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Racism in Aotearoa New Zealand:

Analysing the talk of Māori and their Pākehā partners

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology
at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

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2016

Abstract

Previous studies on racism in the field of critical social psychology have focused on perpetrator talk and text, perpetrator personality and cognition, and in-group psychology. Research examining targets' perspectives and responses to racism and race theory is rare. The current study redresses a little of this imbalance by exploring the accounts of indigenous Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand and their partners. The researcher, a Pākehā (B.A. Māori studies), used long standing Māori contacts to establish trust, and also sought approval from a Māori Cultural adviser, the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, and a local marae (*Takapuwahia*) before beginning the project. Interviews were conducted with 24 participants aged 30-74, 19 of whom were Māori (10 women, 9 men) and five of whom were Pākehā women partners. Participants were asked three open ended questions. Had they had experiences of racism, and if so, could they describe them? Why did they think the racism occurred? Was there a solution? The epistemology chosen to underpin the analyses was social constructionism, which allowed the inclusion of political and social contexts and power issues, and also acknowledged the power of language to not merely reflect reality, but actively construct it. A data driven inductive approach was employed to bring to light the uniqueness of the participants' perceptions. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) informed by social constructionism, was used in the first paper *Resisting racism*, to outline three themes: difficulties in expressing resistance due to power imbalance or stereotyping, non-vocalised resistance, and vocalised resistance, which was the most stressful and successful response. In *Accounting for racism*, a micro-level analysis of participants' talk draws on the discourse analytic tradition of Potter and Wetherell (1987) to highlight four main discourses: Ignorance of racism and Māori people, media promotion of negative stereotypes, an innate Pākehā sense of superiority, and institutionalised racism. Thematic analysis is used again in *Reducing racism* to define four main themes: Structural racism with attention to the workplace and the justice system, education's role in anti-racism practices, increased interaction, and becoming inclusively 'Kiwī' while practising mutual respect. This research contributes key insights from the targets' perspective, and addresses a gap in current research which is focussed almost exclusively on perpetrator theory. In addition, this study holds significance for psychologists, educationalists,

researchers and policy makers as it brings fresh understanding on racism against Māori and how to best reduce it in Aotearoa New Zealand.

He mihi tuinga Acknowledgements

Nōu hoki, e Īhowa, te nui, te mana, The first honour must go to
te kororia, te wikitoria, te honore; Jesus Christ
nōu nga tangata katoa i te whenua. through Whom all things were created
Nōu rātou katoa i manaaki. and God the Father,
Ko tāku mihi tuatahi ki a Koe, Creator of all things,
Te Matua Kaha Rawa, Who in Genesis blessed all peoples equally
ki tōu Tama Ihu Karaiti hoki. and before Whom all people will stand.

Ko Raukawa te moana The Cook Straits are the ocean
Te Whanga-nui-a-tara te whanga Wellington the harbour
Ko Kaukau te maunga Kaukau the mountain
Ko Kaiwharawhara te awa Kaiwhara the river
Ko Ngaio te rohe Ngaio the district
Ko te Pākehā tōku iwi the Pākehā my people.
Nō Ingarangi me Koterani My parents and my ancestors
ōku mātua ōku tīpuna came from England and Scotland
engari i whānau mai ahau ki konei I was born in Wellington,
ki te whanga-nui-a-tara. in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Ko Sylvia te ingoa. My name is Sylvia.

Ēhara tāku toa i te toa takitahi, Without the help of many people,
engari he toa takitini ē. this thesis could never have been written.

Ngā mihi tuatahi I wish to acknowledge and thank the
ki ngā tūao katoa e kōrero ana ki konei. participants who freely gave of their time
He Pākehā ahau, nō reira, and lived understanding,
he iti tāku mōhio; When they talked about their experiences
Na rātou nga kupu mōhio they shed light on this subject

i roto i tēnei rangahau. and gave wisdom to Pākehā.

Ngā mihi ki āku kaiwhakahaere, My thanks to my professorial supervisors,
Ko Keith Tuffin rāua ko Antonia Lyons Keith and Antonia,
e hika, te manawanui o Hopa! who showed amazing patience,
He tino awhina a rāua whakataki, gave consistently constructive feedback,
a rāua tohu katoa. positive criticism, and encouragement.

Ngā mihi hoki ki ngā kaimahi My thanks also to the librarians
O te whare pukapuka o Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa for their helpful communication and
mo ngā pukapuka me ngā pūrongo inexhaustible supply of articles and books,
atikara, he mea nui māku. and the occasional
He āwhina a rātou i ngā wā katoa. kindly waiver of overdues.

