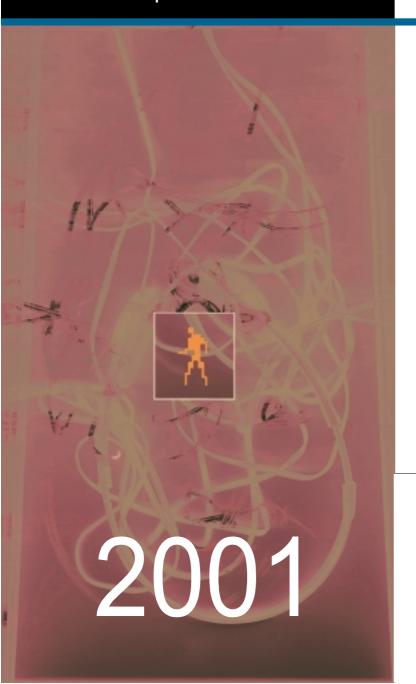Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity

Ethnicity Matters:
Māori Perspectives

Main Paper

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Ethnicity Matters

Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity in Official Statistics

Māori perspectives paper for consultation

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for Statistics New Zealand

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of Statistics New Zealand.

Contents

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to present a range of Māori views on the definition and measurement of ethnicity. The paper aims to stimulate discussion and debate about ethnicity, and hence Māori participation, in the review of the measurement of ethnicity in official statistics being conducted by Statistics New Zealand.

Approach

Statistics New Zealand has commissioned a number of perspective papers to stimulate discussion and debate about ethnicity and its measurement in government statistics. This paper is one of those commissioned and it specifically foregrounds Māori views on this topic to facilitate Māori participation in the review.

This paper was written following a critical review of the New Zealand and international literature on ethnicity, race and identity. Particular reference has been made to the views of Māori authors and those of other indigenous authors. Rather than concentrating solely on the many individual views expressed in the literature, this perspective paper focuses primarily on the underlying theories and ideologies. These are placed against a background of the rights of indigenous people to self-determination.

Outline

The paper is presented in three parts. The first section, 'Māori as tangata whenua', acknowledges Māori rights as indigenous peoples including the right to determine individual and collective identities. This section indicates some of the strengths of this positioning as well as how it is threatened.

The second section, 'Māori in official statistics', describes how Māori were and are defined in government statistics in New Zealand. It highlights the technical, statutory and political tensions that underpin the classification of ethnicity in New Zealand. Issues of data quality are raised and the importance of official statistics to monitor Māori outcomes is highlighted through a brief discussion on which Māori population is best suited for this role.

The final section, 'Different explanations for statistics', aims to show that statistics and their analysis are not neutral. On the contrary, statistics are value-laden and used to endorse different agendas and points of view. An example is provided to illustrate the different meanings that can be attributed to statistics, depending on the analytical framework used and the impact this may in turn have on Māori

representation and rights. Pākehā views of ethnicity need also to be seen in the context of New Zealand society.

A glossary of key terms used in the paper is appended. It is important to read these definitions in conjunction with this paper as some definitions may be contestable.

The Ethnic Statistics Review provides an opportunity for Māori to articulate to the Crown, Māori requirements in respect of the statistics it collects, processes and disseminates, within the framework of Treaty rights. In order to stimulate debate and encourage submissions to the review, questions are asked at the end of each section. These questions, however, are not intended to be restrictive or prescriptive. While the paper discusses various perspectives, it does not claim to be comprehensive and the authors expect new issues to arise during the consultation process.

Māori as tangata whenua

The power to name and the power to claim

> Māori are tangata whenua. Not people in the land or over the land, but people of it.
> (Jackson, 1993:71)

> If we are to reclaim the truth of what is us, if we are to bequeath to our mokopuna a
> world in which they can stand tall as Māori, then we have to reclaim the right to define
> for ourselves who we are, and what our rights are. We have to challenge definitions that
> are not our own, especially those which confine us to a subordinate place. (Jackson,
> 1999:75)

Māori as tangata whenua have international human rights pertaining to indigenous peoples. The United Nations (UN) Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 1993, recognises the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, including the collective and individual right to 'identify themselves as indigenous and to be recognized as such.' (Quentin-Baxter, 1998:204; Trask, 1999). Other international conventions and covenants also protect the identity interests of indigenous peoples and the right to self-determination (G Smith, 1998; Iorns Magallanes, 1998).

Tangata whenua rights do not depend on the numbers of Māori in the population. Even if there were only one Māori in the country, that one Māori would still have all the rights of indigenous peoples (Jackson, 2001).

> Indigenous peoples are defined in terms of collective aboriginal occupation prior to
> colonial settlement. They are not to be confused with minorities or ethnic groups within
> states. Thus 'indigenous rights' are strictly distinguished from 'minority rights' (Trask,
> 1999:33).

This difference between indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities is critical to acknowledge and honour. It challenges contemporary societies with a colonial history and a belief that all citizens within that society exist with an equal set of rights. The rights of indigenous peoples prevent the 'minoritisation' of the needs of indigenous peoples.

