens Wharf and Shed 10.	Design competition	37	371
	RWC 2011 FanZone vs cruise terminal	71	
	Central Government’s Queens Wharf proposals	11	
	Proposal for a new terminal on Queens Wharf	65	
	Shed 10 conversion	41	
	Responsibility for Shed 10 operations as a cruise terminal	56	
	The battle for Queen’s Wharf	90	
	Port expansion – reaction and politics	17	
<i>Commercial displacement</i> Reveals the political and commercial tension between POAL, Auckland Council (and its predecessor local government bodies) and other key stakeholders with respect to the disposition of individual wharves as well the debate over the Ports’ future.	Port expansion – reaction and politics	17	225
	Bledisloe Wharf	75	
	Captain Cook Wharf	88	
	Jellicoe Wharf	15	
	Marsden Wharf	14	
	Wynyard Wharf (Halsey)	2	
	Port futures	14	
<i>Governance, bureaucracy and debate</i> Expresses the distrust and lack of transparency directed to the Auckland Council and its Council-Controlled Organisations.	Need for collaboration	5	27
	Distrust of Council/CCOs	22	
		985	985

debate and disagreement over the redevelopment of Queens Wharf. It is likely that the reason for this spike in prevalence is due to the simultaneous, or perhaps determinative, planning for RWC 2011. While the development of cruise infrastructure and RWC 2011

would appear to bear no relationship to each other, RWC 2011 provoked the first set of episodes which led to widespread community involvement and intense reaction concerning how and where Auckland’s new cruise facilities should be located. The

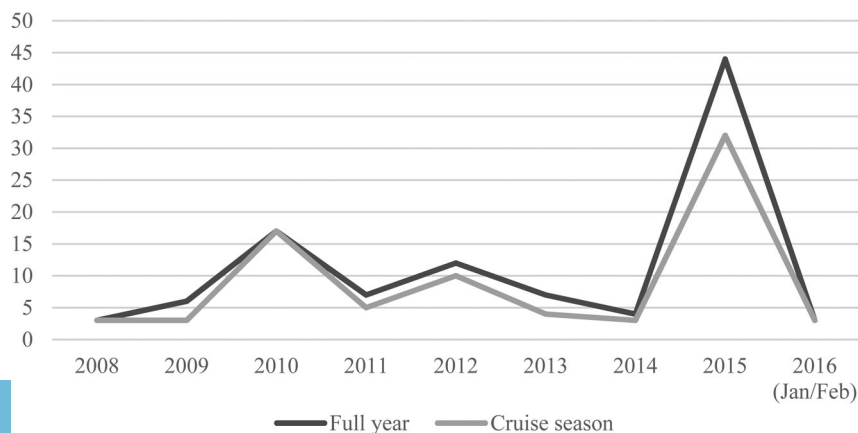


Figure 4. Distribution of articles by year of publication.

two issues also exposed the divisive political situation which existed at the time.

The media discourse surrounding these two issues exposed the debate which manifested itself not only on the local government level but also between the Auckland Council and New Zealand's Central Government. Although Central Government contributed \$20 million (a 50% share) to the purchase of Queens Wharf, its primary, immediate and admittedly only interest was to secure the wharf as the site for the RWC 2011. However, Central Government also unilaterally called for the construction of an iconic cruise terminal on the wharf without indicating how the terminal would be financed. That suggestion was rebuffed by a former key stakeholder from the public sector who categorically stated that he would not be told by Central Government what could be built at the foot of Queen Street:

I've got a message for the Government from the town hall on Queen St in Auckland, the epicentre of the new Greater Auckland Council, and it's this: Don't force on us, the ratepayers of greater Auckland... Don't do it... The people of greater Auckland don't want this giant bus shelter built on the most magnificent waterfront in the world. (Bull, 2010)

A Central Government Opposition spokesperson similarly stated that Aucklanders would not be bullied by Central Government into building a cruise terminal, arguing that such decisions should wait until after the new Council was elected:

We are only 10 months away from a newly elected mayor and council for Auckland. It seems appropriate to wait to determine the future of the waterfront and cruise ship terminal until this occurs and decisions can be made in a democratic and accountable way. (Gay & Orsman, 2010)

This comment also foreshadows another issue which confronts elected bodies, and that is the impact of the election cycle. In this study, there was no hint that the politicians' calls for cruise infrastructure were motivated by their 2010 electoral aspirations (Cadot, Röller, & Stephan, 2006).

