The Construction of Ethnicity and 'Belonging' in New Zealand: Where We Have Come From and Where We Might be Going¹

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Introduction

In the lead up to the 2011 election the issue of 'race' again featured in discussions about the future of New Zealand. The split between the Māori Party and breakaway MP Hone Harawira embodied debates over who has the right to speak on behalf of 'Māori'. ACT party leader Don Brash continued to argue that we are 'all one people' but in the process highlighted 'racial' groupings. New Zealand First party leader Winston Peters, linking nationality and ethnicity, tried to invoke nationalism by identifying a possible foreign 'Chinese' takeover of New Zealand enterprises.² In addition, in 2010 the New Citizen Party was registered to represent 'Chinese New Zealanders'.³ These discussions invoke commonly accepted, but often confusing, categories of race, nationality or ethnicity. Alongside these debates lies the official classification of the New Zealand population, which is based not on race but on self-determined, culturally defined, ethnicity. So how did these official categories come about? And, perhaps more importantly, how useful are they when considering public policy?

Various approaches to ethnic enumeration

Questions about the official classification of populations are not particular to New Zealand. In late 2007 a conference was held in Montreal under the title 'Should we count, how should we count and why?'⁴ The conference brought together a variety of opinions about the collection and use of ethnicity or race data around the world. A summing-up address drew on the framework of Jean-Louis Rallu, Victor Piché and Patrick Simon,⁵ who identify four main approaches to ethnic enumeration by governments:

- enumeration for the purpose of political control
- non-enumeration in the name of national integration
- · enumeration that supports a discourse of national hybridity
- enumeration for the purpose of combating discrimination.

Historical examples of enumeration for the purpose of political control are not hard to find; apartheid-era South Africa is a recent one.

Germany and France stand out as the two main examples of nations which follow an official policy of non-enumeration in accordance with an ideal of national integration. Ann Morning suggests that past misuse of data in these countries means that many people fear official classification will stigmatize and stereotype some groups, leading to discrimination.⁶ Despite the lack of official measures, news items coming out of Germany and France reveal that people employ such classifications on a daily basis.⁷

Morning identifies some Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Colombia, as supporting a discourse 'praising interethnic mixture or hybridity'.⁸

Increasingly, in most countries the justification for counting and classifying people is that monitoring allows governments to assess whether particular groups are being discriminated against. Monitoring assesses groups' outcomes in areas such as health, employment, education, and housing. In addition, the counting of people often considers the degree to which groups, particularly migrant groups, have integrated into the wider society. Recently, some nations have been focusing on issues of indigeneity, often stressing questions of sovereignty rather than integration.

Ethnicity is not easily identified or measured

In line with the international literature, the Montreal conference affirmed that ethnicity is not an easily identified or measured human characteristic. The conference highlighted three important issues. First, there is increasing recognition that ethnicity is a fluid category (ethnic mobility being one aspect) and new identities are always emerging. Secondly, ethnicity is also multi-dimensional – identity is not only expressed, but also perceived and observed. Thirdly, certain groups, such as indigenous peoples, and Roma in Europe, present particular challenges for conceptualizing ethnicity.

The Montreal conference agreed on three further key points regarding the official collection and classification of ethnic data. First, a variety of people, not just officials, need to be involved in creating definitions. However, it was also recognized that encouraging individual or group involvement in the creation of official groupings of people has the potential for promoting political aspirations. Secondly, official data collections and the categories within them are always political, so researchers should be critical when interpreting such data. And thirdly, there should be a shift away from prescribed definitions of race to self-defined ethnicity.

The New Zealand perspective

So what is New Zealand's official perspective regarding whether and how we should count?

Classifications of race and ethnicity have a long and often problematic history in human societies. Cookie White Stephan and Walter Stephan reviewed this history and note that in the late eighteenth century biologists began to subject humans to the same type of classification system previously used only for plants and other animals.⁹ The way in which these classifications were applied however, was heavily influenced by the specific history of each country, especially the source of its migrants. Quoting Frantz Fanon, Lachy Paterson states that colonial societies such as New Zealand were founded on a 'division of the colonizer and the colonized', so counting the indigenous population and the settlers was an important dimension of maintaining this division.¹⁰

The Treaty of Waitangi and its interpretations have also influenced data collections. While some local collections were undertaken before 1840, the first census of all European settlers was carried out in 1851, 11 years after the signing of the Treaty.¹¹ In 1851 New Zealand had two provinces, New Ulster (the Auckland area) and New Munster (the rest of the country). Each province had its own government and each carried out a census that did not include Māori. The first collection of data from Māori took place in 1857-1858. In 1951, for the first time the census included the whole population and separate Māori censuses ceased.