> In contemporary international law, custom, and convention, ethnic population groups –
> often referred to as 'ethnicities' or 'racial minorities' (of which 'tribes' are but a

specifically inferior classification) – have been formally construed as subparts of nations, an international or 'domestic' concern of those countries in which they happen to be situated. Within a fairly well articulated set of parameters, their needs and interests can be, and usually are, legally ('legitimately') subordinated to the 'greater good' or 'wider interests' of the national entities into which they are incorporated…. Peoples on the other hand, are recognized in international law as possessing inherent rights of 'self-determination.' (Churchill, 1994:327)

The right of Māori as tangata whenua to determine Māori individual and collective identities is endorsed by UN covenants, just as Māori status as tangata whenua is affirmed by the Treaty of Waitangi. In recent years a vast body of literature has been generated about the Treaty and its interpretation within a contemporary context. Among all this commentary, a few authors remind us that this body of literature, in itself, 'rewrites' the Treaty (Kelsey, 2000; Jackson, 1993; Dawson, 2001). Specifically, arguments, opinions and judgements, framed within legal constructs, reinterpret the Treaty within these constructs and have the potential to colonise Māori rights. Kelsey (2000) notes, for instance, that interpreting the Treaty article by article confines the Māori right of tino rangatiratanga to Article Two and then largely to power over some natural resources. This limitation of tino rangatiratanga to Article Two negates the Māori tino rangatiratanga inherent in Article One with respect to kawanatanga, and likewise in Article Three with respect to citizenship.

Tino rangatiratanga in respect of kawanatanga and citizenship is central in a discussion of the measurement of ethnicity in official statistics, as it prevents the subjugation of Māori to a minority population with special needs. In general, the government seeks to meet the statistical needs of the total New Zealand population, within which Māori are seen as a subgroup. The statistical needs of Māori are usually subsumed within those of the total New Zealand population.

This may be problematic if it serves to obscure disparities when Māori outcomes or risks are very different from those of the non-indigenous New Zealand population. For example, the current formulation of the Household Labour Force Survey is able to provide regular youth unemployment rates for the New Zealand population, but not for Māori youth (Cook & Mako, 1996) even though the five-yearly census shows it to be higher. This action fails to provide quantitative evidence of disparities and privileges a silence about the existence and extent of disparities between Māori and non-Māori in New Zealand. Furthermore, it limits the potential for the planning and implementation of meaningful interventions, as they will be unlikely to reflect the needs of those with the greatest risks.

The full expression of tino rangatiratanga positions Māori statistical needs as being equally as valid as those of the total population, and challenges the Crown to meet those needs as part of its Treaty obligations.

Individual and collective identities

Central to tangata whenua identity is whakapapa. Whakapapa is used to connect with or differentiate oneself from others. Many view hapū and iwi identity as a prerequisite to Māori identity.

> My being Māori is absolutely dependent on my history as a Tuhoe person as against being a Māori person (Rangihau, 1975:174).

Sir Tipene O'Regan highlights the inalienable aspect of iwi identity. When accused of being 'nothing but a Pākehā with whakapapa':

> I said, 'You are absolutely right. I am not a Māori. I'm Ngāi Tahu! I knew, when I said that, that no one could define it except me and my kin group, my iwi! No amount of analytical theory from outside can penetrate that. The Crown cannot define it. It can only recognise it. It is beyond the power of parliament and that is its beauty. The source of power is in the people themselves and their whakapapa. (Melbourne, 1995:196)

Although being identified by hapū or iwi is fundamental for some, it may be inaccessible for others. In the 1996 Census, one in five people of Māori descent (19 percent) said they were unable to name an iwi. Of these, 7 percent could hold a conversation about everyday things in te reo Māori. Living in a rural or urban setting made little difference to this proportion, but Māori living in the South Island tended to be less likely to know their iwi than those in the North Island (Statistics NZ, 1998b).

On the other hand, some respondents with Māori ancestry may acknowledge their iwi but not identify their ethnicity as Māori. Others may have knowledge of their iwi but not view it as central to their identity (Durie, 2001) or decide not to give that information to the Crown (Walker, 1987).

These various opinions and statistics highlight an identity spectrum where some Māori express the range of individual and collective identities in various contexts. For others, identification will depend on the situation and may develop or change over time. All these positions are valid and are an integral expression of Māori right to be able to name and claim these individual and collective identities.

Crown influences on collective identities

It would be naive to think that the institutions of whānau, hapū and iwi have been untouched by the processes of colonisation. The 19th century government considered the collectives of whānau, hapū and iwi to be antagonistic to the goal of assimilation by preventing the acquisition of land by settlers (C Smith, 1998:23). Individualisation of land title was a key policy response to the strength of the iwi and hapū identity. Together with the land wars and confiscation, this policy resulted in massive land alienation that continued throughout the first half of the 20th century. By 1960 it was assumed that iwi and hapū were irrelevant in the post-urbanisation era (Durie, 2001). Collectively, these policies and the overarching aim of assimilation meant that iwi did not feature in official statistics for most of the century. Where iwi information was collected, for example on birth and death registration forms until 1995, this information was never collated, analysed or published.

By the 1990s, the government policy agenda had shifted towards the 'devolution' of government services to iwi. This, together with Treaty settlements from claims such as the Fisheries claim, led to pressure to redefine iwi within a legal framework (C Smith, 1998). For instance, Te Ohu Kaimoana have recently identified the iwi to which fisheries assets will be distributed as having the following characteristics: descent from a tupuna, hapū, marae, belonging historically to a takiwā, and an existence traditionally acknowledged by other iwi. The concern that urban or other contemporary Māori collectives will be excluded from accessing resources to support local Māori development has resulted in significant legal debate about the definition and identification of iwi, and perhaps more importantly, who has the power to name and claim Māori identities (G Smith, 1998).

