

MEDIA & TE TIRITI O WAITANGI 2007



WHICH MEDIA WE STUDIED

We analysed newspapers and television news - a representative group of 740 newspaper news articles and 118 news TV items about Māori issues, from 14 pre-selected days in February and March, 2007. We used discourse and content analysis methods.

We analysed sources and other content of Treaty and Māori resources stories in 2007 and were able to compare the results with the content analysis of the whole Māori stories sample in 2004.

We were unable to compare stories about Māori issues with coverage of any other issue.

RESULTS

Te Reo

We found low average levels of use of te reo Māori across all 740 newspaper items, with roughly half containing no Māori words for which there are English alternatives. *Te Kaea* and *Te Karere* consistently used iwi affiliations with the names of Māori speakers, but these were very rarely provided by mass television news or newspapers.

The proportion of Māori stories using words of te reo and the average number of Māori words per item (two) is the same as in our 2004 sample, a clear indicator of its low priority.

Frames and themes

When mass media talked of unity in coverage of Waitangi Day, it emphasised a form of New Zealand nationalism that silenced Māori rights and aspirations. When Māori TV news programmes did so, the unity was in diversity, focused on tino rangatiratanga and challenged the Government to honour te Tiriti o Waitangi. Māori language news assumed that the fight for Māori rights

and aspirations is a necessity and is not divisive or unjustified.

Many newspaper stories were written from a Pākehā perspective and represented Māori as a source of problems or conflict. They used or did not counter the Māori Privilege theme. Despite being dismissed as unfounded by the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, this enduring and self-serving Pākehā theme enabled Māori to be viewed as having privileges unfairly denied to Pākehā while also being depicted as poor, sick and a drain on "the taxpayer".

Cumulatively, the health stories that mentioned Māori positioned them in a health crisis. Health and social stories routinely compared Māori with Pākehā without any mention of the impacts of past punitive state policies. Effects of monocultural health and social services were made invisible.

Sources

Newspapers

Papers quoted more Māori (45%) than Pākehā (35%); this was an increase of 10% in Māori sources compared to 2004 across our whole Māori stories sample. They also quoted twice as many men (61%) as women (26%); and more Government sources (31%) than iwi (23%) or non-Government MPs (17%). Newspapers quoted twice as many Māori men as women and three or more times as many Pākehā men as women both years, indicating a possible greater role for women as spokespeople in the Māori world compared to the Pākehā one.

Television news

The proportion of Māori sources used in our 2007 TV sample (66%) was higher than in 2004 (43%) due to the inclusion of *Te Karere* and *Te Kaea*, which are required to use a high proportion of fluent speakers to promote te reo Māori. However, in 2007 on mass TV news (*One News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, *Tonight* and *Midday*) only 55% of sources were Māori. Mass TV news used more

SUMMARY

See the full report at www.trc.org.nz/resources/media.htm

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“ [The Treaty is] a living and evolving document that was never intended to fossilise into the status quo but was intended ... for constructive and ongoing engagement ”

Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous politics and ethnic relations in New Zealand*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1999

than three times as many male as female sources, compared to Māori programmes, where women made up nearly half the sources. Mass TV news programmes relied heavily on Government sources and used only a small proportion of iwi sources, while the opposite was true of *Te Kaea* and *Te Karere*.

Te Kaea and *Te Karere* let sources speak for up to three times as long as the mass news programmes.

“Good” and “bad” news

The balance between these categories in 2007 was much more weighted to neutral items in newspapers and “good” news items in TV than in 2004, when there were more “bad” news items. This may reflect differences between the Treaty and resource items and all Māori stories. In 2007 TV coverage, the greater proportion of “good” news stories is likely to reflect the specialist Māori coverage now available.

In both years, newspaper items from NZPA and stablemate publications included a much higher proportion rated as “bad” news compared with stories written by the newspaper’s own staff. This indicates that the sub-editors who select these items consistently rate stories that are bad news for or about Māori as more newsworthy than “good” news. This is disturbing, given owners’ moves towards increased media centralisation.

Conflict

A majority (57%) of newspaper Treaty and Māori resources items focused on a conflict or disagreement. Stories from NZPA and other newspapers were more likely (68%) to represent conflict or disagreement than stories generated by the paper’s own reporters (49%). Most of the conflict depicted (66%) was between Māori and Pākehā.

Television items were more evenly divided between those containing conflict (54%) and those without (45%). When conflict was part of news stories, it was overwhelmingly between Māori and non-Māori (80%).

Silences

Mass media items continued to provide little or no background explanation or context about the Treaty or Māori issues. The absence of links between current issues and their colonial origins supports status quo understandings of Māori/Pākehā relations.

A range of issues and initiatives appeared on Māori news that received little or no attention in the mass media.

