

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

Introduction

The news media are not neutral or objective. Studies show that the news repeats and reinforces negative themes about Māori that date from the earliest days of colonisation.

These negative themes present Māori interests and what Māori do as problems, or as being on the margins. They also help make Pākehā control over institutions, resources, society and culture seem right and natural.

The first three themes - Pākehā as the norm, 'One People' and 'Rights' - arose originally from struggles in Europe in the 1700s and 1800s. Together these themes represent New Zealand as a modern, liberal, social democracy to New Zealanders, while also closing off alternative ways of looking at our society. Ten of the 11 remaining themes represent Maori as a problem in some way.

This booklet and its associated [website](#) describe these themes, and give other ways of talking about these topics. They list words and phrases that suggest the theme; examples of how news media use it; assumptions behind the theme; the effects it has; and other ways of thinking about the issue.

We welcome your feedback!

Submit your own examples of anti-Māori themes in the media to the website and suggest your alternatives. These suggestions will be moderated and uploaded to the site.

Theme 1 Pākehā as the norm

Theme 2 One people

Theme 3 Rights

Theme 4 'Māori privilege'

Theme 5 'Good Māori/Bad Māori'

Theme 6 'Stirrers'

Theme 7 Ignorance and insensitivity

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Theme 9 'Māori culture'

Theme 10 'Maori inheritance'

Theme 11 'Maori resources'

Theme 12 Financial management

Theme 13 Treaty of Waitangi

Theme 14 'Maori success'

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**We welcome examples and alternatives to these themes at
www.trc.org.nz/alternatives-anti-maori-themes-news-media**

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

Theme 1 Pākehā as the norm

There are no themes in the news about Pākehā as a group because Pākehā are portrayed as if they are the nation. They are shown as the norm or default - the natural, ordinary community against which all other ethnic groups are measured. As a result the media hardly ever refer to or identify Pākehā by ethnicity.

How this is being said in the news

Pākehā as 'us', 'we', 'our', the public, taxpayers, New Zealanders, Kiwis, the nation, Pacific's triple star;
Māori as 'they' or 'them'

Examples

- 'One News, Our News'.
- 'They're not rugby heroes, not gang members. They're the fast growing Maori middle class. Prepare to adjust your stereotypes' *North & South* cover, June 2008.
- The tino rangatiratanga flag referred to as 'their' flag, *One News*, February-March, 2007.
- 'Hone Harawira and the Maori party: what have we got to fear?' *Metro* cover, November 2004.

Other ways to talk about this

- Acknowledge Pākehā ethnicity when there is a vested interest or criminal behaviour ('Pākehā MPs', 'police are seeking a Pākehā man')
- Pākehā are one cultural group among many in Aotearoa.

Pākehā privilege

While the news often implies that Māori are privileged, it never acknowledges the privileges that Pākehā received from colonisation.

Some of the privileges Pākehā received in the 1800s and 1900s, which still have an impact -

- Able to buy or lease Māori land cheaply.
- Able to learn and speak in their language in school.
- Have their vote worth more after the creation of the four Māori seats.
- Able to be paid the full unemployment benefit and old age pension from their introduction.
- Able to get Government loans and finance for land development.

Ongoing Pākehā privileges today include -

- Able to use health, education, justice and social services geared to their cultural values.
- Having their culture and values reflected in the main institutions and goals of society.
- Freedom from ongoing surveillance and criticism on the basis of their ethnicity.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-1-p%81keh%81-norm

Theme 2

'One people'

In this negative theme, 'New Zealanders' are described as a single people who should all be treated the same. This is usually a response to attempts by Maori for recognition as tangata whenua.

How this is being said in the news

Kiwi, New Zealander, one people, equal treatment, we are all the same; no one group should have preference, we are a multicultural society, we are all immigrants.

Examples

- 'Maori have a special place in New Zealand, but that specialness should not be allowed to undermine the sanctity of the simple equality of all New Zealanders living together.' P. Goldsmith, *NZ Herald* column, April 2009.
- 'The justification for the Maori seats is now gone. It is a move that will signify one country, one people'. *Timaru Herald* editorial, Feb 7, 2003.
- 'Beaches for all'. *Otago Daily Times* front page headline, Aug 19, 2003.