For a long period post colonization, the two main population groups in New Zealand were Māori and European settlers. Later, reflecting migration patterns, Pacific peoples became important in data collections, followed by Asian peoples. Much has been written in New Zealand about the subsequent development of official racial and then ethnic categories.¹²

In common with most other countries, early New Zealand statistical collections were based on racial categories. Reflecting ideas of race, notions of blood quantity have also been applied. Early censuses collected only one ancestral group per person. However, there was also recognition of 'hybridity' with the adoption of the category 'Māori-European half-caste'.¹³ Then, in 1936 the census asked respondents to record fractions such as 'three-quarters European' and 'one-quarter Māori'.

The term 'race' continued to be used until 1951, when a switch was made to the term 'descent'. The concept of self-defined 'ethnicity', or more specifically 'ethnic origin', was first introduced in the 1970s. The term 'ethnic origin' then became 'ethnic group' in the early 1990s – a further shift away from the notion of biologically-determined identity. The census also allowed respondents to identify multiple origins, and later multiple ethnic responses were also accepted in the census. In the 1991 census, a separate question was added about Māori ancestry and this has been repeated in subsequent censuses.

As argued by Ann Morning and Daniel Sabbagh, decisions about whether and how we continue to count are strongly influenced by 'the politics of distribution and the politics of recognition' (emphasis in original).¹⁴ Official recognition of groups can be important in several contexts. Recognition can support a celebration of diversity within a multicultural society. The acknowledgment of clear language and cultural differences among ethnic groups may also help policy makers to better target services. But this type of recognition does not need to be connected to group-based rights. In New Zealand, the Treaty partnership between Māori and the Crown is a significant element in both the politics of recognition and the politics of distribution. Public recognition of Maori as first inhabitants of New Zealand may be mainly symbolic. But wider, ethnic-based 'special measures' such as law school student quotas, scholarships, ethnic-based research funds, health funding, and payments to tertiary providers for degree completions redistribute resources. Such measures can apply to any disadvantaged groups, but in New Zealand the focus is Māori and Pacific peoples.

These measures require clear definitions of who belongs to a group. Currently, there is more than one approach to determining group-based access to resources. Self-determined ethnicity is usually the measure used to highlight disadvantage, whereas ancestry, sometimes requiring proof, is often used to measure belonging when resources are to be transferred to individuals within a group. As a further complicating factor, much research suggests that ancestry is often, but not always, an important factor in a person's conceptualization and expression of their ethnicity.¹⁵

Measures of belonging are also important in the distribution of political power. Māori seats in Parliament (and at times on local bodies) require definitions of who is Māori and who is not. Again, it is ancestry not ethnicity that determines eligibility. The criteria for eligibility have changed over time. Between 1893 and 1975, those of 'more than half Māori descent' were not allowed to vote in a European electorate. Those of 'less than half Māori descent' could vote only in a European electorate.¹⁶ From 1896 those of 'half and half' descent were able to choose whether to register for the European roll or vote (unregistered) in Māori seats.¹⁷ Since 1975 the eligibility criteria have been relaxed and those with some degree of provable Māori descent.¹⁸ Without this change, the effect of intermarriage would eventually mean that few people technically would be eligible to vote on the Māori roll.

In practice, ethnic-based special measures form a small part of the policies of redistribution, particularly since the Mallard review of targeted policies and programmes.¹⁹ However, they invoke strong public reactions so need to be carefully considered in relation to their costs and benefits.²⁰ Reflecting on the historic effort to separate church and the state, David Bromell notes,

'It is curious that a society that was rightly cautious about extending public recognition and rights to one form of cultural identity (namely, religion) has, since the mid-1970s, been less critically reflective about extending public recognition and rights to another form of cultural identity (namely, ethnicity)'.²¹

It is against this broad background I now consider current and emerging issues in ethnic data collections.

Challenges with current ethnic data collections

Ethnic data collection in New Zealand faces a number of challenges, some of which have only emerged in recent years. Each of the points below is an important issue, but space permits only brief comments here. More extensive discussions can be found in the rapidly expanding national and international literature, some of which is cited in this paper.

Factors for consideration are:

- the Treaty of Waitangi partnership
- the effect of genetic research on thinking about ethnicity
- 'diversity within diversity'
- ethnic 'hybridity'
- ethnic mobility
- indigeneity
- the 'New Zealander' response in the census
- group ethnic measures (notably ethnic families)
- the question of who can research whom in New Zealand (this is more connected to the use of data than methods of classification).