Graham Smith (1998) notes four 'shaping influences' that are putting pressure on the notion of 'iwi'. He identifies cultural influences, corporate influences, urban influences and state influences. Each of these have patterned and moulded some, if not all, iwi as attempts are made to retain and develop traditional cultural strengths; engage with the market in the effort for economic self-sufficiency; respond to urbanisation; and perhaps conform with the needs and interests of the government. From these and earlier forces, the contemporary expressions of iwi have emerged.

Crown potential to support Māori development

Iwi, hapū, and other Māori collective entities require good quality, comprehensive data to support planning and development. Many of these entities do not currently have the resources to collect their own statistics, and official statistics have significant potential for supporting iwi planning. Since 1991, Statistics New Zealand, through the census, has been monitoring the number of people with Māori

descent who (a) know the name(s) of their iwi, and (b) belong to a list of officially recognised iwi. Statistical profiles of iwi, including those who live within the traditional rohe and those who live elsewhere, have been provided to iwi authorities.

The role of the Crown in collecting, analysing and disseminating iwi information needs further discussion. Issues of ownership and control of iwi data collected by the Crown and intellectual property would seem to be logical starting points. Furthermore, there has been little discussion or policy development as to how iwi data may be used. For instance, the national health data set (including deaths, hospitalisations, cancer registrations, etc) does not include iwi or hapū data, despite policies that recognise the potential of iwi structures for effective health promotion and health service delivery (Durie, 2001:12).

In summary, this section has highlighted Māori and indigenous commentary that reiterates the sovereign rights of tangata whenua to articulate and name individual and collective identities. The contemporary expressions of these identities draw on many influences. Indigenous rights are distinguished from 'minority rights' and are not dependent on the numbers of Māori in the population. To date there has been a tension between responding to the tangata whenua rights and needs of Māori in relation to a total population approach. The review on the measurement of ethnicity in official statistics provides an opportunity whereby Māori needs and opinions can determine the focus, extent and boundaries of the Crown's role in supporting the information and statistical needs of Māori.

Issues for submissions to the review

Māori individuals and groups making submissions to the review may wish to comment on the following areas:
- the relationship between Māori and the Crown in terms of official statistics;
- the role of the Crown in collecting, analysing and disseminating iwi or other Māori collective information (including the extent of this role);
- the responsibility of the Crown in recognising Māori statistical needs as equally as valid as those of the total New Zealand population (including how this responsibility ought to be met).

Comments on other relevant issues are welcome.

Māori in official statistics

The primary aim of Statistics New Zealand is to produce timely and accurate official statistics on a range of economic and social matters of general importance to New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Since official statistics began in New Zealand, the census has been the main source of comprehensive social statistics. The first New Zealand census in 1851 counted only Pākehā. There was a partial census of Māori in the late 1850s. A decade later, censuses of the Māori population became regular events although Māori and non-Māori were counted separately until 1951.

A critical issue was deciding who was a Māori. According to Williams (1992:179), the word Māori means normal, usual and ordinary. It is used to indicate things in their natural state. Broughton (1993:506) notes 'in this way, the word Māori was used to describe the indigenous peoples of the land, that is, to refer to the ordinary inhabitants of Aotearoa'.

From race to ethnicity

Government definitions of Māori have not necessarily reflected this status of tangata whenua. Early government definitions were based on 'race', a concept derived from physical anthropology. Race has been acknowledged since the 1950s as a concept lacking scientific credibility (Jenkins, 1997). However, government definitions of Māori began as 'persons greater than half Māori blood' and Māori-European 'half-caste', living as Māori, ie 'living as members of Māori tribes'. This definition later evolved to a classification based on quantum of blood, usually expressed as 'persons of half or more Māori blood' (Department of Statistics, 1988:44-45). The 'proportion of descent' criteria was commonly used by colonial governments of the period. Several commentators have noted the use of such definitions as a strategy in limiting government obligations to indigenous peoples (Brown, 1984; Cox, 1993; Churchill, 1996, Trask 1999; Simon and Smith, 2001).

By the 1970s, New Zealand demographers and statisticians reviewing Māori population growth using fertility, mortality, migration and intermarriage patterns noted that more people were identifying as Māori (ie half or more Māori blood) than was thought possible given intermarriage rates. Concern was expressed about the interpretation of this data. The 1988 Review Committee on Ethnic Statistics reflected that even in the 1926 Census a large proportion of Māori 'overstated their degree of Māori blood' and that many people who were Māori by self-definition but who also had significant non-Māori ancestry, stated that they were one-half Māori or more.

Thus, this suggests that since at least the turn of the century, the biological definition of Māori (ie half or more Māori blood) has not been interpreted as intended by a considerable proportion of the Māori population. (Department of Statistics, 1988:46)

Numerous statutes provide a definition of who is a Māori. By the early 1960s there were at least ten separate statutory definitions. These were usually based on two different frameworks. The first was centred on the concept of 'half or more Māori blood' while the second extended this definition to include any 'descendant' of a Māori.

This extension from a defined quantum of blood to any degree of ancestry was driven to some extent by issues of practicality and there were also legal concerns of potential accusations of discriminatory practice from Māori of less than 50 percent Māori ancestry (Pool, 1991:17). Furthermore, there was growing recognition that demarcating populations through biological criteria had limited credibility and usefulness. By the 1970s it was thought that determining membership of ethnic groups was more important and useful.