What does this assume?

- Equality means treating everyone the same.
- Cultural or racial differences are divisive, not real, or do not matter.
- Indigenous status and the Treaty are irrelevant.
- Majority rule is the only fair and just way to make decisions.

What does this do?

- Supports Pākehā (ie. majority) control of most important decisions.
- Tells Māori that they should assimilate.
- Removes ethnicity from the discussion as irrelevant.
- Undermines the Treaty.

Other ways to talk about this

- Acknowledge the place of tangata whenua and the Treaty relationship.
- Given the imbalances arising from colonisation, we may need to treat people differently to get more equal outcomes. This is provided for in New Zealand law anyway, for a range of different groups who are historically disadvantaged.
- Pākehā are one cultural group among many.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-2-one-people

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Theme 3 'Rights'

People are portrayed as if they are or should be entitled to do what they want, as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. Māori rights are set up as affecting the rights of others, but Pākehā or 'our' rights are not seen to affect the rights of Māori.

How this is being said in the news

Rights, democracy, equality, level playing field, birthright, one law for all, property rights.

Examples

- 'Foreshore showdown looms as fear of Maori rights escalates'. *National Business Review*, Nov 5, 2010.
- 'Our laws hold that every New Zealander, irrespective of ethnic or cultural identity, enjoys equality in citizenship.' M. Cabling, *NZ Herald* column, April 24, 2009.

What does this assume?

- Rights belong only to individuals.
- Rights always compete or conflict.
- One person's rights are limited by the rights of others.
- Rights, eg. property rights, only exist if they are already provided for by government laws.

What does this do?

- Denies the role of the Treaty in setting out certain rights for Māori and non-Māori.
- Denies indigenous ways in which rights are established.
- Undermines the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which New Zealand has signed.
- Pretends that New Zealand law or Western concepts of rights don't allow for group rights - when actually they can and do.

Other ways to talk about this

- Individual rights are only one of many ways of thinking about rights, even in Western thought.
- Rights can be collective, or belong to groups. This is true of New Zealand and international law, for corporations, unions and indigenous people.
- Rights can be negotiated.
- Māori rights are transmitted through whakapapa and guaranteed in te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Treaty rights apply to both Māori and non-Māori in different ways.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-3-rights

Theme 4

'Māori privilege'

In this negative theme, Māori are portrayed as having rights or benefits denied to others in a way that is unfair and racist. It argues that current 'New Zealanders' should not be held accountable for the inequities created by the treatment of Māori in the past.

How this is being said in the news

Special treatment, Treaty/grievance industry, the past is the past, taxpayer funds, Māori Parliamentary seats, Māori All Blacks, Māori admission schemes.

Examples

- 'Spirituality or special treatment?' NZ Herald headline, Oct 12, 2004.
- 'National's ETS [Emission Trading Scheme] to include special treatment for Maori'. 3 News headline, Nov 16, 2005.

What does this assume?

- Colonisation was in the past and no longer has a negative impact on Māori.
- Society's structures and institutions benefit everyone equally.
- Fairness is a Kiwi value; Kiwis dislike any group being unfairly privileged.

What does this do?

- Masks the unfair and unequal effects of society's structures and institutions.
- Deflects attention away from Pākehā control of wealth and politics.
- Masks the very limited nature of Treaty settlements compared to the real value of resources taken from Māori.
- Portrays guaranteed Māori participation as unjust or racist.

Other ways to talk about this

- Explore Pākehā power in the area under discussion.
- Acknowledge the role of tangata whenua and the Treaty relationship.
- Describe action to reduce Māori disadvantage in context, acknowledging that past injustices have ongoing effects.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-4-maori-privilege

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Theme 5

‘Good Māori/bad Māori’

In this negative theme, Māori who are seen as happy with their lot, ‘fitting in’ or achieving in settler society are described as good, while Māori who resist, seek restitution, demand recognition or do not achieve are bad.

The same person or group can be described as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ from moment to moment. When the speaker is vague about how many people are ‘bad Māori’, they can then dismiss protesters as a minority who lack support from their people.