Meanings for media audiences

Both Māori and non-Māori focus group members experienced mass media representations as unbalanced, decontextualised, negative and frequently depicting Māori as extreme or threatening. The effects were seen as damaging to Māori health and wellbeing, and reinforcing of negative Pākehā perceptions of Māori.

The focus groups and research indicate ways in which media representations of Māori and te Tiriti affect people’s lives and health. Māori focus group members regularly faced hostile reactions at work from Pākehā workmates that were directly related to negative media depictions of Māori and Treaty issues.

Māori members strongly appreciated accurate use of te reo Māori by mass media, and non-Māori focus group members also wanted to hear and see more of the language in the news.

Aspects of balance

The terms “radical” and “activist” were overwhelming applied to Māori in newspapers, and used largely by journalists rather than in quotes. The imbalance in these terms indicates an overall conservative viewpoint on Māori resource issues and a lack of alternative frames for these stories.

Differences between mass and Māori TV news

Values, concepts and worldviews expressed on Māori language television included honouring tupuna, mokopuna and whanaungatanga; these concepts were generally absent from mass media. Māori language TV also frequently expressed the importance of understanding te Tiriti and indigenous rights locally and globally, and coverage recognised the effects of colonisation on issues.

Te Kaea and *Te Karere* used fewer politicians as sources and gave them less airtime than mass TV news. The Māori sources were often people rarely seen on mass TV news. In contrast to mass media television, *Te Kaea* and *Te Karere* almost always provided the iwi affiliations of sources.

Te Kaea sources spoke on average for one and a half times as long as mass TV sources, while *Te Karere* gave sources three times as long to speak on average. They also used a much higher proportion of Māori and iwi sources than mass TV news, and a higher proportion of Māori female sources. Combined with their less confrontational interviewing style and less sensational approach, they mount a major challenge to the monocultural news values so long espoused as universal by mass TV news programmes.

Training

As with our 2004 sample, many of the items point to a need for ongoing in-service training for journalists, and more rigorous discussion among journalists, and between the media and its audiences, about coverage of Māori issues. Another major issue is the ongoing need for more Māori journalists in mass media.

Checklist for media consumers

To support direct action by media consumers about poor media representations of Māori, we have produced a Media Consumers' Checklist (see www.trc.org.nz/resources/media.htm), about which we welcome feedback. It will remain a work in progress. We also look forward to working with media on a checklist for journalists as well as public journalism projects about Māori issues.

What media workers can do

- ▷ Avoid using the anti-Māori themes identified in this research in stories, headlines or teasers; if a source uses them, ensure another source comments, otherwise your story will support those themes whether or not that is what you intended.
- ▷ Ensure that story frames include Māori, rather than excluding them from groupings such as taxpayers, the public or New Zealanders.
- ▷ Acknowledge Pākehā officials and concepts where appropriate; for example, by using "Pākehā history" instead of "our history" or "Pākehā MPs" when you talk about "Māori MPs".
- ▷ Be pro-active about using te reo Māori terms; report the iwi affiliations of Māori interviewees.
- ▷ Avoid labels such as "radical" or "activist" for Māori, or use them equally for "radical" Pākehā groups or ideas.
- ▷ Explain the relevant Treaty clause or the background to a resources dispute; audiences are largely unfamiliar with what the Treaty says.
- ▷ Take a long term view of history - think of Māori perspectives about an issue before deciding what is newsworthy. For example, a Māori contact may consider the spiritual value of a river the key issue rather than just "pollution."
- ▷ Avoid "dial-a-Māori" sources and seek out more iwi or hapū sources for stories.
- ▷ Ensure that stories explain the context of past discrimination and colonisation behind stories about Māori health, education or social issues, as well as Māori efforts in the area; avoid repeatedly depicting Māori failure.
- ▷ Avoid using the terms "race" or "race relations"; they are pseudo-biological terms commonly and inaccurately used to refer to ethnicity or cultural differences.

What media outlets can do

- ▷ Develop programmes to encourage staff, readers and audiences to use and understand more te reo Māori.
- ▷ Be pro-active about newsroom diversity; institute recruitment programmes and scholarships for Māori journalists.
- ▷ Require all those who apply for journalism jobs to have accurate pronunciation and use of Māori words, a basic knowledge of the Treaty and how to behave in Māori settings.

METHOD

We selected our newspaper and television items ahead of time, for a randomly-chosen constructed week during February and March 2007. The selected days were:

Sunday 11/2, 11/3; Monday 19/2, 12/3; Tuesday 6/2, 27/3; Wednesday 7/2, 14/3; Thursday 1/3, 8/3; Friday 9/2, 23/3; Saturday 3/2 AND 17/3.

