Māori Perspectives of Public Information Advertising Campaigns

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Abstract: Within the broad context of New Zealand society in the 21st century, this paper examines reactions to the constructed identities of Māori in public information advertising campaigns. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with participants who self-identified as having a Māori cultural identity. Data were collected about reactions to six advertisements targeting a range of social phenomena such as drink driving, domestic violence and child hunger, and were analysed using a grounded theory foundation to reveal five clear themes. Two distinct groups emerged from the participants: the first group had personal experiences of the social issues depicted in the advertisements, but had difficulties with message comprehension, while the second group, on the other hand, had not experienced the issues, but fully comprehended the purpose of the advertisements. Both groups of participants felt the advertisements reinforced negative stereotypes of Māori without allowing for the presence of other groups of New Zealanders in the negative behaviour depicted in the advertisements. Participants objected to the lack of consultation with Māori about the production of the advertisements.

Keywords: Māori, indigenous, communication, television advertising, social marketing, public information advertising, public service announcements.

1. Context

Māori are the original inhabitants of New Zealand (King, 2003) having settled at about AD 800 (Walker, 2004). Arguably, as a result of the effects of colonisation, Māori are negatively represented in the statistical data pertaining to health, social and cultural well-being. According to the latest census results, one in seven people usually living in New Zealand is Māori (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). However, only one in five Māori can hold a general conversation in the Māori language (Statistics New Zealand, 2013) and fewer than half of Māori have sustained links with their tribal land or regular access to a marae[1](Durie, 2000). Māori are negatively overrepresented across the spectrum of social reporting, for example, criminal statistics (Quince, 2007), motor vehicle road crash fatalities (Sargent et al., 2004); family violence (Hoeata, Nikora, Li, Young-Hauser & Robertson, 2011); smoking causing death (Tane, 2011); breast cancer mortality (Curtis, Wright & Wall, 2005); suicide (Meredith et al., 2012); and have "the poorest health status of any ethnic group in New Zealand" (Ministry of Health, 2013, para. 1).

[1] The courtyard of a traditional Māori meeting house.

2. Public Information Advertising/Social Marketing

Within this social background, the government has endeavoured to improve the situation for Māori through a number of initiatives such as public information advertisements, or public service announcements. A major feature of the initiatives has been campaigns on television advertisements, which, as a communication medium to influence behaviour, are positioned within the realm of social marketing. Weinrich (2011) describes social marketing as "the use of commercial marketing principles and techniques to promote the adoption of a behaviour that will improve the health or well-being of the target audience or of society as a whole" (p. 3). Along with Australia, Canada and the United States, New Zealand has a growing number of social marketing programmes (Truss, Marshall & Blair-Stevens, 2009; Bridges, 2009), and in the 2007-2008 year, spent approximately NZ$100 million on social marketing television advertisements (Taylor, 2007; Millard, 2010). Research by Millard (2010) found that in the year ending 2008, there were 52 separate social marketing campaigns by government agencies in New Zealand, all of which included "television and print advertising, as well as websites and other marketing activities" (p. 5). The majority of all marketing messages (commercial and non-commercial) aimed at Māori in New Zealand are designed to change behaviour primarily in connection with health (Boyes (2010). Boyes' research is consistent with that of Dana and O'Sullivan (2007) which showed that the Māori and Pasifika roles in television advertisements in 2006 were represented in only 1% of television advertisements that promoted health and beauty products, but were represented in 71% of government and NGO television advertisements. Further, social marketing campaigns that are aimed at Māori are mostly concerned with obesity, alcohol, drugs, crime, and educational underachievement, as opposed to encouraging positive behaviours such as Māori language and culture (Matamua, 2010).

3. Research Methodology and Methods

This research explored Māori reactions to the constructed identities of Māori in public information television advertisements. Although individuals subjectively interpret meanings in any text including advertisements (Stern, 1999), it was considered a worthy objective for this research to gather group reactions to the constructed identities of Māori given that Māori culture values the group rather than the individual. To this end most of the data were gathered in group discussions in which individuals contributed but did not dominate, according to the communication practices of tikanga[2].

This qualitative research was therefore a theoretical fusion of critical theory[3], postcolonial theory[4] and kaupapa Māori[5] . While there is an abundance of literature pertaining to critical and postcolonial

[2] Correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention. Habermas, [3]1971; Held, 1980; Horkheimer, 1982; Geuss, 1981; Braaten, 1991; Zima, 2002; Dant, 2003; Finlayson, 2005; Tyson, 2006; Kompridis, 2006; McKinnon, 2009.