How this is being said in the news

‘Good’ - law-abiding, polite, happy, rural, older, hard-working, dignified, co-operative, punctual, clean and tidy, footing it with the rest of us.

‘Bad’ - poor, sick, lazy, urban, young, criminal, aggressive, complaining/protesting, bludgers, stupid/dumb, greedy, dishonest.

Examples

- ‘It’s time to knuckle down, Hone. Go look at your colleague, Te Ururoa Flavell, as an example of someone who does the hard yards and is mightily respected for it.’ John Armstrong, *NZ Herald*, Oct 23, 2010.
- ‘No longer is Harawira the fire-wielding, foul-mouthed attack-dog, but the considered, studious critic seeking cross-party support.’ *Otago Daily Times* online news, July 31, 2010.

What does this assume?

- Pākehā have the right to judge Maori.
- Good Māori don’t make a fuss.
- There are always ‘bad’ Māori; Maori don’t have occasional bad apples as Pākehā do.
- Good Māori fit quietly into Pākehā society.
- Bad Māori make poor decisions that reduce their life chances and outcomes.
- Good Māori don’t need ‘special treatment’.

What does this do?

- Makes it normal for Pākehā to judge Māori in ways they do not apply to themselves.
- The existence of ‘good’ Māori implies it is possible for any Māori to ‘fit in’.
- Blames Māori for social inequalities.
- Represents protest and dissatisfaction as arising from a minority of Māori.
- Encourages Māori to discipline and judge each other.

Other ways to talk about this

- Māori are diverse, and like any group, have a range of opinions.
- Judge Pākehā by the same criteria as Māori are judged.
- Passing judgement on minority groups is a privilege of the dominant group; ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are defined by Pākehā and serve their interests.
- Is being Māori relevant to this particular story?

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-5-good-m%C4%81ori-bad-m%C4%81ori

Theme 6

'Stirrers'

In this negative theme, anyone who challenges the status quo, whether Māori or non-Māori, is portrayed as a troublemaker who misleads others and causes tension for their own political ends. This particularly applies to coverage of protests.

How this is being said in the news

Stirrer, radical, activist, protestor, malcontents, terrorists, bleeding heart liberals, mountains out of molehills, haters and wreckers.

Examples

- 'The attendees included a fair number of crackpots and radicals, some of whom wanted to negotiate with Queen Elizabeth as Queen Victoria's heir rather than the present Government.' *Dominion Post*, Aug 4, 2002.
- 'Maori activists occupied the school's buildings on Tuesday, saying the Government had no right to sell the school because it was on confiscated Maori land.' Sale found to be a mistake, *Taranaki Daily News*, Mar 8, 2007.

What does this assume?

- Race relations are good and it's only stirrers who disturb things.
- Stirrers are a tiny minority whose opinions are not widely shared even among Māori.

- Stirrers are not really interested in the issues they raise but use them as vehicles for their own advancement.

What does this do?

- Deflects attention from the substance of the grievance by focusing on supposed disruption or aggression by the protestors.
- Portrays the issues being raised as extreme, unacceptable or trivial.
- Hides the support and respect Māori have for tino rangatiratanga leadership.
- Attempts to divide Māori from each other.
- Ignores any Pākehā support for tino rangatiratanga.

Other ways to talk about this

- 'Stirrers' have been behind every advance in social justice, including the 40-hour week, the minimum wage, te reo Māori on TV and women's right to vote.
- Tino rangatiratanga and Treaty-based processes work in many organisations and are legitimate viewpoints.
- Acknowledge the 'stirring' of those who use positions of power and media influence to openly advocate racism, such as talkback and TV 'shock jocks', politicians and others.
- Acknowledge the historical context and range of Māori voices on the issue or grievance.
- Explore the foundations and Māori history on the issue.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-6-stirrers

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Theme 7 Ignorance and insensitivity

In this negative theme, Pākehā actions that offend Māori are portrayed as not their fault, and Māori are depicted as just over-reacting.

How this is being said in the news

I didn't know, Māori don't tell us, hyper-sensitive, unreasonable, take offence too easily, need to lighten up, build a bridge and get over it, no sense of humour, it's just PC.