Tension, disagreement and a lack of leadership leading to political indecision between Auckland's local government bodies were also evident in the media discourse. Examples included the constantly changing stream of ideas for the location, design and cost of Auckland's cruise infrastructure; the abandoned public design competition; and the high-profile back-flip by the incumbent mayor as to the desired location of a new cruise terminal. It is this political

indecision which continues to threaten Auckland's sustainability as a desirable cruise destination.

Shed 10/Queens Wharf: public access and cruise infrastructure – co-existence

Queens Wharf was purchased by Central Government and the ARC for two principal purposes that is, "to hold, manage and develop Queens Wharf for the benefit of the public" and to be the site of a "high quality cruise terminal providing economic benefits to Auckland and New Zealand" (Waterfront Auckland, 2012a, p. 4). Since then, considerable media discourse has been devoted to the political debate and community frustration over Queens Wharf (Cumming, 2015). Descriptors such as "shambolic" and "no sense of place" have been used to describe the wharf, with one planning consultant commenting that "[w]e've had this recurring theme where public space is used as the carrot and then it is either not delivered or taken away and privatised" (Cumming, 2015). In response to such criticisms, a spokesman for a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) stated that further development of Queens Wharf must await decisions regarding the port's future development. Whether or not this response is a "carrot," it is clear from the media discourse that the debate surrounding the ultimate location of Auckland's cruise terminal is likely to continue for some time, thereby posing a potential risk to the sustainability of Auckland's cruise sector growth.

Much of the community debate focused on the use of Shed 10 as Auckland's primary cruise terminal. Clear from the media discourse was the message that some key stakeholders viewed this use as inconsistent with the directive that Queens Wharf be developed for public use (Waterfront Auckland, 2012a). Media reports include the criticisms that the use of Shed 10 as a cruise terminal is tantamount to privatising the wharf and that the terminal's transportation marshalling area reduces the amount of space available to the public. Other key stakeholders dispute these claims, arguing that there is ample space on the wharf for both a cruise terminal and the public. However, there appears to be general agreement rejecting an attempt by a private consortium to develop Queens Wharf. One key public sector stakeholder is reported as bluntly stating: "Queens Wharf is not for sale. It belongs to the people of Auckland" (Orsman, 2014).

Commercial displacement: commercial shipping and cruise shipping collide

Cruise and commercial shipping are often in conflict as ports seek to maximise their profits through their commercial shipping activities (London & Lohmann, 2014). This dilemma is no less true in Auckland where this conflict has surfaced in relation to the many proposals which have been mooted for the development of cruise infrastructure. In each case, POAL has asserted that it cannot give up commercial space to accommodate mega cruise ships unless it can extend Bledisloe Wharf.

Whether the media merely uncovered the story or actively fuelled the debate, POAL's retaliation against its failure to gain approval to extend Bledisloe is perceived as a red herring, indicative of the entrenched community distrust of POAL:

[A key public sector stakeholder] said the port company was only talking about a prospect of four cruise ships being unable to call at Auckland during a one-year halt to its wharf extensions, yet it had been able to accommodate the Queen Mary II since 2008, 'and there are not too many bigger than that.' 'Games are being played.' (Dear-naley, 2015)

One stakeholder was particularly blunt, stating that:

the Port of Auckland's justification that the extension was needed for cruise ships did not 'wash' with him. "They need to be able to provide services and facilities for those big ships to come otherwise they lose it to places like Napier and Tauranga, that's definitely what's driving it. They don't want to lose the trade to those other ports. The cruise ship thing is just a red herring." (Bootham, 2015)

Inherent in this comment is a sense of distrust, alluding to a failure by POAL to fully disclose its reasons for seeking the extension to Bledisloe Wharf. As discussed in the next section, it is that distrust that led to a focus in the media discourse about power and a lack of transparency.

