

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.

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See www.trc.org.nz/theme-1-p%4%81keh%C4%81-norm

Submit your own examples of this theme in the media and suggest your alternatives. Suggestions will be moderated and uploaded to the site.