The Treaty of Waitangi partnership

The Treaty partnership has influenced data collection and reporting. But those discussing ethnicity sometimes misunderstand this partnership and, therefore, ethnicity. For example, psychologists Chris Sibley and James Liu state, 'The idea of a partnership between Maori (the indigenous peoples of New Zealand) and Pakeha (New Zealanders of European descent) was enshrined in the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840'.²² Many New Zealanders believe the Treaty formed a partnership between Māori and Pākehā (a problematic term in itself), but that has never been the case. The Treaty formed a partnership between those iwi and hapū who signed the Treaty and the Crown. Some iwi did not sign the Treaty; however, it is often treated as a treaty between Māori as an emergent group and the Crown.²³

The Crown in 1840 was very different to the Crown in 2011. In 1840, the Crown was the British government representing British subjects, who, because

of the extent of the British Empire, included groups such as ethnic Indians living in India. Now the Crown is the New Zealand Government. As such, the Crown today represents all New Zealanders – Māori, Europeans, Asian peoples, Pacific peoples, and all other groups. This representation potentially includes the many New Zealanders, including Māori, who live overseas but retain political, economic and social links with New Zealand. In addition, it is increasingly recognized that the Crown itself has a Māori dimension.²⁴ New Zealand has had a Māori governor-general, Sir Paul Reeves (1985-1990), and in 2011, it has another, Jerry Mateparae. The number of Māori members of parliament has increased from seven in 1993-1996 to a peak of 23 in 2005-2008, before dropping back to 20 in the 2008 parliament (16.4% of MPs). Māori also work for the Crown in a variety of roles, including filling 16.7% of public service jobs overall and 9.0% of senior management roles in 2008.

The historical development of Crown-Māori relations – and misunderstandings concerning these relations – are a first indication of the complex issues involved in conceptualizing and defining groups in New Zealand.

Effect of genetic research on thinking about ethnicity

At the Montreal conference on ethnic counting, there was a call for a shift away from prescribed definitions of race to self-defined ethnicity. Findings from genetic research tend to support this idea.

The concepts of 'race' and 'racial groups' are contentious, with three broad positions evident. One position is that race has no biological basis. Morning cites the finding that human beings share 99.9% of their DNA, which has become a mainstream argument for undermining racial categories.²⁵ This research tends to support an idea of a common heritage and common humanity.

The second broad position is that there are visible genetic-based differences, but that these are primarily cosmetic. They include superficial characteristics such as skin and hair colour, features that involve a small number of genes that were selected for historically in particular environments. This view tends to support a modified idea of a common humanity.²⁶ While skin colour and other visible differences might be seen as cosmetic, they do affect several outcomes, including the experience of discrimination.²⁷ The third broad position is that genes and race remain linked to each other. This assertion tends to arise in relation to health outcomes but occasionally, and more contentiously, in relation to issues such as cognitive and physical abilities. In New Zealand it has emerged in the context of speculation about Māori inheritance of 'warrior genes'.²⁸ Except for some specific and rare diseases, this third position seems to have limited support in the literature.

However, even if distinct 'races' existed in the past, centuries of intermarriage and miscegenation have blurred boundaries. This is revealed in popular television programmes such as the genealogical documentary series *Who Do You Think You Are?*, as well as through new genetic testing tools available to the public which often uncover complex ancestries. These factors tend to support ideas of a common humanity rather than clear racial or ethnic boundaries.

'Diversity within diversity'

At the last Census (April, 1956) New Zealand's population was just under two million two hundred thousand, and if the present rates of natural increase and immigration continue, it will reach three million in 1975. Almost 90 per cent. is of British stock and about 6 per cent are Maoris.²⁹

What is striking in this quotation from a 1957 Australian and New Zealand bank report is the way New Zealand's population was seen as primarily comprised of two non-overlapping races, those 'of British stock' and 'Maoris'. Even today much health research still considers only two 'groups': Māori and a residual non-Māori group. In part this practice reflects a wish to honour the Treaty. Increasingly, however, health and social research considers four groupings: Māori, Pacific, Asian, and European. Sometimes social scientists and policy makers employ six census-based groupings: European; Māori; Pacific peoples; Asian; Middle Eastern, Latin American and African (MELAA); and a new (contentious) category of 'Other'. There is a seventh category that is important. This is the combined 'no response' or 'not defined' respondents. These respondents may have failed to complete the census form, or did not wish to record their ethnic responses – perhaps because, for example, they belong to an ethnic group that has suffered from persecution.

Many of these categories are not ones we choose for ourselves when filling in census forms. They are used because researchers, policy makers and statistical agencies see a need to reduce the complexity of data collections, so tend to regroup the many possible responses into a much smaller number of categories. At times, this regrouping has changed the responses.

Statistics New Zealand notes that apart from Māori, all the high-level ethnic classifications are not individual ethnic groups but collections of groups. While in many surveys, including the census, 'New Zealand European' is a box that can be ticked, the higher-level groups of European, Pacific peoples, and Asian are generally not responses that can be ticked. Therefore, they are not strictly 'who we are', but who statistical agencies or researchers group us with.