An ethnic group has been defined as follows:

The term ethnic group has a wide meaning. It is not the same as nationality, race or place of birth. Ethnic groups are ... people who have culture, language, history or traditions in common. These people have a 'sense of belonging' to the group, which may not be based on birth. It is possible to belong to more than one ethnic group. At different times of their life people may wish to identify with other groups. (NZHIS, 1996)

Based on the way people define themselves and the group(s), to which they feel most closely aligned, the concept of membership of ethnic groups reflected Māori practice of opting into the Māori ethnic group irrespective of the quantum of Māori ancestry. Ethnicity was welcomed by many as representing a closer alignment with the social reality of New Zealand (Murchie, 1984:27). This alignment with social reality also emphasised the need for self-identification, that is, for people to define their own ethnicity rather than have it prescribed by statute or another person. Self-identification underpins ethnic classification and is a principle of self-determination. It became the statutory procedure for the classification of ethnicity in 1975 for electoral purposes and for statistical purposes in the 1986 Census.

However, a tension still existed between the statutory needs to determine the Māori population based on ancestry (eg to use when defining electoral boundaries) and the need to determine characteristics of the Māori ethnic group for the purposes of social statistics, policy and planning. This posed challenges for those designing questionnaires. It was eventually recognised that two separate questions were required for these two separate purposes. Consequently, the census now asks both an ancestry question (to identify the populations in order to satisfy the legal and constitutional needs) as well as a question pertaining to ethnic group membership (to identify populations for use in statistical analysis).

Data quality

While the statutory needs are largely fulfilled by a question that allows self-identification of ancestry, statistics using ethnic group affiliation continue to be challenged by population dynamics. These issues of data quality have many important variables, four of which are discussed here: validity, continuity through time, consistency across data sets and data completeness.

Validity[1]

The dynamic aspects of ethnicity are illustrated by how the answers to an ethnicity question may change in different situations. Response may be influenced by the actual ethnicity question, the respondent's interpretation and engagement with the question, the purpose to which the information will be put and who is asking the question.

The specific wording of the ethnicity question has been shown to affect the way people respond. For example, the question used in the 1996 Census was found more likely to elicit multiple ethnic affiliations than the 1991 Census ethnicity question. Furthermore it was found more likely to draw upon the ancestry component of the ethnicity concept (ACNeilsen, 1999).

> I think of myself as Māori and didn't think of the Irish group until I saw it listed.
> Tick as many circles as you need indicates that I need to tick all ethnic groups
> that I have ancestral ties with. (Māori respondents in ACNeilsen research)

It is also necessary to recognise that the whole population does not have the same understanding of what ethnicity is and the distinction between ethnicity and ancestry. Children do not complete their own census questionnaires but rely on a proxy such as a parent or caregiver. These proxies may not necessarily know or represent the child's reality but rather be influenced by their own views.

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[1] For the purposes of this paper, validity relates to how well the measurement tool (usually question) captures what the researchers intend it to measure.

Furthermore, for people of mixed ancestry, there may be some time reconciling the need to honor the ancestry of both parents and this reconciliation may spill over into the identification of one's own ethnicity.

If part of the population does not agree with the question or what it is attempting to measure, this may also affect the result. As discussed previously, when part of the Māori population did not agree with the government definition of Māori as being 'half or more Māori blood' a significant group ticked the Māori box irrespective of ancestry quantum. Likewise, currently a small proportion of the New Zealand population disagrees with the ethnicity question and writes 'New Zealander' in the space labeled 'other'. However, strictly speaking, New Zealander is a nationality not an ethnicity (Department of Statistics, 1988).

The context in which the information is provided is also important. The perceived purpose of the information and who is requesting the information may impact on the way a person responds to an ethnicity question. Some surveys conducted by Māori (eg Rapuora and Te Hoe Nuku Roa) have found a higher proportion of people with Māori ancestry who self-identify their ethnicity as being Māori, than reported in the census. It may be that some identify as Māori to other Māori, while classifying themselves as non-Māori to the Crown.

> On more than one occasion, a woman who did not appear to be Māori identified herself as Māori when the interviewer, another Māori woman, appeared on her doorstep. Many householders expressed positive feelings on this point saying they would not have taken part in the survey had they been approached by a non-Māori. (Murchie, 1984:22)

In the quest to provide official statistics with a high degree of 'accuracy', validity issues demonstrate the complex relationships between members of the population, the collectors of information and the survey instruments. The interplay of these factors influences the final results of the survey through data quality.

Continuity through time

Censuses and other surveys represent snapshots of our population. In themselves they cannot inform us about trends. However, serial surveys, taken at regular intervals like the census, can provide some indication of time trends if the questions asked through this repeated process have a high degree of continuity. This allows the impact of government policies, for example, to be more reliably evaluated.

As noted earlier, a change to the ethnicity question in the 1996 Census led to a significant change in the size and demographic make-up of the Māori ethnic populations. Monitoring trends over time became problematic. For example, if health time trends improved, it was difficult to tease out if there had been a real improvement in Māori health or whether the 'improvement' was an artifact of a larger Māori ethnic group as a result of the changed census question. This, in effect, disrupted the continuity of time trends, making any changes difficult to interpret, and creating difficulties in assessing the impact of the major policy changes of the 1980s and 90s (Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare, 2000).

While the population's knowledge and attitudes towards the measurement of ethnicity may be changing, and this in turn may require some evolvement of the ethnicity question over time, changes ought to be incorporated in a way that disruption to historical continuity is minimised.

Consistency across data sets
In order to monitor specific issues such as health, fertility, or life expectancy, different data sets are used in combination with census data. It is important that ethnicity is asked consistently across these data sets in order to calculate rates more accurately.