[4]Fanon, 1963, 1965, 1967; Said, 1978, 1994; Ghandi, 1988; R. J. C. Young, 2001, 2003; Knopf, 2008; Sharp, 2009; Chávez, 2009.

[5]L. T. Mead, 1996; L. T. Smith, 1999; Barnes, 2000; Eketone, 2008; R. Mahuika, 2008, Pere & Barnes, 2009; N. Mahuika, 2011; M. K. Durie, 2011; Doherty, 2012; M. Durie, 2012.

perspectives in the academic domain, overseas scholars may not be familiar with kaupapa Māori. M. Durie (2012) refers to kaupapa Māori as "the Māori way of doing things" (p. 22), and the approach particular to Māori is generally considered as an extension to critical theory (Smith, 1999; Doherty, 2012). M. Durie (2012) best summarised kaupapa Māori when he said, "Mātauranga Māori is an always evolving underlying body of knowledge that can guide practice and understanding. How you do that is a kaupapa Māori approach" (p. 23). By using a kaupapa Māori approach, all components of the research including knowledge and power are held by the participants.

The data gathering was conducted through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews and these methods suited the research as they reflect the social realities of a cultural group (Hughes & DuMont, 1993). In fact, the notion of kānohi ki te kānohi (literally, face-to-face) is an "essential concept to the effectiveness and efficiency of kaupapa Māori research" (Berryman, 2013, p. 271). Further, Smith (1999) noted that the notion of storytelling is an "integral part of all indigenous research" (p. 144). As such, focus groups and interviews are one of the qualitative methods that "fit more comfortably within a Māori way of doing" (Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006) and have been identified as important research tools for Māori research.

The focus group discussions were conducted with six groups who comprised a mixture of urban and rural, iwi (tribal organisation) or hapū (subtribal organisation), and health and/or social service organisations. There were a total of 63 participants in the focus groups. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with five Māori leaders. The sampling strategy used for the focus groups and semi-structured interviews followed purposive sampling (Adams, Khan, Raeside & White, 2007; Babbie, 2007; Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Data collection commenced on 27 October 2013 and concluded on 1 January 2014.

4. Television Advertisements

The research participants viewed five recent television advertisements (produced and aired between 2008 and 2013) that featured Māori. The five television advertisements are itemised in Table 1.

Table 1. Television Advertisements

Advertisement	**Primary Organisation**
Family violence – It's not ok (featuring George Ashby) Video link: http://youtu.be/LyDIGVI4hNk	Ministry of Social Development
Never, ever shake a baby Video link: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/video/29236/power-to-protect-advertisement	Ministry of Social Development
Legend (aka "Ghost Chips") Video link: http://youtu.be/dIYvD9DI1ZA	New Zealand Transport Agency

` Nourish our Kids Video link: http://youtu.be/h7Y2iX7F4qE	Tip Top & KidsCan Charitable Trust
Blazed Video link: http://youtu.be/P8KAaf45g5U	New Zealand Transport Agency

The advertisements were selected because each had been aired on national television so it could be assumed that most people would have seen at least one of them. As Table 1 shows, each advertisement covers a different social issue: family violence, child abuse, drink driving, child hunger, and drug driving. There were other campaigns that could have been used but the limitation did not harm the discussion of focus groups, because as it turned out, participants spoke freely about other television advertisements. All of the advertisements in the sample were the result of government initiatives, except for the "Nourish our Kids" campaign which is jointly promoted by Tip Top and the KidsCan Charitable Trust. This "Nourish our Kids" campaign was included for two reasons; first, to give representation to a non-government campaign, and second, to gain a reaction from participants.

Indicative questions pertaining to the advertisements were prepared in advance to foster discussion. The indicative questions were focused on how participants felt about the advertisements, Māori representation in the advertisements, and Māori cultural identity. However, once the advertisements were shown, the participants did not require encouragement to stimulate engagement.