The 'European' category includes a wide range of nationalities and ethnic groups, including English, Irish, Greek, Italian, Australian, Corsican, French, Greenlander, Hungarian, Ukrainian, American (US), New Caledonian, South African, Russian, Maltese, and Norwegian. It is a problematic category for a number of reasons. For many people, the term European does not signify an ethnic group but simply denotes someone from a geographical region. 'European' can also exclude people from the United Kingdom and Ireland. The term is also problematic in settler societies where people with European heritage have lived in those societies for many generations and there has been ethnic intermarriage.

Randall Collins notes that some ethnicities such as 'Italian' are recent constructs that arose when migrants regrouped in a new country.³⁰ He comments that in America, Italians are people whose original homeland identities would have included Sicilian, Calabrian, Neapolitan and Genoan. He also notes that these regional subgroups are themselves the result of the merging of previously fragmented villages or clans.

The diversity contained with the category of 'European' illustrates the issues raised by the practice of recoding subgroups to a higher-level classification. In the New Zealand 2001 census, people who described their ethnicity as 'New Zealander' were recoded as 'European' at the highest level of classification. But as Jo-Anne Allan notes in a paper discussing the construction of ethnicity, 'New Zealander' also refers to a person's nationality and many people describe themselves as 'New Zealanders' but 'do not have European descent, white skin or cultural roots in Europe. There are recent immigrants from non-traditional source countries such as Malaysia'.³¹ In the 2006 census, by contrast, the coding practice changed and 'New Zealander' responses were placed in a new group, 'Other ethnicities'.

Another high-level classification, the Asian group, includes ethnicities associated with the broad territory of Asia, such as Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese, Gujarati, Japanese, Korean and Afghani, although it does not include people of Iranian ethnicities.

The group 'Pacific peoples' includes Samoan, Cook Island Māori, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Hawaiian, Nauru Islander, Papuan/New Guinean/Irian Jayan, and Tuvalu Islander/Ellice Islander, as well as the indigenous ethnicities of Australia. Today, if a Pacific person arrives in New Zealand they would generally be identified in relation to their home country. If a Pacific person arrived before the British colonization of New Zealand – as the ancestors of the Māori did – this connection is generally not acknowledged in official classifications of ethnic identity. The passing of time in a country and the development of unique cultures and languages have changed the identification, in this situation, to Māori.

People represented in the MELAA category are of Middle Eastern, Latin American and African ethnicities. The inclusion of Iranian ethnicities in this category should be noted. This disparate group was referred to as 'Other' before the adoption of the 2005 Standard Classification of Ethnicity. A new category of 'Other ethnicities' contains primarily 'New Zealander'-type responses and others who do not fit into the five main groupings. This category was developed in response to the growth of 'New Zealander'-type responses in the 2006 census.

Ethnicity data is collected from everyone in New Zealand on census night, but the data reported from the census generally only focus on the usually resident population. At any one time a significant number of people in New Zealand are not usually resident. They include tourists, short-stay students and temporary workers, including those from non-traditional Pacific migrant source countries such as the Solomon Islands. These people all add to our visibly diverse population.

Migration to the United Kingdom, both temporary and permanent, has resulted in what Steven Vertovec terms 'super-diversity'. Vertovec argues that policy frameworks and many areas of social science do not acknowledge this super-diversity.³² He notes the increased numbers of 'new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade'.³³ Some aspects of this 'super-diversity' can be seen in New Zealand. While some groups are very small, more than 200 ethnic categories were recorded in the 2006 census and more than 120 distinct languages.³⁴ Within large ethnic categories there is further diversity. Take for example, Chinese. Some Chinese have been in New Zealand for multiple generations, others, over the course of an extensive Chinese diaspora, have migrated here from a variety of countries, including Malaysia and Botswana. Chinese speak a variety of languages and follow a variety of religions. They may also identify with 'hybrid' categories such as Chinese-Māori.³⁵

Diversity within and between ethnic groups is further nuanced by issues of religious affiliation. Differences in religious beliefs are becoming especially significant in countries such as the United Kingdom. Commentators see new societal divisions forming, primarily along religious lines, but also along lines of income and wealth. Within established religious communities diversity is also increasingly evident, for example within mainstream Christian churches as well as more fundamentalist churches.

As a further example of diversity within groups, consider hardship as measured by New Zealand's Ministry of Social Development.³⁶ Clearly, a higher proportion of Māori suffer economic hardship than do Europeans. But there is much diversity within both groups, with an emerging Māori elite despite the 'long tail' of Māori disadvantage.³⁷ Equally, there are poor

Europeans. This is shown by the fact that in 2008 just on two-thirds of Māori were judged *not* to suffer hardship, but that 11% of Europeans *did* suffer hardship. A significantly higher proportion of Māori suffered hardship but, due to differing population sizes and age structures, there were more deprived Europeans than Māori.