Examples

- 'At the time [of the 1979 Haka Party incident], none of us kids thought we were disrespecting anyone's culture.' *NZ Herald*, May 2009.
- 'Don Brash has criticised the use of powhiri at official functions, saying a 'half-naked man poking his tongue out' is not a particularly civilised way to greet foreign dignitaries.' *NZ Herald*, Sep 4, 2005.

What does this assume?

- Māori culture, language and values are inferior; therefore Pākehā need not respect them.
- Pākehā culture and language is dominant and universal; therefore anything Māori must fit in or adjust.
- It's the responsibility of Māori to tell Pākehā about their culture.

- Māori are secretive about their culture; so it's their fault if Pākehā don't know what could cause offense.

What does this do?

- Blames Māori for Pākehā transgressions.
- Excuses persistent and deliberate breaches of commonly understood Māori values and practices, such as mispronouncing te reo Māori, or not bothering to learn appropriate protocols.
- Sidelines Māori cultural practices and maintains the dominance of Pākehā ones.
- Criticises respect for Māori language and culture.
- Portrays Māori cultural practices outside Māori environments, such as marae, as political impositions on others.
- Gives encouragement for telling people to stop speaking Māori or practising tikanga Māori in everyday situations.

Other ways to talk about this

- Māori culture, language and practices are extremely important to identity in Aotearoa and should be respected as such.
- Māori are unique to Aotearoa and contribute to New Zealand's distinctiveness internationally.
- Information is widely available, so Pākehā cannot plead ignorance about disrespect to Māori.
- New Zealand is one of the most monolingual countries in the world; in many countries being multi-lingual is ordinary.
- Learning te reo and developing cultural competence in tikanga Māori and other cultures enriches national life.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-7-ignorance-and-insensitivity

Theme 8

'Māori violence'

In this negative theme, Māori are portrayed as affected by violence more than others, either as perpetrators or victims.

How this is being said in the news

Warriors, 'warrior gene', primitive, Jake the Muss, gangs, 'bro' language, thugs, staunch, Māori child abuse.

Examples

- Repetitive use of Māori children as illustrations of child abuse.
- Widespread and repeated use of images of haka and wero to represent Māori.
- 'A New Zealand researcher claims there is an over-representation of the 'warrior gene', which has been linked to aggressive behaviour, in Maori men.' NZ Herald online audio, Aug 9, 2006.

What does this assume?

- Māori, and Māori men in particular, are inherently violent.
- Non-Māori violence is the action of 'bad apples'; Māori violence is cultural or genetic.
- Non-Māori don't abuse their children, or do so less than Māori.
- Māori accept and cover up violence.
- Māori are generally unconcerned about using crime to support themselves.

What does this do?

- Creates fear of Māori.
- Makes Pākehā family violence and child abuse invisible.
- Focuses the stigma of violence on Māori families.
- Reinforces stereotypes of Māori as violent.
- Increases Māori belief in these negative stereotypes.
- Encourages media to sensationalise Māori crime.
- Ignores state violence against Māori (eg Ruātoki raids, being beaten for speaking Māori at school, Land Wars).

Other ways to talk about this

- Unmask White crime.
- Reporting should reflect the fact that child abuse and family violence happen in all cultures.
- Well-off families are more able to keep family violence from coming to police attention.
- Between 2009 and 2012, 41% of children killed from child abuse or neglect were Pākehā or other non-Māori, non-Pacific people (Family Violence Death Review Committee, *Fourth Annual Report*, 2014)
- Māori child-rearing practices were subject to the changing whims of the dominant culture. EG: Pākehā researchers in the 1950s said that Māori spoilt their children and didn't hit them enough, and that Māori thought corporal punishment in school was abhorrent and cruel.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-8-māori-violence

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

Theme 9 'Māori culture'

In this negative theme, Māori culture and language are presented as primitive, irrelevant and inadequate for the modern world. On the other hand, Pākehā will often use non-threatening aspects of Māori culture to mark their own identity as New Zealanders.