For example, to find out the proportion of the Māori population who go to hospital each year, the number of Māori who go to hospital (obtained from hospital records) is divided by the number of Māori in the population (obtained from census data). For this to be accurate, the hospital needs to record the ethnicity of Māori patients in the same way as it is recorded in the census. This has two important dimensions. Firstly, ethnicity must be recorded routinely. If some Māori patients did not have their ethnicity recorded when they went to hospital, and their admission record was assumed to be for a non-Māori patient, the rate of Māori hospitalisations would be artificially low. Secondly, the hospital policy ought to be to ask the same question as used in the census because of the evidence that changing the question may have a significant effect on how people respond, which in turn could skew the calculated rates.

Currently there is poor consistency across data sets. This is both because of missing data (ethnicity is not asked of all persons) and because an alternative ethnicity question (other than the census ethnicity question) is used. While this information does not affect the quality of data for the total population, it marginalises Māori information, making planning and evaluation of policy interventions difficult.

Data completeness

Data completeness, with respect to ethnicity data, refers to missing data and incomplete data. Migration data is an important example. Māori migration grew rapidly from the 1960s to 1980s, especially to Australia (Statistics NZ, 1998a). Since the removal of the ethnicity questions on New Zealand arrival and departure cards in the mid-1980s, there has been no accurate information on the number of Māori leaving and/or returning to New Zealand (Aspin, 2000). It was estimated that around 27,000 people of Māori ancestry were living in Australia in the mid-1980s (6 percent of the New Zealand Māori descent population) (Statistics NZ, 1998a) and recent estimates have been as high as 39,900 Māori (14 percent of the 285,500 New Zealand-born Australian residents) (Aspin, 2000:220).

In the New Zealand census the number of Māori who gave their address five years ago as Australia increased from 4,428 in 1991 to 6,573 in 1996. The number of Australian-born Māori children living in New Zealand has more than doubled over the past decade from 1,113 in 1986 to 2,934 in 1996, suggesting that many Māori return migrants are family groups coming home (Statistics NZ, 1998a). Lowe has estimated that there are two Māori migrants from Australia to New Zealand for every three who migrate from New Zealand to Australia (Aspin, 2000:73).

Information on Māori migration is needed for Statistics New Zealand to produce reliable estimates of Māori populations between censuses. These estimates are used in the construction of rates to monitor, for example, trends in Māori deaths or hospitalisations. Demographers have had to rely on migration data from the early 1980s when ethnicity was still collected on arrival and departure cards. The 1988 Review of Ethnic Statistics recommended that 'a redesigned question be included on the arrival and departure cards, and that the best means of seeking ethnic information be adopted when the card is next reprinted' (Department of Statistics, 1988).

Migration can be costly for the individuals or families who leave, both in terms of cultural costs (particularly intergenerational) and possibly economic costs. It also has an impact on the community left behind, as marae and hapū lose person-power and cultural capital, and whānau resources are dispersed (Durie, 2001). The absence of ethnicity information in migration hampers Māori ability to track the number of Māori migrating in and out of New Zealand, and to factor these trends into the appropriate planning cycles.

Completeness of data sets such as the New Zealand census is high by international standards. However, in other official information one may object or refuse to answer the ethnicity question. Evidence from

surveys in hospitals note that few (less than 6 percent) New Zealanders object to being asked their ethnicity, although a similar percentage would like more information about how the data is used (Harris et al, 1997).

Monitoring Māori outcomes

Measuring ethnicity provides the ability to monitor Māori outcomes. This in turn supports the description of disparities and the implementation of appropriate interventions. In addition, specific data about Māori supports the identification of Māori opportunities and risks.

Disparities are unexpected and unexplained differences in the outcomes of different groups. Māori, like many other indigenous peoples, have a profile of significant disparities across a spectrum of social indicators such as education, employment, health, wealth, criminal justice and housing statistics. In almost every instance, Māori outcomes are significantly worse than those of non-Māori.

Some authors suggest that ethnicity is the variable that explains the differences in outcomes (Statistics NZ, 2001). However, others see ethnic disparities as symptoms that disclose more about the society from which the disparities arise (Reid, 2001). Reducing disparities between Māori and non-Māori citizens was the focus of government attention in recent years. This policy platform was subsequently reviewed and reframed to meet the needs of all low income New Zealanders and ethnic minorities. This reframing shifted Māori from a position of tangata whenua to a marginalised position as an ethnic minority.

Monitoring Māori outcomes also provides necessary information to best inform appropriate interventions. But a question still exists as to which Māori population should be used as the reference population for comparison and commentary. Three Māori populations are produced from current census information: the Māori descent or ancestry group; the Māori ethnic group comprising those who indicated Māori as at least one of their ethnic affiliations; and the sole-Māori group that indicated Māori as their only ethnic affiliation. While sole-Māori is a subset of the Māori ethnic group, there is some evidence that it is particularly important in the monitoring of disparities as its members have more risks associated with socio-economic deprivation and vulnerability in a colour-conscious society (Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare, 2000).

However, it is important to recognise that if high-quality ethnicity data were collected by committed data-gathers, disparities could be examined for all three of these Māori population groupings. Users of statistics would then be better able to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the ancestry or

ethnicity-based Māori populations and make a better-informed decision as to the appropriateness of any single group as the monitoring standard.