Ngā mihi nui rawa atu From my heart,
ki tōku hoa rangatira, I would like to thank my wonderful husband,
me a māua tamariki pai tokotoru, our three equally wonderful adult children,
(mo tou mōhio hangarau, he rawa) (thanks especially for the technical expertise)
toku whaea kēkē Marion. and my amazing, supportive Aunty Marion
Waru tekau ma waru ona tau, who at age 89 is still teaching
he kaiwhakaako tonu ia. To all of you, your unfailing belief in me and
Nā koutou te whakapono, telling me I can do this,
te tumanako, te aroha. your love and support and prayers,
Nō reira, kua oti te mahi. have made this journey possible.

Ngā mihi hoki ki āku hoa katoa! I wish to thank the many friends who
He mea tino pai rawa atu expressed encouragement, affirmation, and
ō koutou aroha, tautoko hoki. love, throughout this project. How could I
Ka whakatenatena ahau a koutou kupu have got through this, particularly during
whakahauhau; times of family illness, without those coffee
nā koutou te kaha, te toa, te manawanui breaks, the phone calls, the meals,

Nā to koutou aroha, atawhai hoki, the special times together.
 Ka tautohe au Just a few dear ones mentioned here:
 ki te whai mai ki tēnei mahi Pani (for not only being my dear friend, but
 Ngā mihi nui ki a Pani, for sharing understanding of *te ao Māori*, and
 toku tino hoa Māori for encouraging me in *te reo*),
 kia ora mo tou mōhio Sheryl, so many discussions over cups of tea,
 ki a Sheryl raua ko Julie so many intelligent insights,
 ngā kaitautoko tino pai, Julie, for your heart warming support,
 ki a Kath rāua ko Shelley Kath & Shelley, fellow students,
 ki tatou katoa kei PFNZ, And all my friends in PFNZ prison ministry
 nā koutou ngā kupu ‘Ka taea e koe...’ you encouragers you...

Hei whakamutunga And finally, to all of you

Kia hora te marino, May the seas be calm,
Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana, May the shimmer of summer
Kia tere te kārohirohi Glisten like the greenstone,
i tōu huarahi. And dance across your pathway.
Ma Ihowa koutou e manaaki, e tiaki, May God bless you and protect you
i nga wa katoa. for all time

My journey

I grew up unaware of my privilege as a Pākehā *Kiwi*, and totally unaware that Māori might be marginalised. Culture wasn't something I thought I had; the fact that New Zealand as a whole was English in orientation was something I took for granted. I remember in Secondary School years beginning to sense that French might not be much use to me, and asking a teacher if I could learn Māori instead, but when he said it wasn't on the curriculum, I wasn't surprised, and it didn't seem to warrant protest. After all, this was an English speaking nation. The years passed, I trained as a teacher, and it seemed to me that New Zealand was a world wide example of racial harmony and equal opportunity for all. This was the accepted, taken for granted assessment of the status quo among my Pākehā peers. I had a musician friend who was Māori, but she and I were focussed on promoting our music and racism was never discussed. It wasn't until much later, when I took up voluntary prison ministry work on inter-denominational church teams, and found myself meeting regularly with fellow workers who were Māori, that I began to hear things that made me question my assumptions about Aotearoa New Zealand.

The first of these was when a close friend, a Māori married to a blonde Pākehā, told me that her equally intelligent, healthy children had been treated differently by teachers at school. They had assumed that the child who was phenotypically Māori would be interested in rugby, and the child who was of Pākehā appearance, would be academically inclined. Their teachers had constructively encouraged them in these directions, without mentioning the supposed ethnic orientation. This shocked me, not only that it had happened, but that I, an ex-teacher had had no idea. From older Māori, I heard accounts of their childhoods, including beatings from teachers for letting slip with a Māori word, having to give up their seats on buses for Pākehā, and sitting separately in the cinema. Others told me quite bluntly that Māori were still discriminated against today, especially in the legal system, and the fact that many Māori were overly represented in prisons was a miscarriage of justice. This I baulked at; after all, everyone in prison had a record, and I knew nothing of aversive racism manifesting in biased sentencing practices. No relevant statistics ever made the papers.