5. Data Analysiss

The data were analysed in a method based on a foundation of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), one of the most popular forms of research design (Birks & Mills, 2011). Strauss and Corbin (1994) defined grounded theory as "a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed" (p. 273). It includes a process of methodically analysing units of text (from the transcriptions) which allows codes to emerge and relationships to be identified (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). The focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were video recorded for the purposes of capturing voice tone and volume, facial expressions, body language and other communicative gestures that might be important in order to understand the meaning behind the spoken words (Jones & Alony, 2011). At the conclusion of each focus group discussion and interview, a reflective process of note taking, or memo writing (Glaser, 1978) was undertaken and the video recordings were viewed multiple times to assess verbal and nonverbal data (Polgar & Thomas, 2013). Thereafter, a transcription process was undertaken whereby the spoken words were manually typed in order to facilitate further analysis (Stewart et al., 2007). After each transcript was typed, a line by line analysis of text (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was undertaken. Analysis on a "line by line basis ensures that the data will be examined microscopically" (Locke, 2001). A range of methods were used to compare the initial ideas, codes and categorisations that were identified in the transcripts, such as concept mapping (Jackson & Trochim, 2002). The codes and categories that were identified as patterns in the data were then interrogated to establish logical and coherent interpretation. The findings are discussed in the following sections.

6. Findings – Themes

Five themes emerged from the data, but before presenting them, it is important to consider that textual interpretation may not always capture the intended meanings of the speaker. Smith (1999) and Cram (2009) draw attention to a proverb that is fundamental to a kaupapa Māori research: "*Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata*", which translates as "Do not trample on the *mana* of the people". Mana is translated as prestige ("Mana", 2014), and so in the presentation of the data, every effort has been taken to truly represent the voices of the participants (Cram, 2009).

As already stated, five themes, or categories, were identified in the data. According to Damon and Holloway (2002), there are two ways to classify emergent themes: first to use terms that were spoken by the participants; second, for the researchers to create titles for the themes based upon the content. In this research the themes were labelled using the second method. The names chosen to represent the themes are Dehumanising Depictions, SOS: Saving Our Society, Capturing Criticisms, Promising Positives and Identifying Identity.

6.1. Theme 1: Dehumanising DepictionsDepiction**s**

There was overwhelming agreement among the participants that the advertisements framed Māori in the negative to the point of dehumanising Māori and making them appear primitive or as the Other. While usage of the term 'Other' varies considerably (Macey, 2000), in this context it refers to the way in which colonial discourse produces its subjects as being inferior. Dehumanisation can manifest in many ways such as depriving subjects of human qualities and replacing them with non-human qualities and is essentially the denial of full humanness (Haslam, 2006; Lammers & Stapel, 2010). According to Waytz and Epley (2011) it "represents a failure to attribute basic human qualities to other" (p. 70) and in terms of stereotyping groups of people, dehumanisation is intertwined with racial stereotyping as it "is a psychological process of making some people seem less than human" (Hairston, 2008, p. 65). The participants felt that racist discourse as a schema of dehumanisation was evident in the advertisements as Māori were represented as inferior to Pākehā (non-Māori or European New Zealanders). This interpretation of the text by participants was explicit in all focus groups and was reiterated in follow-up interviews.

Some participants perceived the advertisements as intentionally designed to label Māori as pathologically deficient, or at least deviant and were angered by the image of Māori as violent, criminal, poor, and uneducated, being rehashed and distributed in advertisements under the guise of social marketing. These participants felt that old prejudices were simply mixed into advertising campaigns and cleverly perpetuate the negative categorising and labelling of Māori. Most participants felt that the advertisements show Māori as an irresponsible people devoid of human normality, and as a deficit and burden on society. Further, participants were concerned with the misrepresentation of Māori to people from other countries and cultures, the negative images of Māori children in advertisements, and an imbalance caused by the exclusion of other ethnocultural groups. The combined views of the participants have inadvertently established that the advertisements reinforce negative stereotypical

representations of Māori as the Other.

6.2. Theme 2: SOS - Saving Our Society

The title of this section reflects the genuine concerns among the participants regarding the social issues addressed by the advertisements. The participants were not oblivious of the negative overrepresentation of Māori in all facets of health and social outcomes and did not need to be reminded of the statistical data as there was a collectively held consciousness of the social issues. The social issue of poverty was intertwined within much of the discussion about the advertisements and participants noted that the issues are not limited to Māori as a group.

Some of the participants related closely to the issues of the advertisements because they had lived experience of them and these participants believed that the problems are widespread among Māori communities. By contrast, a second group of participants admitted to awareness of the problems but had never experienced them and could not accept that the issues were rampant across Māori. This second group proposed that issues are not related to ethnicity but rather are directly associated with poverty. Community leaders who participated in the research identified colonisation as the primary cause of the social problems that affect Māori.