Governance, bureaucracy and debate: power and lack of transparency

Prominent throughout the media discourse surrounding the Bledisloe Wharf controversy was the overarching theme of *Governance, bureaucracy and debate*, and particularly the subordinate main theme, *Distrust of Council/CCOs*. Power and the lack of accountability and transparency were at the core of criticisms levelled at the Council-owned POAL. Reporting of the state of Auckland's cruise infrastructure and

the political environment surrounding proposals for its development revealed both the positive and negative views of both, but of the sub-themes relating to how the Council and POAL engaged with the community, 106 of those sub-themes were negative, with only one reflecting a positive stance. This distribution is clearly indicative of an environment which is characterised by a lack of transparency, political indecision and threats to open access to information:

The council owned the port, but 'it's the ports that seem to have the upper hand. Literally the tail is wagging the dog,' [a community activist] said. 'We have these extensions before this committed long term strategy.' Ports of Auckland would be adamant the extensions should go ahead and block views towards the harbour entrance from the public waterfront areas. 'If they block views of the outer harbour then it's very hard for people to be aware of what they're doing in that port precinct,' he said. (Customs Today, 2015)

A leading financial services expert in New Zealand attributes the community protests against the Bledisloe Wharf extensions to POAL's lack of transparency and accountability (see also Judd & Simpson, 2003). He argues that public sector-owned companies which are listed on the stock exchange and therefore subject to disclosure requirements are far more transparent than are companies which are wholly owned by their public sector bodies. Compounding this observation is a suggestion of arrogance directed against POAL by Auckland Councillors and the incumbent mayor who stated that POAL needs to become more engaged with the community. However, POAL predictably refuted these claims, arguing that they feel that they are "really engaged with the public" (Orsman, 2015b).

Connecting the themes

Analysis of the themes generated during this study provide clear evidence of local support for Auckland's burgeoning cruise tourism industry. The over-arching themes, *Cruise tourism growth* and *Auckland's cruise infrastructure*, are comprised of sub-themes which are for the most part positive, incorporating sub-themes relating to cruise tourism's economic benefit to Auckland, Auckland's growing popularity as a cruise destination and the clear recognition that more facilities of an international standard are required to accommodate Auckland's cruise industry growth. The only negative themes within this over-arching theme are those that address the risks which can occur if suitable cruise infrastructure is not built.

In the context of risk, risk often involves choice (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992), and it is this “choice” which is embodied in the debate which surrounds the further development of Auckland’s cruise infrastructure.

Two distinct threads of debate emerged, reflected in the corresponding most populated over-arching themes, that is, *Shed 10/Queens Wharf* ($n=371$ sub-themes) and *Commercial displacement* ($n=225$ sub-themes). Each involves the choices key stakeholders need to make to mitigate against the risks of contraction or loss of Auckland’s cruise tourism industry. *Shed 10/Queens Wharf* embodies sub-themes which involve the differing views of key stakeholders and the community as to the future use of Queens Wharf while the sub-themes embodied in *Commercial displacement* reflect the differences in objectives between POAL, key stakeholders and the community. In other words, *Shed 10/Queens Wharf* is about place, while *Commercial displacement* is about operational requirements. The fifth over-arching theme, *Governance, bureaucracy and debate*, puts the focus of the debate on the community, with sub-themes representing the community’s frustration with a lack of transparency in the decision-making processes with respect to Queens Wharf and POAL. In other words, the sub-themes which comprise *Cruise tourism growth* and *Auckland’s cruise infrastructure* can be considered to be the economically desirable “outputs” to the two over-arching themes *Shed 10/Queens Wharf* and *Commercial displacement*, while *Governance, bureaucracy and debate* represents the “input,” the decision-making processes which are perceived by many to be ill-conceived, unfair and less-than-transparent. Figure 5 shows the relationship of the over-arching themes.

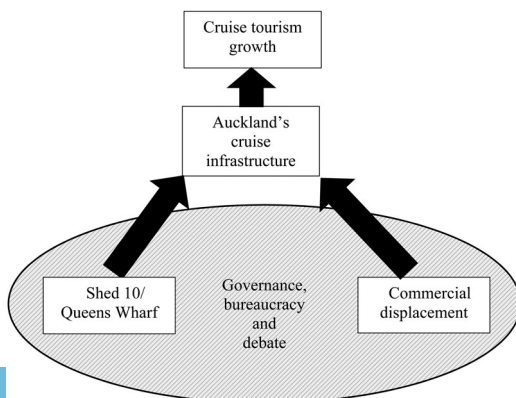


Figure 5. The relationship of the over-arching themes.

Discussion

As noted earlier, previous studies on cruise infrastructure development have focused on such issues as the social, civic and economic benefits of development (Johnson & Lyons, 2011b; McCarthy & Romein, 2012) and, on the other side of the coin, the potential negative impacts of that development on the destination (Brida & Zapata, 2010; Hritz & Cecil, 2008; Terry & Smith, 2015) and whether cruise facilities should be developed at all (Dredge, 2010; Litvin et al., 2013). However, the media discourse in this study did not explicitly mention these issues. Instead, it focused on the divisive and volatile political discourse surrounding the design and location of Auckland’s proposed cruise infrastructure; the co-existence of cruise infrastructure and public space; and the displacement of commercial port operations by cruise shipping operations.