In summary, this section has noted the changing definitions of Māori in official statistics from one based around quantum of blood to one based in ethnic affiliation, which was thought to better align with Māori social reality. However, data quality still poses a significant challenge for official statistics with regard to ethnicity. Issues of validity, continuity through time, consistency across data sets and data completeness still need improvement. Poor quality ethnicity data undermines the ability to effectively monitor Māori outcomes and eliminate disparities.

Issues for Submissions to the Review

Māori individuals and groups making submissions to the review may wish to comment on the following areas:

- how Māori should be defined in official statistics;
- whether those claiming Māori ethnicity should be required to have Māori ancestry;
- how the quality of ethnic statistics can be improved;
- the relative importance of historical continuity of the ethnicity question compared with adapting the question to suit contemporary understandings of ethnicity;
- whether the Crown should monitor Māori migration, and if so, how and where;
- which Māori population group(s) is/are best suited to monitor Māori outcomes; and
- whether there are other domains where ethnicity data ought to be collected.

Comments on other relevant issues are welcome.

Different explanations for statistics

This third section of the paper aims to show that statistics and their analysis are not neutral. On the contrary, statistics are value-laden and used to foreground different agendas and points of view. Examples are provided to illustrate the different meanings that can be attributed to statistics depending on the analysis and the analytical framework used, and the impact this may in turn have on Māori representation and rights.

Framed - Representation in Statistics

In everyday life, one is bombarded with a variety of statistics. For example:

- Māori students are over two and a half times more likely than non-Māori students to leave school with no qualifications (39 percent compared with 14.6 percent) (Statistics NZ, 1998a).

This statistic seems innocent enough but most people will have a question or an assumption about 'why'. The superficial assumption is that the Māori student has failed, and many people will read the statistic in this way. But a statistic is a representation of an analytical framework and an ideological standpoint. There are a number of frameworks that could be used to explain the above statistic. These analytical frameworks need to be scrutinised. This section highlights how various writers have attempted to explain the basic statistic. This is not a definitive listing or a thorough review of the field; rather it provides examples of how Māori data gets used or misused to represent other people's agendas.

Māori culture as the explanation

With the rejection of biological determinism in the 1950s, some researchers sought cultural rationales to explain the differences between Māori and Pākehā. Still within an assimilationist agenda, Māori became the objects of scrutiny, subject to measures of character, personality, intelligence, educability, etc (Stewart, 1997). The inevitable outcome of such research was the finding that Māori were deficient compared with Pākehā, and hence there was an expectation that Māori should adapt to Pākehā norms (Johnston & Pihama, 1995). Pākehā culture remained unexamined and unequal power relations were not acknowledged.

> A cumulative effect of all this research on Māori from the 1960s through to the early 1980s was the widespread perception by Māori that educational research was victim-blaming research, which simply regarded Māori culture, Māori people, Māori parents and Māori children as being culturally deprived (Simon and Smith, 2001).

The analytical framework of such research, and the resulting policies and interventions, fail to acknowledge the system as a possible variable which could influence outcomes. This framework has been described as the 'deficit-model':

> First, social problems were identified (by victim-blamers). Second, a study was done in order to find out how the disadvantaged and advantaged were different. Third, once the differences were identified, they were defined as the causes of the social problem. Fourth, governmental intervention was set in play to correct the differences (ie, deficiencies) (Valencia 1997:3).

Strength of identity

Māori resistance to being represented as culturally deprived or deficient was expressed in continued assertion of the strengths and benefits of Māori culture. Koro Dewes in 1968 commented that 'he was sick and tired of [Māori] being blamed for their education and social shortcomings, their limitations highlighted and their obvious strengths of being privileged New Zealanders in being bilingual and bicultural ignored.' (Simon and Smith, 2001:307)

Rather than measuring acculturation for assimilationist purposes, Māori concern about the ongoing impact of colonisation on Māori resources led to research on issues such as the state of te reo (Benton, 1991) and of hapū and iwi (Winiata, 1988). Access to cultural resources such as te reo Māori, regular contact with Māori cultural institutions, and ancestral land, were identified as a source of secure Māori identity, and therefore a determinant of well-being (Durie, 2001).

Consequently, scales were developed to measure strength of identity among Māori and measures of cultural participation (Durie, 1995). A Christchurch study of 21-year-olds of Māori descent used the census ethnicity questions as a measure of ethnic identification. They found that those who identified their ethnicity as 'sole Māori' had higher levels of participation in Māori-specific activities and language (cultural participation), than those reporting Māori descent without Māori ethnic identity. Those reporting mixed ethnicity lay between these two groups in terms of participation (Broughton et al, 2000).

Census data shows that sole Māori are over-represented among those living in the most socio-economically deprived areas[2] of New Zealand. Deprivation is associated with poorer educational

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[2] NZDep96 is an area-based index of socio-economic deprivation that uses nine variables measured in the 1996 Census (no access to a telephone, receiving a means-tested benefit, unemployed, low household income, no access to a car, single parent family, no education qualifications, not living in own home, overcrowded home). The index provides a deprivation score for each meshblock (geographical units containing a median of 90 people) in Aotearoa (Howden-Chapman and Tobias, 2000).

outcomes. These two factors would lead one to expect that sole Māori are more at risk of worse educational outcomes, although other researchers report strength of identity as a mitigating factor (Durie, 2001).

Problematic aspects of measuring or judging 'Maoriness' include the potential for reifying stereotypes of Māori- the 'quintessential Māori' (Wall, 1997), good Māori and bad Māori (Wetherell and Potter, 1992), and a hierarchical categorisation of authenticity (L Smith, 1999).