6.3. Theme 3: Capturing Criticisms

The third theme captures participants' discontent with the advertisements. The focus groups provided an outlet for genuine concerns to be raised, noted and disseminated, and in this way the research provided a voice for the targeted audience of the advertisements. The participants expressed strong negative opinions about the lack of consultation in the production of the advertisements, believing that the advertisements should contain positive cultural messages. Although participants felt that iwi (tribal organizations) should have generally been consulted, they could see that some knowledge of Māori had been included because the advertisements showed some cultural markers in language and humour. Some participants even suggested that any Māori who lent their knowledge to the production of the advertisements (for instance,Taika Waititi, director of the advertisement "Blazed") should be held accountable for misrepresenting their people.

The advertisements were criticised for showing children, taonga (cultural treasures) and the Māori spiritual world in a negative light. The participants clearly believed that the agencies' campaigns did not give due respect to tikanga and the associated principles of Māori customs and protocol. Tikanga underpins a Māori worldview and guides conduct for all things Māori. Royal (2000) provided a definition of tikanga as meaning "ethical behaviour" (p. 1), and participants struggled to see any evidence of ethical considerations within the advertisements. Further, some participants felt the advertisements were a Pākehā (European New Zealand) product for a Pākehā audience to show mainstream society that something was being done about "the natives". Some participants felt the advertisement purposely condoned illegal behaviour, for example, 'It's okay to use drugs, just don't drive afterwards' and 'It's okay to drink alcohol excessively even if you're underage, just don't drive afterwards'.

The most disliked advertisement was "Nourish our Kids" by TipTop (a corporate entity) and KidsCan Charitable Trust. Many participants felt there was an underlying racial connotation to the advertisement and most disliked the involvement of a for-profit corporation in an advertisement about child hunger. Participants felt Tip Top used Māori children to capitalise on a social issue in order to increase profits.

6.4. Theme 4: Promoting Positives

Although most of the discussion showed negative reactions to the advertisements, there was one element that was received positively and that was humour. The inclusion of humour was understood as a way of selling the message and even when it was received positively, it was almost an addendum which included a negative mark about the advertisement. The participants seemed to feel that the negativity of the advertisements outweighed the positive element of humour.

The participants who praised the advertisements related to them because they had experienced the issues first hand. For example, one participant was able to take something away from the "Blazed" drug driving advertisement and reconsider his own behaviour. He spoke about how the humour initially captivated his attention but ultimately the message made him think about his behaviour. However, this individual was the only person out of all six focus groups and semi-structured interviews who said that he had changed his behaviour as a result of the advertisements. All focus groups were asked if the advertisements had influenced their behaviour.

6.5. Theme 5: Identifying Identity

One of the main points of discussion centred upon Māori identity and whether or not Māori identity was accurately depicted in the advertisements. Many of the participants gave their own definitions as to what they thought was Māori identity and described their own identity. The participants self-identified as having a Māori cultural identity, for example, "I am Māori" as opposed to "I have Māori ancestry". This indicated a strong sense of Māoritanga (Māori culture, practices and beliefs) among participants.

The concepts of *whānau* (family) and *whakapapa* (genealogy) were consistently mentioned. Knowing and belonging to a place, meaning an ancestral homeland, also permeated the data. However, belonging to the wider Māori community was questioned by some participants as no longer being applicable in contemporary society. These comments referred to the urbanisation of Māori and the deconstruction of Māori tribal living. The majority of opinion seemed to suggest that there was an absence of "Māori identity" within the advertisements. Most of the discussion centred upon the notion that Māori identity is a positive construct as opposed to negative representation. The participants felt that the characters in the advertisements were not representative of Māori identity, rather, "just Māori people".

7. Discussion

Overall the participants felt that the advertisements appear to apportion culpability for social problems

towards Māori without taking into account the effects of colonisation and the wider social issues associated with it. Participants therefore gave the advertisements a resistant reading, feeling that the purpose was to fix blame rather than to fix problems. The participants perceived that while the advertisements are targeted at individual behaviour, wider constructs were also at play. It could be argued that the depicted social issues are symptomatic of inequality as opposed to the deficit ideologies that are perpetuated in the advertisements. This is reflective of the agency and structure debate of social theory (Bruce & Yearley, 2006) and the notion of free will and determinism (Williams, 1941).

This study showed that participants opposed the advertisements primarily because of the dehumanised portrayals of Māori. The reaction of the participants in this study bears out the work of Baumann and Ho (2014) and plethora of other scholars[6] who found that when racial minorities appear in advertisements, they are often represented stereotypically. Within the New Zealand setting, the finding supports the discussion about anti-Māori hegemonic discursive patterns within mainstream New Zealand media and stereotyping in society[7] .