Political debate and community protest are often predictable companions to infrastructure development projects (Dredge, 2010; Griggs & Howarth, 2004; Rozema, Cashmore, Bond, & Chilvers, 2015). Judd and Simpson (2003) argue that community protest can be traced to dispensing with the democratic processes that have traditionally accompanied large infrastructure development projects. Some of the mechanisms used by local government to exclude the public include doing away with referenda; eliminating public scrutiny from negotiations by negotiating behind closed doors; and creating quasi-public agencies which are not bound by the rules which ordinarily apply to local governments (Judd & Simpson, 2003). Judd and Simpson (2003) also observe that major capital projects involving tourism infrastructure are particularly prone to local governments finding ways to exclude the public because of the perceived complexity of these projects (Eisinger, 2000; Legacy & van den Nouwelant, 2015).

In this study, the apparent lack of public sector transparency was a major underlying theme evident in the media discourse. In a city where the Council’s public information office is called “Democracy Services,” a non-compliant, secret process decided by Council officers would inevitably seem to lead to protest. Although a previous study found that the enabling legislation creating Auckland’s CCOs requires democratic accountability (McKinlay, 2015), the reality appears to be different, particularly in relation to POAL’s secret negotiations with the Council to extend Bledisloe Wharf. The lack of public

transparency in these negotiations, uncovered by the media in their extensive reporting during this period (see Figure 5), directly led to community protests. Media discourse has fuelled community protest in other contexts as well. For example, media focus on potential risks led to community protests which resulted in the blocked development of a biomass electricity plant (Upreti & van der Horst, 2004). However, an absence of media focus can also lead to community protests. Hindmarsh (2014) found that social discontent in respect of infrastructure development could result from failing to include local, community viewpoints in the media, particularly where that local knowledge is rich.

Political change and indecision have been found to thwart infrastructure development, leading to lost opportunities (Huston, Rahimzad, & Parsa, 2015; McLaren, 2014). The media discourse surrounding Auckland's cruise infrastructure development reveals political change and considerable indecision, arguably threatening Auckland's future cruise infrastructure development. The political change, in this case, was the result of a major reshaping of Auckland's local government structures, leading to the amalgamation of regional and local authorities into a single council.

Charges of indecision have arisen, for example, in respect of the incumbent mayor's back-flips with respect to the location of and investment in a new cruise terminal and uncertainties related to port expansion. Political indecision thwarting development is not new to Auckland. Other examples include the construction of an inadequate harbour bridge crossing, an incomplete rail tunnel, the first (abandoned) waterfront stadium proposal and the further development of Princes Wharf.

Another theme which was prevalent in this study was the disagreement between levels of government. Disagreement concerning infrastructure development is not an uncommon phenomenon (Schmallegger & Carson, 2010). It can be traced to such factors as a perceived power imbalance (Stewart & Lithgow, 2015); differences in objectives (Kubiak, 2015; Orsman, 2015a); and a fragmented rather than collaborative approach to planning and development (Legacy & van den Nouwelant, 2015; London & Cadman, 2009). In this study, the media discourse focused on two high-profile examples of perceived power imbalance leading to differing objectives. Central Government and the former city and regional governments clashed over the development of Queens Wharf in what appears to be an assertion of unwelcome

power by Central Government based on differing objectives, that is, the use of the wharf during RWC 2011 and the complexity of the cruise facility which should be developed. In the second example, the media revealed an episode where POAL appeared to use its power to expedite the bureaucratic process to secure its objective of more commercial wharf space. It is this bid which exposes another expression of differing objectives, and which has the potential of threatening Auckland's future cruise growth.

Proposals for other public sector large scale infrastructure projects in Auckland surfaced during the same period as the one represented by this research, generating similar scenarios. Amongst them are recurring proposals for a waterfront sports stadium, a story that takes place during a similar period (2006–2016) to that of the cruise infrastructure debate (2008–2016) and involving many of the same key stakeholders. The media discourse is familiar, focusing on such issues as the impact of the stadium on the sight-lines (view) of the harbour, uncertainty over the source of finance for the stadium, a High Court action brought by dissatisfied Auckland residents, indecision about its location (involving two of the same wharves) and unwelcome intervention by Central Government. The stadium debate was reinvigorated in 2016, once again becoming the subject of considerable media discourse (Lewis, P., 2016; Orsman, 2016; Stuff.co.nz, 2016).