Aggregate group measures can be important in helping to identify pockets of disadvantage. But in terms of overcoming disadvantage, in an increasingly diverse society they have limited value because they give little guidance regarding individual outcomes or need. For example, public health funding is allocated according to ethnic population proportions but is ultimately distributed according to individual need.

Ethnic 'hybridity'

The complexity involved in constructing ethnicity in a context of historical ethnic intermarriage, as well as ethnic conflict is illustrated by New Zealand poet Glen Colquhoun. In a poem entitled 'Race relations', Colquhoun lays out a complex set of components concerning the speaker's ancestry, kinship, and country of origin.³⁸ This background includes Australian, English, Scottish, German, Jewish, and Māori roots. The speaker notes that historically many of these groups have been in conflict with each other and, referring to his English and German background, remarks, 'One half of me lost a war the other half won'.³⁹ Similarly, describing his Scottish and Māori connections, he writes, 'Somewhere along the line/I have managed to colonise myself'.

In colonial New Zealand, Lachy Paterson argues, 'half-castes' or hāwhekaihe challenged the division between colonizer and colonized: 'The presence of individuals who bridged the racial divide was destabilizing and problematic for the "natural" contours of the colonial world'.⁴⁰ Like many countries, New Zealand has gone through various phases in the reportage of those who cross ethnic boundaries, including use of the term 'half-caste' in the 1886 census.⁴¹ Even today, it is not uncommon to hear the expression 'part-Māori', despite many Māori objecting to this term.

Instead of trying to develop categories of hybridity, collectors of official data in New Zealand now allow the recording of more than one ethnic affiliation. However, when more than one group is collected, reporting becomes more complex. A growing proportion of New Zealanders, especially young people born in New Zealand, report dual, multiple and hybrid ethnic identities. In 2006, 19.7% of people aged under 15 identified with more than one ethnicity.

When the New Zealand census first allowed people to record more than one group it was standard to consider groups based on half-or-more affiliation. However, for data from the 1986 and 1991 censuses, Statistics New Zealand (as well as most government agencies and researchers) relied primarily on its system of prioritizing ethnic groups in order to simplify the presentation of the data. Under this system, Māori had priority coding, followed by Pacific peoples, then Asian, then other ethnic groups besides European, followed by 'Other European' and, finally, European. This prioritization system meant that, for example, if a person recorded himself or herself as belonging to both Māori and Samoan ethnic groups, they were classified as belonging only to the Māori ethnic group.

Much has been written about the problems this system created, but some health researchers continue to use prioritization.⁴² The attraction is that it places people in simple non-overlapping boxes. Yet where people do report two or more ethnic identities, they may identify with each of them equally, they may self-prioritize one identity over another, or they may express (or wish to express) hybrid identity.⁴³ Self-prioritization may change over time or shift according to social context. As an example, analysis of 2006 data from the Youth Connectedness survey found that three-quarters of youth who recorded more than one ethnic group were able to choose a main group when asked to do so.⁴⁴ Of the youth who identified as both Māori and European *and* self-prioritized, a small majority chose European over Māori.

There are alternatives to prioritization.⁴⁵ Two main reporting systems are now used in New Zealand. The first is total counts, which counts people in all the groups they record. For example, where people record both Māori and European they are counted as Māori and as European. However, this leads to some double counting. It may also be that these people see themselves as having a 'hybrid' identity, that is, as Māori-European rather than Māori *and* European – or they may use some other self-determined concept of identity. Therefore, counting them separately may not reflect their self-image.⁴⁶

The second system is to report all main groups and all main combinations. Using Māori as an example, people recording Māori and European (but no other groups) would be reported in a group 'Māori and European'. Those recording only Māori would be reported as sole Māori. This system does not have overlapping categories. Statistics New Zealand uses this system to report unemployment data. One advantage is that outcomes for groups within groups can be identified. For example, for reasons that remain unclear people recording Māori-only have, on average, poorer outcomes in many areas of life than those recording Māori and European.⁴⁷ However, one drawback of the system is that small groups such as those recording Māori and European and Pacific, are often not reported and become part of a residual group.

Both of these systems have strengths and weaknesses which researchers and policy makers need to be aware of. Ideally, researchers and policy makers would use both, but this may not always be practical.