As the mass media are the primary source of information about ethnocultural groups (van Dijk, 1987) and what is seen on television "becomes a strong part in our worldview" (Sheehan, 2004, p. 82), then the research findings pertaining to stereotypical depictions of Māori are a concern given that people construct views of themselves and others through media (Dana & O' Sullivan, 2007). Further, stereotypes are authenticated and gain cultural currency through repetition (James, 1997) and it is pertinent to mention that prejudiced attitudes are closely related to stereotype endorsement (Kawakami, Dion & Dovidio, 1998; Vargas et al., 2004). This is evidenced in the scholarly research that "has consistently shown that there are a number of negative attitudes held by Pākehā (New Zealand European) towards Māori" (Holmes et. al, 2001, p. 79).

These advertisements reinforce such beliefs about Māori not only to Māori themselves, but also to Pākehā and other non-Māori. A recent study by Turner (2013) is an example of how the internalisation

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[6]Shuey (1953); Kassarjian (1969); Colfax and Sternberg (1972); van Dijk (1987, 1991, 1993); Taylor and Lee (1994); Gabriel (1994); Gerbner (1995); Bristor, Lee and Hunt (1995); Taylor, Lee and Stern (1995); Wilson and Gutièrez (1995); Plous and Neptune (1997); Taylor and Stern (1997); Stern (1999); Coltrane and Messineo (2000); Entmen and Rojecki (2000); Reisigl and Wodak (2001); Bang and Reece (2003); Mastro and Stern (2003); Belch and Belch (2003); Sue (2003);

Henderson and Baldasty (2003); Lee, Williams and La Ferle (2004); Livingston (2004); Wolsko, Park, Judd and Wittenbrink (2004); Vargas, Sekaquaptewa and von Hippel (2004); Schumann (2004); Higgs and Milner (2005); Moriarty and Rohe (2005); Downing and Husband (2005); Absolon and Willett (2005); Sudbury and Wilberforce (2006); Bailey (2006); Maher, Herbst, Childs and Finn (2008); Knopf, (2008); Sharp, (2009); Dennis (2011); Enteman (2011); Lester (2011); Brown (2011); Curry (2012); Reynolds (2014)..

[7]Archer and Archer (1970); Spoonley (1990); Walker (1990, 1996); McGregor (1991); McCreanor (1995); Stuart (1996, 2002, 2003, 2005); Wall (1997); Abel (1997, 2007); Chapple (2000); Holmes, Murachver and Bayard (2001); Fox (2002); Barclay and Liu (2003); Rankine and McCreanor (2004); Bell (2004); Taira (2006); Archie (2007); Dana and O'Sullivan (2007); Cotter (2007); Te Hiwi (2008); Kukutai (2008); Phelan and Shearer (2009); Taonui (2010); Moewaka Barnes et al.

of stereotypical beliefs can impact society at all levels. Turner (2013) found that school teachers had lower expectations of Māori students "due to perceived deficits in the students' home background including broken families, a lack of parental support and education, and criminal tendencies" (p. ii). These beliefs foster institutionalised racism in New Zealand which "prevents children from succeeding educationally and ultimately keeps Māori at the low end of the socio-economic scale" (Cotter, 2007, p. 54). Besides the social cost of institutionalised racism for the individual and community, there is an economic cost to the country by Māori gaining lower levels of education and therefore not maximising their contribution to the state's economic growth. From a different angle, Cotter (2007) posited that stereotypical depictions of Māori have "benefited Pākehā (New Zealand Europeans) by reaffirming their status as the hegemonic or dominant group" (p. 54). The power imbalances between Māori and Pākehā continue to be evident throughout all levels of New Zealand society.

Finally, while the study identified that the participants would like wide consultation with Māori about the design and construction of social marketing advertisements that feature Māori, it will probably never happen. There is ample literature which appears to have been ignored by those behind the campaigns. For example, in Ropiha (1994), it was clearly stated that health messages should never portray Māori negatively and should always use positive messaging, yet 20 years later, the participants in this study are finding negative stereotyping and a lack of respect for cultural constructs. Thus, while the participants have called for positive messaging, respect for culture, and consultation; the advertisements that are targeted towards Māori audiences will most likely retain the same depictions unless Māori are involved in the full process.

Ko tōu reo, ko tōku reo, te tuakiri tangata.
Tihei uriuri, tihei nakonako.
Your voice and my voice are expressions of identity.
May our descendants live on and our hopes be fulfilled.
(Māori proverb)

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