How this is being said

Time-wasting, PC, sexist, without Pākehā Māori wouldn't have..., property values will dip because of Māori

Examples

- 'Dannemora property investor Sherrie Jacobs said she was worried that had the area [Howick] been [re] named Te Irirangi, house prices could dip.' *NZ Herald*, Sep 14, 2010.
- 'Education Minister Trevor Mallard has sparked a race relations row by suggesting Maori culture sometimes cuts across the tradition of equality in schools.' *NZPA*, Sep 25, 2004.
- 'Josie Bullock described Department of Corrections Maori ceremonies as 'sexist''. *NZPA*, Sep 25, 2004.

What does this assume?

- Some cultures are simply superior.
- There is a progression in cultures from backward and primitive (tribal) to sophisticated (industrial).
- For Māori culture to be authentic, it has to remain as it was at the time of colonisation.
- Māori culture and Māori people are either authentic or lost.
- All Māori are experts about customary Māori culture.
- Pākehā culture is modern and universal.
- Pākehā have a right to make judgements about Māori culture regardless of their knowledge.
- Māori culture is being imposed on non-Māori.

What does this do?

- Justifies Pākehā dominance and ongoing colonisation.
- Undercuts Treaty rights for Māori taonga.
- Constructs Māori culture as decorative or purely ceremonial.
- Supports ongoing assimilation of Māori.
- Encourages Māori to believe their culture is inferior.
- Divides Māori culture into either 'authentic' or 'fake'.
- Makes it harder for Māori to value their own cultural diversity and innovation.

How else could this be said?

- Pākehā engagement with Māori culture is a privilege; Māori engagement with Māori culture is a right.
- Māori culture is expansive and cannot simply be explained by its differences from Pākehā culture.
- Māori cultural concepts are legitimate and complex; e.g. Pōwhiri embrace the Maori concept of manākitanga - welcoming and hosting other people - as tangata whenua.
- Pākehā culture is influenced by Māori culture; e.g. kaitiakitanga (guardianship and environmental protection); tangihanga (mourning and funeral processes).
- All cultures are diverse and fluid and have their own measures of what is valuable.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-9-m%C4%81ori-culture

Theme 10

‘Māori inheritance’

This negative theme asserts that there are few ‘real Māori’ left because of intermarriage, so they are no longer a distinct people and should not claim any benefits.

How this is being said

Māori blood, blood fractions (half-Māori, quarter-Māori, half-caste, part-Māori), intermarriage, pure, genes, drop of Māori blood, born-again Māori, plastic Māori, fingernail of Māori blood, waka-blond, biculturalism in the bedroom.

Examples

- ‘Where could we be in 100 years’ time when, because of further intermarriage, an ever larger share of the population, say 30 percent, has a drop of Maori blood.’ Paul Goldsmith column, *NZ Herald*, April 2009.
- ‘Everyone who was born here is a New Zealander... four of my eight grandparents were Irish so by this silly racist Maori identity yardstick I am still half Irish.’ Frank Haden, *Dominion Post*, Sep 20, 1992.

What does this assume?

- A valid Māori identity is purely genetic or biological.
- Racial purity means a strong cultural identity, while mixed ancestry dilutes that identity.
- Fifty percent Māori ‘blood’ is a magical dividing line between authentic and fake.

- Māori and European are mutually exclusive categories.
- Māori identity is claimed falsely by individuals wanting ‘special’ benefits.
- Only Māori should prove their identity; Pākehā don’t have to.

What does this do?

- Challenges Māori right to self-identify as Māori, continually requiring Māori to define who they are.
- Suggests assimilation of Māori is inevitable.
- Confuses race, ethnicity and culture.
- Downplays the size of the Māori population and hence claims on public resources, undermining legitimate claims by tangata whenua.
- Creates a fear that Māori identity fraud is rampant.
- Pākehā often get defensive about identifying as a group.
- Reinforces some indicators of Māori identity as more valid than others, writing off many people with Māori ancestry.

How else could this be said?

- Self-identification is valid.
- Whakapapa expresses an integrated relationship between Māori ancestry, ethnicity, culture and identity.
- Be clear about using ethnicity, culture and race appropriately.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-10-m%C4%81ori-inheritance

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

Theme 11 'Māori resources'

In this negative theme, potential or actual Māori control of significant resources - for example, land, fisheries or money - is portrayed as a threat to non-Māori.