It may be that some people filling in surveys are already developing their own 'hybrid' responses as part of the politics of belonging. On census forms people have written responses like 'white Polynesian'. In some situations, the 'New Zealander' response may be an attempt to simplify a complex set of ethnic affiliations. Michael King, in *Being Pakeha Now*, portrayed himself as a 'white native' in the subtitle.⁴⁸

Ethnic mobility

Public policy discussions involving ethnicity often assume that people remain in fixed ethnic categories over their lives. But people recording a sole ethnic group in one survey may change their response in another survey – an example of ethnic mobility. A decade ago New Zealand research identified ethnic mobility in the census in relation to Māori. Then in the 2006 census a dramatic and somewhat unexpected increase occurred in 'New Zealander'type responses: a high-profile example of people changing their responses to ethnicity questions. However, the most telling indications come from longitudinal data, where consistent ethnic questions are asked. This data shows a small but important level of mobility, especially for Māori and Pacific peoples.⁴⁹

The challenges presented by ethnic mobility are particularly marked in the area of health data. People are asked about their ethnicity at many of the contact points they have with the health system, so a person may have many responses recorded over time. This raises a question about how to report such data, a question made even more complex if the person is recording multiple ethnicities at some or all points. One response could be to ignore any change, choosing instead a single point in time in the data capture series and assuming that this is the 'correct' one. However, methods do exist by which ethnic mobility can be reported and used in analysis. Some recent education studies, as discussed by Ralf Engler, have used a method of reporting that uses 'never', 'ever', and 'sole' ethnic group categories.⁵⁰ Using European as an example, with this method people in the 'never' group have never recorded a European ethnic response (either as a sole ethnicity or as part of dual or multiple ethnicities). Those in the 'ever' group have recorded a European response in one or more of the surveys. Those in the 'sole' group have only ever recorded European. But such systems have their drawbacks, including the tendency to simplify complex lives.

Indigeneity

In an international comparison of censuses undertaken in or near to the year 2000, Morning notes that roughly 15% asked respondents about their indigenous status.⁵¹ The countries which included this question in their censuses were located in North America, South America, and Africa.

Morning suggests that indigeneity is used as a category in official data collections largely in nations that experienced European colonialism. She notes that a question on indigenous status was not found in any European or Asian censuses. David Pearson and Lorenzo Veracini stress the political nature of claims to indigeneity and note it has become a highly sensitive issue for 'settlers' as well as the populations in place at the point of settler contact.⁵² Census collection in settler societies often aims to distinguish populations that do not have European ancestry (separating them from mestizos, for example, in Mexico) and who inhabited the territory before European settlement.

Internationally there has been some focus on indigeneity. For example, the United Nations 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities and the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The declarations set out a strategy for integration and non-discrimination of minorities, and an 'accommodationist' approach towards indigenous peoples based on selfdetermination and governance.53 However, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which New Zealand supported only in 2010, avoids offering any definition of indigeneity. Indeed, the original working group concluded that a definition of indigenous peoples at the global level was neither possible nor necessary. According to a United Nations fact sheet on indigeneity, the organization's approach to indigeneity is similar to New Zealand's approach to ethnicity.⁵⁴ It aims to identify, rather than define, indigenous peoples. The United Nations argues that this approach is based on the fundamental principle of self-identification as set out in various human rights documents. The United Nations uses the following guidelines for understanding the term "indigenous":55

- Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member
- · Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

Despite such guidelines, concepts of indigeneity are becoming increasingly complex due to factors such as cross-cultural and cross-national intermarriage. Under the heading 'Kangaroo Timana Tahu wants to hop into NZ Maori' a 2010 *Sunday News* article outlined how Australian international rugby league player Timana Tahu was to create history after agreeing to play for the New

Zealand Māori rugby league team.⁵⁶ He was eligible to play for an indigenous team in both New Zealand and Australia as his late father was Māori and his mother Aboriginal. The international sports arena offers numerous examples of the complexity of indigeneity as globalization and profesionalization lead to players shifting national allegiances. This is particularly common among players who shift between the Pacific, New Zealand and Australia. Consider also the case of people with Māori ancestry, born overseas and with foreign citizenship, who could be considered indigenous but do not have automatic rights to New Zealand citizenship.⁵⁷

The issue of indigeneity is treated quite differently in the context of environmental and ecological movements. In New Zealand there is a strong eco-restoration movement, with 'friends' of swamps, rivers and forests active up and down the country. Such movements place an emphasis on using only local indigenous plants. In part, this can be seen as a process of 'decolonizing' areas of New Zealand. In this context 'hybridity' is rejected. Take the hybridized ngaio tree, which is a cross of New Zealand and Tasmanian ngaio. These trees are no longer seen as indigenous and are treated as weeds.⁵⁸ In eco-restoration, 'one drop' of non-indigenous ancestry rules out indigeneity, but for human society 'one drop' is often seen as the key to inclusiveness.

It is difficult to predict the effect of New Zealand's support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁵⁹ But it is almost certain there will be more use of the term 'indigenous peoples' in New Zealand over coming decades and with this, debate about the concept and importance of indigeneity.