We searched for the following key words and phrases:

- ▷ Treaty of Waitangi/te Tiriti o Waitangi
- ▷ Māori-Pākehā relations
- ▷ Disparities between Māori and non-Māori/mainstream
- ▷ Sovereignty
- ▷ Land Rights
- ▷ Foreshore and seabed
- ▷ Waitangi Tribunal
- ▷ Māori development
- ▷ Constitutional change
- ▷ Iwi/hapū/whānau
- ▷ Māori health.

THE ITEMS WE COLLECTED

Māori stories sample

Items were defined as Māori stories if they focused on –

- ▷ Treaty of Waitangi issues or Waitangi Day
- ▷ Māori control of resources
- ▷ Legislation and protest about this
- ▷ Māori arts, cultural and religious activities including visual displays of Māori culture
- ▷ Māori health and education
- ▷ Iwi and other Māori organisational and business activity
- ▷ Māori involvement in political processes
- ▷ The history of Māori occupation
- ▷ Historical or current relations between Māori and Pākehā
- ▷ The socio-economic status of Māori
- ▷ Individual Māori in conjunction with one or more of the above criteria.

“ **The New Zealand Herald took a strong line in promoting settlers' claims to land but was not politically aligned.** ”

Karl du Fresne (ed.) *The right to know: News media freedom in New Zealand*, Newspaper Publishers Association, Wellington, 2005.

SUMMARY

“ In March 1834, New Zealand adopted its first flag [the United Tribes of New Zealand flag] at a meeting of Maori and Europeans called by British Resident James Busby at Waitangi ... so that ships built in New Zealand could be registered - unregistered ships in international waters risked seizure and the impounding of cargo. The flag later featured in a Shaw Savill Line postcard. ”

New Zealand Herald insert, Our Treaty - Where it all began, 2008

A total of 118 television items were classified as Māori stories; 74 were broadcast on TV1, 27 on Māori Television, 11 on TV3 and six on Prime.

We analysed themes and case studies across all the newspaper and television Māori stories. We also analysed use of te reo Māori across all the newspaper items.

Due to resource constraints we did not analyse television news use of te reo Māori, and we analysed story sources, conflict and “good” and “bad” news only for a subset of 254 newspaper and 77 television news Māori stories. These were about Waitangi Day, the Treaty and resource stories such as land, fisheries, foreshore and seabed, financial probity and some business stories.

“Good” and “bad” news analysis

We wanted to provide a benchmark of the balance of “good” and “bad” news in Māori stories. This is, of course, a value judgement, but to make the basis of the judgement clear we defined as “bad news” stories that included one or more of the following features –

▷ The reporter used belittling language about Māori or Pākehā (eg squabbling)

- ▷ A source made negative generalisations about Māori that went unchallenged by the reporter or were supported by headlines or images (eg that Māori practices undermine equality)
- ▷ The story contained negative statements about Māori and Māori comments were absent or inadequate
- ▷ The story focused on a negative issue such as possible fraud
- ▷ Sources insulted each other
- ▷ The story framed Māori as a threat
- ▷ The story was framed using themes or phrases identified by research as supporting negative constructions of Māori.

“Neutral” stories included but were not restricted to –

- ▷ Stories about conflict that included non-abusive comment from all sides of the controversy
- ▷ Announcements or descriptions of events.

“Good news” stories included –

- ▷ Feature stories portraying rounded individuals
- ▷ Success stories
- ▷ Stories describing individuals or groups making progress.



Kupu Taea: Angela Moewaka Barnes, left, Raymond Nairn, Mandi Gregory, Jenny Rankine and Tim McCreanor; Inset: Belinda Borell and Hector Kaiwai.

ABOUT KUPU TAEA

Kupu Taea roughly translates as the power of the word.

Angela Moewaka Barnes (Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu)

Angela has experience in film and video production and is enrolled in a PhD at the University of Auckland on Māori films.

Belinda Borell (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngai Te Rangī, Whakatohea)

Belinda is a researcher in Te Ropū Whāriki, a Massey University social research group, with a particular interest in rangatahi Maori.

Mandi Gregory (Pākehā)

Mandy is a qualitative researcher at Te Ropū Whāriki.

Hector Kaiwai (Ngāti Porou, Ngati Maniapoto, Tuhoē)

Hector is a researcher and evaluator with Te Ropū Whāriki in

the areas of alcohol marketing, social marketing, positive youth development, participatory action research, gambling and fire safety.

Dr Tim McCreanor (Pākehā)

Tim analysed Pākehā submissions to the Human Rights Commission on the 1979 Haka Party. He is a researcher at Te Ropū Whāriki and an honorary Research Fellow at the University of Auckland Department of Psychology.

Dr Raymond Nairn (Pākehā)

Raymond has studied race discourse and media analyses for more than 13 years, as well as media depictions of mental illness.

Jenny Rankine (Pākehā)

Jenny is a freelance researcher, editor, writer and graphic designer with more than 20 years' experience in print media and public relations.