How this is being said

Threat, fear, rich iwi, reverse racism, Māori land 'gifted' back, fisheries, compensation, customary rights, public access, iwi tax, Pākehā missing out, give Māori an inch and they'll take a mile.

Examples

- "Iwi tax' Tribe sets lakebed fishing levy', *Dominion Post* headline, March 6, 2009.
- 'TV3 implied that Ngai Tahu were to blame for David and Morgan Saxton being imprisoned for stealing the pounamu.' *Press*, April 11, 2008.
- 'Tribe: Pay us for air rights', *NZ Herald* headline, Oct 7, 2004.

What does this assume?

- The audience is non-Māori.
- A Pākehā audience should feel threatened by Māori control.
- Māori control of resources is offensive because they don't deserve it.
- Māori should be grateful for any compensation.

- Economic opportunities for non-Māori are limited by iwi unfairly 'locking up' resources.
- The resource is wasted on Māori.

What does this do?

- Makes Pākehā control of wealth in Aotearoa invisible; for example, by focussing on Māori-controlled land and ignoring the 80 percent in non-Māori hands.
- Obscures the sales of major assets from non-Māori to foreign interests.
- Demonises Māori who want to develop their own economic base in line with Māori values.
- Undermines Māori efforts toward economic self-determination.
- Justifies government scrutiny of Māori-controlled resources.

How else could this be said?

- Treaty settlements and the return of resources are a significant and positive achievement that everyone can be proud of.
- Māori resources are less likely to be sold overseas.
- Māori control and use of resources generates taxes, jobs and services.
- It is in Pākehā interests for resources to be in Māori control, because they will be managed with a long-term view.
- Māori concepts of resource management are legitimate and sustaining; e.g. wairua and kaitiakitanga promote conservation and sustainable development.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-11-m%C4%81ori-resources

Theme 12

‘Financial management’

In this negative theme, Māori are represented as financially inexperienced, incompetent or corrupt.

How this is being said

Fraud, forgery, inappropriate use of money, allegations, incompetence, mismanagement, nepotism, financial disarray, fake, Treaty settlement, audit (of Māori organisation), conflict (within Māori organisation).

Examples

- ‘Iwi Services investigated by police’ *Northern News* front page headline, Feb 7, 2007.
- ‘Maori drug and alcohol service Te Rito Arahi faces a torrid time after a devastating audit and a staff rebellion.’ *Press*, Mar 17, 2007.
- ‘There’s more drama at Maori Television Service following the sudden announcement that its third chief executive in less than two and a half years is quitting.’ *One News*, Aug 27, 2004.

What does this assume?

- Māori are not accountable in the same way as Pākehā for money they receive.
- Māori handling money is a new thing; accounting is not part of Māori culture.
- Māori will often employ their family members - nepotism.

- Māori shouldn’t have this money in the first place.
- Māori don’t generate wealth.
- Pākehā are better at financial management.

What does this do?

- Māori groups are under constant scrutiny by the government and non-Māori about how they deal with their money.
- Māori have difficulty getting loans and development finance.
- Undermines Māori Treaty claims and Māori provision of health and social services.
- Provides ammunition for those opposing Māori initiatives.
- Stigmatises Māori as a people.

How else could this be said?

- Bad management is common in corporations (Blue Chip, South Canterbury Finance, Nuplex, National Finance, BNZ, Bridgecorp, Hanover Finance, Lane Walker Rudkin, Five Star Finance...) yet no one uses that to imply that Pākehā as a group are financially incompetent.
- Māori have a long history of being entrepreneurial. By 1840, Māori were supplying Auckland and Sydney with food transported in their own ships.
- Māori do a lot with little.

- Focus on where Pākehā wealth comes from, and the advantages Pākehā gained from obtaining Māori land and resources cheaply or for nothing.
- Family businesses are seen as a positive Pākehā institution; why are family businesses bad when they’re Māori?
- Māori do things for others for free; Pākehā often charge.
- Māori ethical values are built into Māori business.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-12-financial-management

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

Theme 13 Treaty of Waitangi

This theme depicts the Treaty as a historical document that is irrelevant to the present and which blocks development. It links strongly with themes 4: 'Māori privilege'; 5: 'Good Māori/Bad Māori'; and 11: 'Māori resources'.