The 'New Zealander' response in the census

'For me, then, to be Pakeha on the cusp of the twenty-first century is not to be European; it is not to be an alien or a stranger in my own country.' Michael King, 1999.⁶⁰

Michael King used the term 'Pākehā' to describe himself, assuming some strong connection to New Zealand through the name. However, many New Zealand studies find the definition of Pākehā problematic. Pākehā is a term that has not been universally accepted in New Zealand. It is sometimes interpreted as 'New Zealanders of European descent',⁶¹ but this definition does not acknowledge a long history of ethnic intermarriage in New Zealand. Graham Butterworth and Cyril Mako note that all Māori have some degree of non-Māori ancestry.⁶² Therefore, Māori too are 'New Zealanders of European descent'. Assuming Pākehā can be only European and not Asian or other ethnic groups, Pākehā should really be defined as 'New Zealanders of *only* European descent'. But even this definition is problematic. Such a

person could be a new immigrant to New Zealand, perhaps someone from Poland, with no historic connection to New Zealand.

King also raised the possibility that all New Zealanders could identify as indigenous if they are 'committed to this land and its people and steeped in the knowledge of both'.⁶³ But since King wrote this piece, another response to the census question on ethnicity has strongly emerged, that of 'New Zealander'. Is this simply a confusion of nationality and ethnicity? Or perhaps it indicates the emergence of a second 'indigenous' group, an expansion of the meaning of tāngata whenua? Te Akukaramu Charles Royal has suggested 'the concept of "tangata whenua" should no longer be exclusive to Maori but be part of a new language to include all those who share and are committed to a spiritual relationship with the natural environment'.⁶⁴ In contrast, some see the 'New Zealander' response as a protest against ethnic labelling. Yet others, including those from non-European backgrounds, see it as a way of signalling integration into New Zealand. As already discussed, those with complex, hybrid backgrounds may see 'New Zealander' as a new, evolving identity.

Some in the research and policy community argue that the New Zealander response should be actively discouraged, with suggestions that its acceptance makes monitoring of Māori outcomes more difficult, especially if a significant number of those previously recording Māori ethnicity switch to this new identity.

The literature is growing around the use of 'New Zealander' in New Zealand statistical collections, as it is around the use of 'Canadian' in Canada.⁶⁵ In the past, Statistics New Zealand recoded all those who recorded such an identity as 'European'. But in reaction to debates such responses are now coded to the new, diverse category of 'Other ethnicity'.

Group ethnic measures

Although ethnicity is a personal attribute not a group measure, some in the policy and research communities are calling for group measures of ethnicity. The two main examples are ethnic businesses and family ethnicity. Both are problematic. The two conceptual issues to consider when determining family ethnicity are what constitutes a family and then, how is family ethnicity defined.⁶⁶

Take a relatively simple example of a heterosexual, two-parent family with one child. The mother identifies as Pacific, the father identifies as both Māori and European, and the child identifies with all three ethnicities, not an uncommon identification among children. Is this a Māori family, a Pacific family, or a European family? Or is it simply a complex family? One could imagine that a cervical screening programme trying to increase uptake by Pacific women would target individual Pacific women. But it is more difficult to see how ethnically targeted services can be aimed at families. Take an even simpler example. A Pacific sole mother has a Māori child. Based on the mother's ethnicity, this could be defined as a Pacific family but, based on the child's ethnicity, it could be defined as a Māori family. Health services may want to increase immunization rates among Māori children, but a Māori health provider may not be the best way to reach the Pacific mother. In this case, if the mother attends church (as many Pacific people do), a Pacific church-based approach might be more successful.

The diversity of individual ethnic affiliations within New Zealand families means that if measures of family ethnicity are wanted, then ideally they should incorporate the responses of all individuals rather than be an artificial simplification. However, increasingly it is likely that researchers and policy makers will come to understand that group ethnic measures are problematic and of limited value in understanding society or developing good social policy. Targeting social policy based on individual ethnicity is already problematic; doing so through unclear concepts of family ethnicity adds a new set of challenges.

Who can research whom in New Zealand

In 1999 Linda Tuhiwai Smith published her influential book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.⁶⁷ Smith argues that any research undertaken in relation to Māori needs to empower Māori and that, historically, research 'on Māori' has been one of the many colonial tools of disempowerment. Drawing on this thinking, Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministry of Māori Development, in 1999 published a guide for government agencies concerning research evaluations of Māori outcomes.⁶⁸ The guidelines noted that evaluation teams range between the extremes of no Māori involvement and kaupapa Māori teams where '[t]ypically Māori make up all of the research team'.⁶⁹ Te Puni Kōkiri preferred the latter model. In a section on ethical issues it noted that '[e]valuators with cultural, language/reo, subject and research competencies are required to undertake an evaluation involving Maori. The gender and age of evaluators are also important considerations when undertaking specific evaluations'.⁷⁰

Te Puni Kōkiri also suggested that '[o]ne of the key weaknesses of mainstream evaluations has been a lack of Maori input at the evaluation's formative or planning stages. The first and most important step to improve the quality of evaluations for Maori is to *involve them* early at the planning stage'.⁷¹

