

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

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' type 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.

Published in 2014 by
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Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand

See www.trc.org.nz/theme-8-m%C4%81ori-violence

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