Seeking bridges, I began to learn *te reo* and Māori studies. I was endeared by the hospitality and friendship, and always felt challenged by accounts of racism, however mild. I began to wonder if it was possible to look deeper, to understand more about the lived experience of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to focus the light of academic research on what was being said to me. It occurred to me that what they were telling me was not generally known, and sat outside the parameters of existing studies written by Pākehā; that if I hadn't expected their statements, then maybe other middle class Pākehā would not expect them either. This melded well with the concepts of social constructionism, in which a researcher might create their own reality, by composing a questionnaire which limited the answers to what they expected to find. I considered the idea that if Māori constructed their embodied experience with their own words, instead of trying to fit Pākehā created frames, it might be possible to understand things which did not currently exist in a Pākehā ontology. This was an exciting thought. Although I didn't realise it, my journey towards the doctorate had irrevocably begun.

In the course of the research, I found myself challenged. There were many occasions on which I found myself reflecting on my own situatedness as a middle class Pākehā, in a bi-cultural Aotearoa New Zealand, trying to understand what I was reading. It became clear to me that my background and goals had created an ontological blindness. Why had I chosen to trust a certain epistemology? Had that worked to screen out Māori constructions? Throughout, my Māori friends guided and steered me, kindly, joking, sympathising with the hard work involved, but always bringing me back to what they saw to be self evident: Pākehā do not see things the way Māori do, and they are generally ignorant of Māori experience. It needed explaining, and they were glad I was listening. I realised it was therefore my honour, and my academic challenge, to analyse and present themes and discourses of the Māori experience of racism in Aotearoa New Zealand, as told by Māori participants and their partners.

Glossary of Māori words

Māori words in the text are italicised, except for ‘Māori’ ‘Pākehā’ and ‘Aotearoa’ which are in common usage. The translations relate to the Māori words or phrases as used in the context of the thesis and the excerpts from participants’ interviews.

<i>aroha</i>	love, caring, compassion, empathy
<i>ako Māori</i>	to learn the Māori way of doing things
<i>āta</i>	A <i>kaupapa Māori</i> principle relating to the building and nurturing of relationships
<i>haka</i>	Māori war dance
<i>He aha te mea nui?</i>	What is the most important thing in the world?
<i>He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.</i>	It is people, people, people.
<i>hongi</i>	to press noses in greeting
<i>iwi</i>	a people
<i>kānga</i>	sweetcorn
<i>karakia</i>	prayer
<i>kaiwhakamana</i>	respected elder in authority, who empowers
<i>kanohi ki te kanohi</i>	face to face
<i>kapahaka</i>	Māori culture performing group
<i>karakia</i>	prayer
<i>kaumatua</i>	old man or woman, a person of status
<i>kaupapa Māori</i>	Māori approach or methods
<i>kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga</i>	A <i>kaupapa Māori</i> principle relating to Socio-Economic Mediation
<i>Kiwi</i>	New Zealand citizen regardless of ethnicity (coll.)
<i>koha</i>	gift
<i>Kohanga Reo</i>	Māori language immersion schools for children aged up to six years

<i>kunekune</i>	fat, short-legged, feral pig
<i>Kura Kaupapa Māori</i>	Māori language immersion schools
<i>mana</i>	authority, influence, prestige, power
<i>marae</i>	(Māori) village common
<i>manuhiri</i>	visitor
<i>Māori</i>	Person of the native Polynesian race, New Zealander
<i>mokopuna</i>	grandchild
<i>Moriori</i>	Chatham Island Māori
<i>mōteatea</i>	poetry, lament
<i>Ngāti</i>	Prefix or separate word meaning tribal group
<i>paiheretia</i>	unity and connectedness
<i>Pākehā</i>	a New Zealander of predominantly European descent
<i>poroporoaki</i>	traditional farewell ceremony
<i>pōwhiri</i>	welcoming ceremony
<i>rangatiratanga</i>	evidence of breeding and greatness; chieftainship
<i>reo, te reo</i>	Māori language
<i>tangata</i>	human being
<i>tangi</i>	Māori funeral
<i>tauiwi</i>	European or New Zealander of non-Māori descent (literally ‘other people’)
<i>tautuutu</i>	the principle of reciprocity
<i>Takapuwahia</i>	An area between Porirua and Titahi Bay
<i>taonga tuku iho</i>	the principle of cultural aspiration
<i>te ao Māori</i>	the Māori world, Māoridom
<i>te reo</i>	Māori language (literally ‘the language’)
<i>tikanga</i>	rule, method, customs
<i>tinu rangatiratanga</i>	the principle of self determination
<i>whaka</i>	prefix/particle: to cause something to happen

whakaiti

As a principle or value: Humble oneself so
that the message can be heard

whakamā

to be ashamed, shy, bashful, embarrassed

whānau

family, extended family

whakatauki

Māori proverb

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