Te Puni Kōkiri also noted that it was helpful if Māori stakeholders were given an opportunity to comment on draft analysis, so 'Maori stakeholders can verify whether the analysis is valid and appropriate, and thereby add substantial value to the analysis'.⁷²

These recommendations have had a strong impact in some areas of government and social science, for example the health sector and qualitative research. But they have had very little impact in other areas such as Treasury and the field of economic analysis. However, some separate streams of Māori research funding have been created, notably through the Health Research Council.⁷³

Debate about the concept of research 'by Māori, for Māori' (and to a lesser degree 'by Pacific, for Pacific') has been limited. Notable exceptions are the 2000 article by Martin Tolich entitled 'Pākehā "Paralysis": Cultural Safety for Those Researching the General Population of Aotearoa',⁷⁴ Carla Wilson's 2000 review of Smith's book,⁷⁵ and articles by Dannette Marie and Elizabeth Rata.⁷⁶ The issues are too complex to fully address in this paper, but the criticisms these authors raise include the following points:

- Despite an increase in the number of Māori and Pacific researchers, the pool of potential researchers remains limited, so insufficiently qualified researchers may be used to meet ethnic researcher requirements.
- Without an attempt at objectivity, the findings can simply reflect back ideologies and group myths, thus hindering critical thinking.
- Other members of the ethnic group can challenge the 'authenticity' of a researcher's ethnic identification.⁷⁷
- Other important attributes of identity (such as gender, class, religious beliefs, sexuality, income and occupational status) may be overlooked if they are seen to diminish the alignment a researcher has with those they are researching. These characteristics may be more important in determining whether a researcher is seen as an 'insider' or an 'outsider'.
- 'Matching' researchers to subjects becomes difficult, if not impossible, when factors such as ethnic 'hybridity' are taken into account. If the research subjects are Māori-Chinese does the researcher need to be Māori-Chinese or just Māori or just Chinese?
- Reflecting the discussion on 'ethnic families', if a researcher is interviewing a European mother who, through marriage with a Māori father has a Māori child, should a European researcher interview the mother and a Māori (or perhaps a Māori-European) researcher interview the child?
- Sensitive information may not be shared with 'insiders' due to familial and other connections that make confidentiality problematic.

'Who can research whom' is an area needing free and frank debate. Regardless of whether this debate takes place, the complexities of ethnic identification make it highly likely that in the future the ability to maintain strict boundaries in ethnic research will be undermined.

Conclusion

The 2007 Montreal conference asked three questions: Should we count? How should we count? Why should we count? In New Zealand, as in almost all other countries, there is general agreement that we should count. However, as the conference highlighted, debate continues nationally and internationally about why and how we should count our populations.

Identity is complex, multi-dimensional and often not fixed. Gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, skin colour and other visible 'differences', and a variety of other attributes, influence who we are and how others view us. It is clear that for some people, ethnicity is a critical and daily part of their identity. For others, especially those belonging to the dominant population group, ethnicity can be a minor part of identity or, in particular contexts, might have little meaning. Over time the construction of ethnicity and its importance in public policy and public life has changed in New Zealand. Currently, ethnic divides are often highlighted in research and public discourse, yet despite some data identifying discrimination it can be asserted that on a day-to-day basis New Zealanders find it relatively easy to get along.⁷⁸ Some commentators suggest ethnicity will continue to be a critical lens through which to view society, others argue we should move towards a post-ethnic society.⁷⁹

This debate is being driven by a variety of factors including significant and complex patterns of global migration; increased mixing of groups, including intermarriage among groups that were previously geographically isolated; a better, but still incomplete, understanding of genetics and human evolution; an increasing awareness, primarily through longitudinal studies, of ethnic mobility; and growing diversity of outcomes within groups. No matter whether it is race or ethnicity that is being discussed, the national and international literature demonstrates that the division of populations into neat, non-overlapping groups is increasingly problematic. All of these factors will tend to push us toward a post-ethnic society where ethnic affiliations are increasingly a private matter, important to some people but not to others. However, even in such a society, surveys such as the census would likely continue to collect ethnic affiliation, just as religious affiliation is still collected. In the long term, this is the direction New Zealand is likely to move in.

In contrast, official recognition of group rights in a climate of increased political claims on this basis, whether based on ethnicity or on concepts of indigeneity, will continue to emphasise the importance of creating and maintaining ethnic boundaries. Official recognition of ethnicity will be determined primarily through the political process. As noted in the introduction, some politicians attempt to build a constituency by emphasising difference between groups, often using the term race rather than ethnicity to do so. Whether this approach will continue to attract support remains to be seen.

In the coming decades, debate and lobbying about why we count and how we count is likely to continue. The debates will be affected both by research findings and lived experiences. Through these processes the evolution of ethnic identities will continue and, with this, the role of such identities in daily life and in New Zealand public policy will also evolve.

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