How this is being said in the news

Treaty/grievance industry, grievance mode, gravy train, divisive, never-ending, Treatyism, the past is the past, undermine democracy; any calls to dispense with the Treaty.

Examples

- Treaty of Waitangi claims are continuing to delay the sale of Masterton's abandoned schools (*Dominion Post*, 19 February, 2008).
- ...when the orchestrated grievance display that is Waitangi Day passes... (*Manawatu Standard* editorial, 7 February, 2007)

What does this assume?

- Pākehā are entitled to determine the worth and meaning of the Treaty on their own.
- Any decision or process that treats the views of Māori and non-Māori equally is undemocratic.
- A treaty signed more than 170 years ago is no longer relevant.

What does this do?

- Undermines any consideration of the Treaty in debates or conflicts between Māori and Pākehā
- Ensures that Pākehā institutions such as the police, courts and Parliament settle issues, which will usually benefit Pākehā at the expense of Māori.

Other ways to talk about this

- Explain the Crown's breaches of te Tiriti at issue.
- Te Tiriti is a contract enabling Pākehā to live justly in Aotearoa, by according Māori rights as tangata whenua
- Te Tiriti was as an agreement between two sovereign peoples, with Māori having an equal say in any interpretation
- Te Tiriti should be a foundation for a new constitution enabling a just, Treaty-based future.
- The Magna Carta was signed in 1215 but current laws banning arbitrary arrest and justice for sale are based on it.
- The inadequacies of media reporting about the Treaty undermine the ability of Pākehā and other non-Māori to consider their Tiriti obligations.
- Pakeha anxiety about their place in Aotearoa will be resolved only through honouring the Tiriti and acknowledging Maori as tangata whenua.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-13-treaty-of-waitangi

Theme 14

‘Māori success’

Particular forms of Māori economic activity in the arts, business and education are celebrated, especially those using aspects of Māori culture for branding. This is the only positive theme about Māori; however, it still ties in with other negative themes.

How this is being said

Young Māori, starting business, exhibition, show, first, world stage.

Examples

- ‘Papatoetoe business testing the waters in the global economy’. *Manukau Courier*, Dec 4, 2007.
- ‘A new ‘cybertribe’ of Maori artists is harnessing the web to take paintings, sculpture, mixed media, weaving and glassworks to the world art market.’ *NZ Herald*, Sep 10, 2004.

What does this assume?

- Māori success is rare but can occur.
- Success is to be defined in Pākehā terms.
- Māori can be successful when they use Pākehā structures and values.
- Māori success is positive as long as it doesn’t threaten Pākehā wealth or power.

What does this do?

- Divides Māori from one another.
- Māori have to be superstars, amazing and outstanding to be successful.
- Supports the ‘good Māori/bad Māori’ theme - these good Māori just try harder.
- Reinforces the idea that everyone has equal opportunities.
- Limits Māori success to pre-determined areas.

How else could this be said?

- Māori are often successful in spite of stereotypes and racism.
- What defines Māori success? How do Māori themselves understand success?
- Among Māori, self-promotion is discouraged: *Kāhore te kumara e kōrero mō tōna reka* - The kumara does not say how sweet it is.

Submit examples and alternatives to www.trc.org.nz/theme-14-m%C4%81ori-success

Ko Wikitoria te Kuni
irani i tana hiahia hoki kia tohungia ki a ratou
nu hoki te rongu ki a ratou me te Atanoho hoki kua
hei kai wakarite ki nga Tangata maori o Nu Tirani
e Kuni ki nga wahikatou o te Wenua nei me nga Motu
kua noho ki tenei wenua a e haere mai nei.

Na ko te Kuni e hiahia ana kia wakaritea te
naori ki te Pakeha e noho ture kore ana.

Na
ana mo nga wahi katoa o
o te wakaritea o nga
ro te tahi

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We welcome your feedback, examples and alternatives to these themes at
www.trc.org.nz/alternatives-anti-maori-themes-news-media