Given that this research is about the analysis of the media discourse relating to episodes which reveal a highly contested political environment, it is not the aim of this paper to offer suggestions or solutions about how to resolve that environment or to make recommendations about how to progress Auckland's cruise infrastructure development. Instead, this study seeks to illustrate the media's role in shaping public opinion with respect to two major episodes, that is, the controversies surrounding the development of Queens Wharf and the proposed Bledisloe Wharf extension. As the above discussion illustrates, much of the media discourse highlighted the sentiments of distrust and feelings of a lack of transparency harboured by the community, sentiments related to the sustained climate of political indecision and perceived unwelcome assertions of power surrounding these episodes. In such a hostile environment, it is incumbent upon policy-makers to understand the dynamics of the media discourse surrounding significant issues and events if they are to understand how public opinion is shaped. More specifically, policy-makers

need to understand how the media discourse differs from their own communications, aligning them accordingly to enable them to co-opt community support rather than foster further challenge and dispute (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Simon & Jerit, 2007), a finding that was clear in this study particularly in respect of the perceived lack of transparency. Furthermore, policy-makers need to understand that changes in the media discourse do not *cause* changes in public opinion, but as part of a complex system information dissemination, it is the chief source of being able to predict public opinion (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Other sources include professional journals and other print media; the oral discourse used by policy-makers and those who seek to influence them; and the challenger (or claims-making) discourse, generated by those who seek to organise collective action opposing contentious issues (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Stallings, 1990). However, Stallings (1990) argues that the media discourse element of this system is the most important because it is the media which gathers the views of experts who interpret and explain the issues or events to the public.

Another factor for policy-makers to consider is the degree to which the media discourse reflects the community's familiarity with the reported issues or events (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). In this context, Gamson and Modigliani (1989, p. 9) refer to the media-dependency hypothesis which "suggests that the relative importance of media discourse depends on how readily available meaning-generating experiences are in people's everyday lives." In other words, the media will construct meaning within the discourse according to how they gauge the extent of the public's knowledge and experience with respect to the reported issues and events. Thus, the significance of the media discourse and its interpretation by the community will depend on how familiar the community is with the reported issues and events and its consequent ability to evaluate that discourse. The construction of this meaning can be significant because although the audience may be dependent on media discourse, it is, as noted above, part of a toolkit which individuals use to shape their opinion (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). However, their reliance on this discourse is likely to be substantial where it is considered to be a major, accessible source of information about familiar issues or events, particularly where the discourse focuses on community dissatisfaction with or challenges to policy-makers.

In this study, Auckland's harbour is a central focal point for the community, given that the harbour, its wharves and harbourside lands affect the community directly through living, work and leisure activities. In addition, cruise infrastructure is increasingly part of the community's consciousness as the contribution to Auckland's economy continues to grow and as more and more Aucklanders take cruise holidays. Therefore, media discourse relating to any unwelcome intervention affecting their cherished harbour will invariably place much of its focus on public opinion.

Another factor for policy-makers to consider is the temporal scope in which the media discourse appears. In contrast to isolated events which tend to be reported once and then forgotten, the media discourse relating to high profile or familiar events which occur over time is constructed by creating patterns of issues relating to those events (Stallings, 1990). As observed in this study, such patterns are based on commonalities which the public extracts from the sequence of events which form that discourse (Stallings, 1990). In other words, "a pattern exists when someone successfully creates a link among events that others might see as unique" (Stallings, 1990, p. 88). Thus, in this study while the two episodes appear to be separate events, the thematic analysis demonstrates that the link, that is, the commonality, between them is the perceived lack of transparency and distrust which permeated both episodes. Thus, it appears that the political indecision and failures to disclose information linked to the Queens Wharf episode proved to be part of a pattern, a culture that endured, becoming even bigger issues which manifested themselves in the Bledisloe Wharf extension proposal episode. The growth in the intensity of public opinion relating to these issues is also evident in the media discourse. The pattern of themes extracted relating to this negative community reaction latterly included the presence of claim-making influence in the media discourse. Claim-makers target a specific issue and seek to make that issue a public or collective problem rather than a personal one (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Stallings, 1990). Claim-makers can be highly organised and high profile, working with journalists to change the frames of reporting. Thus, policy-makers need to consider the role of claim-makers in the media discourse (Stallings, 1990) as they formulate their own conversations with the public.