> Questions of who is a 'real indigenous' person, what counts as a 'real indigenous' leader, which person displays 'real cultural values' and the criteria used to assess the characteristics of authenticity are frequently the topic of conversation and political debate. These debates are designed to fragment and marginalize those who speak for, or in support of, indigenous issues. They frequently have the effect also of silencing and making invisible the presence of other groups within the indigenous society like women, the urban non-status tribal person and those whose ancestry of blood quantum is too 'white' (Smith, 1999:72).

Questions also arise over whether scales of Māoriness, or 'cultural participation', imply a static culture, unchanging and unresponsive to different environments. Are scales of Māoriness measuring the rate of change of Māori culture, rather than the level of Māoriness or acculturation of individual Māori? Identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as the past. One's identity is undergoing constant transformation subject to the continuous play of history. If the future aspects of identity are not identified, then identity may often be constructed in relation to the recovery of the past (hooks, 1992).

> It is not for me to become my grandmother, it is for me to become the grandmother my grandchildren will need me to become in the future (Reid, 2001).

Socio-economic explanations

During the 1980s and 1990s research emerged showing socio-economic status to be associated with various health outcomes (eg tobacco smoking, hospitalisations and mortality). This evidence led some commentators to conclude that differential social and health outcomes between Māori and Pākehā can be explained primarily by relative socio-economic status with culture providing an additional explanatory factor (NHC, 1998; Howden-Chapman et al, 2000).

However, while there is significant evidence to demonstrate that the Māori population is disproportionately distributed among the lower socio-economic or most deprived sectors of New

Zealand society, few authors stopped to question this maldistribution, the mechanisms that might be causing it and societal acceptance of it.

Racism

It has been argued that socio-economic status should be monitored as an outcome variable rather than an explanatory variable.

> We should never accept socio-economic status as an 'explanation' of Māori and non-Māori health disparities. That would be accepting as a given the differences in the distribution of socio-economic status between Māori and non-Māori. We need to ask the questions which will highlight the structural factors which cause/perpetuate ethnic differences in socioeconomic status. Those are the real explanations (Jones, 1999a).

Jones contends that institutionalised racism is the mechanism by which historical injustices (eg land alienation through colonisation) are perpetuated, and is the reason that there is an association between socio-economic status and ethnicity (Jones, 1999). There is compelling evidence that this exists in New Zealand. Māori outcomes in health are consistently worse than Pākehā at all levels of deprivation (Reid, Robson & Jones, 2001). Furthermore, there is evidence that Māori may not be receiving equal (let alone requisite) levels of health service access (Baxter, 2001).

Although the recent focus on decreasing ethnic disparities has been refashioned, some government documents acknowledge racism as a likely determinant of health and social well-being and recommend that institutional racism and experience of personal racism be measured and monitored (Ministry of Health, 2001).

A re-examination of the statistic at the beginning of this section acknowledges that it could be rewritten. Using other analytical frameworks 'Māori students are over two and a half times more likely than non-Māori students to leave school with no qualifications' could equally be presented, as 'the New Zealand education system is two and a half times more likely to fail Māori students than non-Māori students', or again as, 'New Zealand society, through the education system, privileges Pākehā by the time they leave school'. This example illustrates the need to question and scrutinise the underlying agendas that drive research, its analysis and its presentation. Official statistics ought not to be exempt from this examination.

> The 'culturalization of racism', whereby Black inferiority is attributed to 'cultural deficiency, social inadequacy, and technological underdevelopment' thrives in a social climate that is officially pluralist. … Canadians are outraged when racism, particularly indirect racism, is named, as it is not supposed to exist. What is really denied is that 'whites regularly idealize and favour themselves as a group.' Thus, there can sometimes be a more or less general rejection of overt racism and, at the same time, 'an increasing reluctance to see race as a fundamental determinant of white privilege and Black poverty.'… Cultural differences are used to explain oppression; if these differences could somehow be taken into account, oppression would disappear (Razack, 1998:60-61).

When Dr Camara Jones visited New Zealand in 1999, she asked her audiences a question used in the United States to measure 'race-consciousness': "How often do you think about your race/ethnicity?" The answer categories ranged from never, once a year, once a month, once a day, once an hour, to constantly. She had used this question in several large surveys of US women as a measure of how often people are made conscious of their 'difference' or 'othered'. The results from Māori were similar to those of black women in the United States, with a majority reporting that they think about their race (or ethnicity) constantly.

In contrast, most white women in the United States stated that they never or rarely thought about their race. 'Many white people in the United States do not even consider that they have a race. They consider themselves "normal", "human" or "universal"' (Jones, 1999:33).

When considering submissions from people preferring to identify as 'New Zealander', the 1988 Review of Ethnic Statistics recognised that it is common for a predominant ethnic group not to consider itself as an 'ethnic group'. Being generally immersed in a society broadly reflecting their own 'culture', many Pākehā do not have to think about their ethnicity, and some assume they don't have an ethnicity. In this situation, national identity may be easier to perceive than ethnicity. 'Nationalism and the construction of national identity are, after all, explicit projects of the State. If nothing else, we have passports' (Jenkins, 1997:15). Instead of engaging with the concept of ethnicity, some Pākehā engage instead with nationality, and want to call themselves 'New Zealander' or 'Kiwi'.