Thus, as this discussion demonstrates, the two seemingly separate episodes became a continuum of

events, linked by public opinion which challenged and continues to challenge (see, e.g. Lewis, P., 2016) Auckland's policy-makers. It is therefore incumbent on those policy-makers to consider the factors that both shape and are shaped by the media discourse and develop their communications strategies bearing in mind the importance of the media discourse.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates how the media shapes public debate surrounding the development of large, public infrastructure. The reporting of this discourse in the context of the rich case study presented in this paper will be of particular interest to policy-makers faced with proposals for the development of new or expanded cruise infrastructure. Many studies can be found which focus on the specific issues relating to cruise infrastructure development, for example, social and environmental impacts (Brida & Zapata, 2010; Hritz & Cecil, 2008) and financing and investment (Wang, Pallis, & Notteboom, 2014). However, for the most part, these studies represent a detailed look at a topic within a specific period. In contrast, this study considers the role and impact of these issues as components of a political process over a period of years.

Reporting of the events surrounding infrastructure development falls within the media's traditional role as the voice of local government. In this study, one particular journalist fulfilled this role but rebuffed the reciprocal tradition of government relying on the media to disseminate its own message (Besley & Prat, 2006; Gordon, 2000). In addition, the community protest which resulted from the Council's perceived lack of transparency evidences the view that the media can play a significant role in informing community response to a lack of transparency in the public infrastructure development process (Hurliman & Dolnicar, 2012; Wilken et al., 2015). In one sense, proposals for Auckland's cruise infrastructure development continue to be mere exemplars, with none of the debate focused on the issues which feature prominently in other studies. Therefore, the value of this rich case study lies not only in the field of cruise tourism but in any sector considering large public infrastructure development.

This study also demonstrates that thematic analysis can be a useful approach for deciphering the political debate, particularly where the debate takes place over a longitudinal period. Discovering the prevalence and

patterns of the themes of that debate over time enables the researcher to aggregate those themes to identify, prioritise and analyse the threads which comprise the day-to-day reporting of the issues. In other words, thematic analysis can prove to be useful in creating a cohesive narrative of the decision-making process, stakeholder views and community response. For example, in this study, the analysis revealed unanimous support for the development of a large public infrastructure project while at the same time exposing a uniform resistance to interference by Central Government and a substantial, enduring mistrust of the decision-making process. Although the focal point of this study relates to Auckland's cruise infrastructure, the spoils of battle could be a waterfront sports stadium, an international convention centre, a new hospital, social housing or a second airport runway.

Furthermore, as this study shows, the application of thematic analysis to the case study method can produce a rich case study by providing "texture, detail and critical insight" (Rule & John, 2011), useful in attaining a deeper understanding of the case as well as the rationale for the conclusions reached by the researcher (Faltis, 1997). In other words, a case study can be enhanced not only by providing rich detail but also by triangulating the detail provided in the case study with documentation about that case.

Suggested further research in the context of cruise infrastructure development includes analysing how the media reports issues, looking as such journalistic techniques as framing, hedging, stance and superlativism (McLennan et al., 2014; Schmallegger & Carson, 2010). Also, a survey of policy-makers, stakeholders and the wider community would provide additional insights into their interpretation of the media discourse (Bowen, 2009) and at the same time, enrich the results produced by the thematic analysis. Conversely, survey data can be complemented by a thematic analysis of the media discourse (Bauer, 2000).

This study was limited to a thematic analysis of the media discourse over a pre-defined period. It was further limited to content which focused predominantly on cruise infrastructure development, although as can be seen from the preceding discussion, the thematic analysis undertaken in this study could have been applied to tell the story of other pivotal issues such as political dysfunction, planning for and development of any public space or the governance of a CCO. As such, the approach outlined in this study can usefully be employed on its own or in combination with other methods by researchers and

policy-makers who wish to acquire a nuanced understanding of the issues which confront governments and communities in diverse fields, for example, the provision of health services, the economic benefits of tourism and the formulation of transport policy – as well as the decision-making process which surrounds public infrastructure development.

Note

1. The factual content documented in this paper has mostly been compiled from the 103 articles which form the dataset used in this research. These articles have been extracted from 14 different sources, with 66 of the articles sourced from *NZHerald.co.nz*, the online version of Auckland's main daily newspaper.

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