> The majority Pākehā group, whose ethnicity is largely unacknowledged and unchallenged, tend to perceive ethnic identity as irrelevant to the way in which society is structured or managed. Thus, the sentiment 'we're all New Zealanders' encompasses an ideology in which nationalism does not permit any prior claims to ethnicity. One feature of this

position is the rejection of the need for the collection of ethnic statistics (Spoonley et al, 1984:156).

This position signals a point of possible conflict in the ethnicity debate. Those who wish to engage solely at the level of nationality may be unable to respond appropriately to such things as the rights of tangata whenua, the need to monitor Māori outcomes or intervene in disparities. Unless they are provided with adequate information and a critical analysis, they may ultimately seek to reduce the rights of Māori to be counted.

In summary, this section has highlighted how various analytical contexts have attempted to explain the ethnic statistics collected and reported by the Crown, in particular the disparities between Māori and Pākehā. Biological determinism, prevalent until the 1950s, was substituted with the concept of 'ethnicity' as an explanatory variable. In the ensuing focus on cultural difference and socio-economic explanations, Māori became the objects of inquiry, positioned as deficient, while the determining nature of Pākehā culture and unequal power relations remained unexamined. Colonisation and racism are prominent in Māori explanations for disparities but have received scant attention for official monitoring. In a society that protects against racism by law, there may be a high level of denial that ethnicity is important or indeed that racism exists. Māori rights may be further at risk.

Issues for Submissions to the Review

Māori individuals and groups making submissions to the review may wish to comment on the following areas:

- What is the role of the Crown in ensuring that through its official statistics, Māori are not minoritised or further marginalised.

Comments on other relevant issues are welcome.

Summary

Those who name the world have the power to shape people's realities. Ethnicity matters. It involves our identity, how we view ourselves and how we are represented in society.

> There is an umbilical connection between the description imposed upon any group and how it is treated, between the label a group can be convinced to accept … and the treatment it is ultimately entitled to demand. (Churchill 1994:327)

In New Zealand, it is government policy that ethnicity be self-identified. It is our right to name our own identity and to have our ethnicity recorded as we wish. Being Māori means an infinite number of things, changing according to context or not changing – we need not be boxed in, we have the right to be us, whatever, wherever, and whenever we wish to be. It is important to note, however, that we live in a society where there is differential access to the goods, services and opportunities of society by ethnicity. This illustrates that others also identify Māori ethnicity and alter their behaviour or attitudes because of this identification. The end result of their action has a measurable impact on Māori outcomes.

The Ethnic Statistics Review provides an opportunity for Māori to articulate to the Crown, Māori requirements in respect of the statistics it collects, processes and disseminates, within the framework of Treaty rights. This paper aims to stimulate discussion and debate about ethnicity and hence to encourage Māori participation in the review.

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Key Terms.[3]

- **Hapū** – usually, though not always, aggregations of whānau (Durie, 2001:189).

- **Indigenous peoples** – Indigenous peoples are defined in terms of collective aboriginal occupation prior to colonial settlement (Trask, 1999:33). 'In New Zealand, the terms "Māori" or tangata whenua are used much more frequently than "indigenous" as the universal term, while different origin and tribal terms are also used to differentiate between groups. Although the word 'Māori' is an indigenous term it has been identified as a label which defines a colonial relationship between "Māori" and "Pākehā" the non-indigenous settler population' (L Smith, 1999:6).

- **Iwi** – 'large kinship-based, political groupings of Māori.' (L Smith, 1999:18). Often translated as tribe, although the word tribe is recognised as problematic arising from colonial notions of tribes as 'primitive', 'non-civilized' forms of social organisation (Jenkins, 1997). The definition of iwi has been the subject of legal and political debate and is likely to continue to be contested.

- **Ethnicity** – Ethnicity was translated as 'momo tangata' in the 2001 Census, and recently as 'te karangatanga tangata'.

  'I Aotearoa nei, ka riro māu tonu e whakatau nō tēhea karangatanga tangata koe. Neke atu i te karangatanga kotahi ka taea. I ōna wā anō tērā koe ka whai pānga ki ētahi atu karangatanga. Kāore i rite te karangatanga tangata ki te whenua i whānau mai ai koe, ki te whenua rānei e noho ana koe, ki tō whakapapa rānei' (HURA, 2001).[4]

  In New Zealand, ethnicity is based on self-identification. You can belong to more than one ethnic group. At different times of your life you may wish to identify with other groups. Ethnicity is not the same as the country you were born in, the country you live in, or your ancestry. "Ethnic groups are people who have culture, language, history or traditions in common" (NZHIS, 1996).

- **Ethnos** – An ancient Greek word which referred to a range of situations in which a collectivity of humans lived and acted together, and which is typically translated today as 'people' or 'nation' (Jenkins, 1997:9).

- **'Race'** – 'A rough proxy for socioeconomic status, culture, and genes, which captures the social classification of people in a race-conscious society. "Race" is not a biological construct that reflects innate difference, but a social construct that precisely captures the impact of racism' (Jones, 2000).

- **Racism** - Jones (2000) delineates racism into three levels: Institutionalised racism is differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race. Interpersonal racism is prejudice

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[3] We recognise that definitions for many of these terms are contestable. The meanings presented here are not definitive and challenges through the submission process will be welcomed.
[4] Translated by Jenny Jacobs and Te Haumihiata Mason, Huatau, 2001.

(differential assumptions about the abilities, motives and intentions of others according to their 'race' or ethnicity) and discrimination (differential actions towards others according to their 'race' or ethnicity). Internalised racism is the acceptance by members of the stigmatised ethnic group of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth.