

Ethnicity measures, intermarriage and social policy

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Analytical understanding of ethnicity is one of the weak spots in the social sciences.

(Collins, 2001a: 13)

Introduction

Measuring and reporting the ethnic composition of New Zealand is an important part of an ongoing process of understanding our identity as individuals, as groups, and as a nation. Ethnicity is also a very important dimensional variable in New Zealand social science research and policy making. However, ethnicity is not a human characteristic that can be easily identified or measured. In common with other countries, in New Zealand there remains ongoing debate as to the best way of measuring ethnicity in data collections, like the five yearly Census of Population and Dwellings; in sample surveys, like the Household Labour Force Survey; and in administrative collections, like death certificates. This debate includes regular reviews of ethnicity statistics undertaken by Statistics New Zealand with the current one to be completed in mid 2003 (Statistics New Zealand, 2003).¹ Yet despite these discussions, Baehler (2002: 27) argues that in New Zealand there is a “pent-up demand for dialogue on the broad subject of ethnicity and what it means for national identity and public policy”.

This paper consists of three interconnected sections. The first section explores some of the historical debates around the collection and reporting of ethnicity data in New Zealand. The United States (U.S.) is used as a comparison. With this background in mind, it then examines changes that have taken place in the recording of ethnicity in the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings since 1991.² I am particularly interested in two issues. First, how people wishing to be “New Zealanders” can have this choice recorded and reported on. Second, how people who know they belong to more than one ethnic group are recorded and reported in official publications. This focuses particularly on those individuals who affiliate with Maori as one of their ethnic groups.

The fact that people can have multiple ethnicities generally reflects that they are the product of ethnic intermarriages.³ The issue of ethnic intermarriage moves the discussion into the next section. Ethnic intermarriage can be studied at a number of levels. A

¹ Statistics New Zealand has issued a draft report from this review. Statistics New Zealand expects to publish the final report by mid 2003. A number of background papers were prepared by Statistics New Zealand for this review (Statistics New Zealand, 20001a & b).

² For a detailed history of changes to the census in New Zealand prior to 1991 see Brown (1984) and Pool (1991).

³ The term marriage in relation to New Zealand data includes both legal unions and de facto relationships. However, in American studies marriage normally refers to those legally married.

detailed analysis might consider marriage between such groups as Italians and Greeks, Samoans and Tongans, Hungarians and Irish, and Chinese and Koreans.⁴ However, even within some of these groups intermarriage between smaller subgroups, such as by Iwi or Hapu within the wider Maori group or even New Zealand born and overseas born Chinese, could be of importance. In addition, and further complicating any potential analysis, only some of the descendants of ethnically mixed couples will record more than one ethnic group in official data collections. While recognising and, in fact, arguing for researchers to increasingly acknowledge such diversity as a first step in a wider study of the allocation of ethnicity in families, this paper restricts the analysis to intermarriage rates between two broad groups – those who affiliate with Maori ethnicity and those who do not. However, in doing so it divides the wider Maori ethnic group into two categories. The first is where individuals recorded only Maori as their ethnic group. The second is where Maori was one of the two or more ethnic groups recorded. Although 2001 census data were available when preparing this paper I chose to use 1996 data. This is because the more open and less ambiguous nature of the 1996 census ethnicity question in comparison to that common to the 1991 and 2001 censuses potentially provides a more accurate picture of the multi-ethnic society emerging in New Zealand.

The final section explores some social policy implications of ethnic intermarriage, particularly between Maori and non-Maori, and the growing proportion of New Zealanders who claim multi-ethnic affiliations. In many social policy debates Maori and non-Maori are treated as separate groups. Increasingly, however, the two populations cannot be seen as entirely distinct. This has many implications for social scientists and policy makers.

Measuring ethnicity

This section of the paper explores two issues. The first is how individuals can construct their own ethnicity. The second is how Statistics New Zealand then aggregates individual responses to create the high level ethnic groupings that are most commonly reported in official publications and the groups that researchers and policy makers generally use when analysing ethnicity data.

The ethnic classification of individuals

Classifications of race and ethnicity have a long and often problematic history. In a review of this history, Stephan and Stephan (2000) note that by the late eighteenth century, biologists began to subject humans to the same type of classification system previously used only for plants and other animals.⁵ The result was that physical

⁴ Collins (2001a) notes that ethnicities such as Italian are themselves recent constructs often based on a regrouping following migration. In America, Italians are made up of people whose original homeland identities would have included Sicilians, Calabrians, Neapolitans, and Genoans. He also notes even these regional subgroups are the result of assimilation of previously fragmented villages or clans.

⁵ For a New Zealand review of this history, and the links of race to racism, see Spoonley (1993). See also Kukutai (2001).

characteristics were used to define tribes or races. In common with other countries, race was the basis of most early New Zealand statistical collections.

While the term race continues to be used in countries like the U.S., Stephan and Stephan suggest that race is now more properly viewed as a social rather than a biological construct even if biology still plays a role in the phenotypic expression of some physical characteristics.^{6 7} The majority of social scientists share this view, as do most individuals studying the biological sciences (Graves, 2001).⁸ Research by the latter group not only undermines concepts of “pure” races but also any separation of human beings into races. This negation of any scientific foundation to classifying people on the basis of race is now being promoted in the mainstream media (e.g. Bone, 2003)

In contrast to the U.S., in New Zealand social science researchers and official agencies now almost always use the term ethnicity rather than race.^{9 10} Use of the word ethnicity moves the discussions further away from biological characteristics and more firmly into the area of social construction. Yet, as Collins (2001a: 18) argues, “there is no deep and analytically important distinction between “race” and “ethnicity”.”¹¹ He goes on to suggest:

Conventionally, races are regarded as physically distinctive (for example, by skin color), while ethnic groups are merely culturally distinct. But ethnic groups also have somatotypical differences (hair, skin color, facial structures, and the like), and these differences are one of the chief markers that people commonly seize on in situations where consciousness of ethnic divisions is high. A sociological distinction between ethnicity and race is analytically pernicious, because it obscures the social processes determining the extent to which divisions are made in the continuum of somatotypical graduations.

The construction of ethnicity for individuals is a complex process and there is much debate about how this process should take place. While the construction of ethnicity is already problematic in settler societies (Pearson, 2001) as will be discussed later in this paper, this issue becomes even more complex when there is ethnic intermarriage and onward migration from one settler society to another. Allan (2001: 5-6), in a background paper to the 2001/02 Statistics New Zealand *Review of Ethnicity Statistics*, lists a set of factors that may influence the construction of an individual’s ethnicity. Many of these are interrelated. In particular, the differences between ancestry and race are somewhat clouded. This list is:

⁶ There has been a parallel shift in social science towards the upholding of social rather than biological construction of father and motherhood.

⁷ Phenotype is defined as “the observable physical or biochemical characteristics of an organism, as determined by both genetic makeup and environmental influences”.

⁸ Graves (2001) estimates that perhaps only six genes determine skin colour out of between the 30,000 and 40,000 genes individuals have. However, some scientists argue that even very small differences in some key genes can have major effects. For example, just one chromosome determines the sex of a person (Bone, 2003: 24).

⁹ In New Zealand a person’s ‘race’ was recorded in censuses prior to 1971, ‘origin’ in 1971, and ‘ethnic origin’ from 1976 until 1986.

¹⁰ However, the term “race” has not entirely disappeared in New Zealand. As one example, the official agency set up to investigate cases of racial/ethnic discrimination is still called the Race Relations Office.

¹¹ For a further discussion of distinctions between race and ethnicity see Cornell and Hartmann (1998).

- **ancestry**: ancestors are described as people from whom a person is descended; a forefather; a person regarded as the forerunner of another.
- **culture**: broadly speaking, a person's way of life, which may include music, literature, dance, sport, cuisine, style of clothing, values and beliefs, patterns of work, marriage customs, family life, religious ceremonies, celebration days/events which have particular cultural significance, e.g. Chinese New Year.
- **where a person lives and the social context**: are they rural, village dwellers, landowners or city inhabitants?
- **race**: defined as 'the descendants of a common ancestor especially those who inherit a common set of characteristics; such as set of descendants, narrower than a species; a breed; ancestry; lineage, stock; a class or group, defined otherwise than by descent'. This often 'refers to physical characteristics such as skin colour, treated by members of a community as ethnically significant. ... There are no clear-cut characteristics by means of which human beings can be allocated to different races'.
- **country of birth and nationality**: nationality can be defined as membership of, or the fact or state of belonging to, a particular nation; a group or set having the character of a nation.¹²
- **citizenship**: the status of being a citizen and the membership of a community, or having the rights and duties of a citizen.
- **religion and language**: religion can be a key element of an ethnic group, for example Jews. Language is also commonly a marker of an ethnic group.

Statistics New Zealand notes that while any of these factors can influence the construction of a person's ethnicity, "they do not necessarily determine a person's ethnicity" (Statistics New Zealand, 2003: 4).

As a subset of these influences, Broughton (1993) identifies the three key elements of defining Maori identity as whanaungatanga (the family and kinship ties); te whenua, (the land) and te reo (the language). For Maori of mixed ethnic background, there are potentially influences from other lands, other languages and ancestral/kinship ties to other cultures. Kilgour and Keefe (1992), when considering Maori health statistics, list three possible definitions for Maori. These are biological, self-identity and descent. The key difference between biological and descent is that in the latter "degrees of blood" are not specified. How much these various influences matter often depends on the reason why identity is being determined. As O'Regan (2001: 87) notes when resources are at stake identity definition becomes more important:

The difficulties inherent in the process of distinguishing those who have the right or ability to identify with a particular group are further complicated when economic and political rights are associated with that identity.

¹² A distinction needs to be made between a legal-political definition of country of birth and nationality, and a sociological definition of the latter, which may or may not, impact on the former if there are choices/constraints on how this might be adjudged by self and others.

O'Regan (p. 86) also comments that:

Countries that have a long history of intermarriage between ethnic groups can usually claim an equally long history of conflicting views on which factors are required to determine ethnic identity.

Kukutai (2001) identifies the lack of a Maori voice in the process of collecting and reporting data on Maori as part of this tension. She notes (p. 9) "...most of the discourse on defining and counting 'Maori' has been shaped, if not dominated, by non Maori academics and civil servants".¹³

Recognising that there may be many influences on the choice of ethnic group by individuals, Statistics New Zealand's definition of an ethnic group has, in recent years, been very broad. This definition draws on the work of Smith (1981).¹⁴ An ethnic group is defined as a social group whose members:

- share a sense of common origins
- claim a common and distinctive history and destiny
- possess one or more dimensions of collective cultural individuality
- feel a sense of unique collective solidarity(Allan, 2000: 5)

This set of definitions is very loose and potentially includes other groups that are non-ethnic, for example gender-based (e.g. women's groups), location-based (e.g. West Coasters), class-based (e.g. freezing workers), and leisure-pursuit based groups (trampers).

Following on from the 2001 ethnicity review, in its draft report Statistics New Zealand (2003: 5) has proposed a new guiding definition. According to Statistics New Zealand, this incorporates concepts from the Australian Bureau of Statistics ethnic group definition and draws on further work of Smith (1986). The new guiding definition brings ancestry into the list.

- a common proper name, to identify and express the 'essence' of the community
- one or more elements of common culture, which need not be specified but may include religion, customs, or language
- a sense of unique collective solidarity
- a shared sense of origins or ancestry¹⁵
- a common geographic origin

¹³ Kukutai (2001) also contains a useful discussion of possible measures of "Maoriness".

¹⁴ While drawing on the work of Smith (1981, 1986), Smith places more emphasis on kin ancestry than does Statistics New Zealand.

¹⁵ For data collections such as the census, ancestry does not have to be proven. However, when resources are directly at stake "proof" of ancestry is sometimes required. For example, when discussing the allocation of benefits to members of Kāi Tahu, O'Regan (2001: 96) notes that all members are entitled to equal access to collective tribal benefits. However, O'Regan adds "that right is inalienable as long as you have proven descent to Kāi Tahu".

However, as will be shown the way the actual ethnicity question is asked in the census guides respondents towards particular concepts of ethnicity.

While this paper focuses on individuals who are constructing their own ethnicity, it is important to keep in mind that various ‘others’, such as employers, landlords, teachers or the police, will also be constructing a person’s ethnicity. For instance, Xie and Goyette (1997: 549-550) note that, for members of minority groups in the U.S., “choice” about ethnicity is limited by “labels imposed by other members of society or by custom.” Waters (1990, 1996) also puts forward the view that minority groups have less flexibility in determining their ethnicity. Often this construction of ethnicity will be constrained by visible characteristics. This includes phenotypic expression of particular physical characteristics, such as skin colour.¹⁶ Yet, physical characteristics can be misleading. Jackson (2002) comments that there was much surprise, particularly amongst Maori, that Keith Abbott the policeman who shot Steven Wallace in Waitara was Maori (with descent from Ngati Kahungunu). This was presumably based on physical characteristics. This realisation complicated discussions about possible racism as a factor in the shooting. When announcing a top female Maori scholar, Mana magazine (Mana, 2002: 22) focuses initially on physical characteristics and somewhat defensively notes “[d]on’t be fooled by the blond hair and the green eyes. She’s Maori, really, and is our top scholar for the year.” Equally, O’Regan (2001) notes some of the difficulties of being a “white skinned” Maori.

Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) studied black and white biracial individuals in the U.S. and found that how others perceive an individual’s appearance has a strong influence on the choices of racial identity for that individual. A U.S. study, focusing on youth, also demonstrates how self-reports of race sometimes differ substantially from observers’ perceptions (Harris and Sim, 2001). As a further research example of how skin colour can be important in determining a person’s life chances and well being, a U.S. study indicates individuals can be economically penalised based on the colour of their skin regardless of how they themselves construct their ethnic group (Mason, 2001).

While social scientists now tend to see ethnicity as primarily a social construct, there is more debate amongst health researchers as to whether the phenotypic expression of particular physical characteristics is still important (Graves, 2001; Kaufman and Cooper, 2002; Satel, 2000; Schwartz, 2001; Wade, 2003). These characteristics may alter the propensity of groups to be at risk from particular types of illness and also raise questions as to whether medical treatment should vary on the basis of ethnicity/race.¹⁷

¹⁶ For instance, when the New Zealand police are endeavouring to track down a suspect they will often resort to physical descriptions. This can include the word “Caucasian”, a term Pool (1991) argues is inappropriate for most people of European descent, when the person is white skinned. In addition, while New Zealand social scientists generally support the cultural construction of ethnicity, they will still often refer to skin colour when discussing changes in society. For example, Kiro (2002) uses the phrase “brownification” of New Zealand when discussing population projections.

¹⁷ Graves (2001) suggests there are major dangers in practicing “race” based medicine. If doctors focus on risk factors that are associated with particular groups then they may overlook far more important risk factors such as family background, lifestyle and the living environment.

In New Zealand and the wider Pacific, examples can be found of medical research that consider race/ethnicity to be critical variables. These include studies of body size and health problems in Polynesians (Swinburn *et al*, 1999) and Tongans and Australians (Craig *et al*, 2001). Other research in this field points to an accurate record of ancestry being important when considering health risk factors (Grandinetti *et al*, 1999). New Zealand researchers in the field of multiple sclerosis report a growing incidence of this disease amongst Maori and speculate that this may be due to the mixing of genes with people who have European ancestry (Dominion Post, 2003).

Another health problem facing New Zealand is the high rate of skin cancer. Shaw (1988) notes that malignant melanoma is rare amongst Maori. Taylor (2002) discusses the lower incidence of skin cancer amongst certain darker skinned individuals compared with fair-skinned persons; a lower incidence and different presentation of photo aging; pigmentation disorders in people with skin of color; and a higher incidence of certain types of alopecia (hair loss) in Africans and African Americans compared with those of other ancestry. However, Taylor also argues genetic factors are not the only ones impacting on these differences in skin disorders. Taylor suggests that cultural practices can also have a significant impact. Finally, non-medical research examples can be found acknowledging that genes passed on by particular ethnic groups might have an effect on health outcomes. O'Regan (2001: 135) notes that early in the colonisation of New Zealand “[k]āi Tahu leaders were quick to recognise the increased resistance to European illnesses in those of mixed descent.”

The types of research quoted suggest that for data collections used in health studies an accurate record of ancestry, as well as information on cultural affiliations, could be important. Yet there are major problems with ancestry information. First, how far back does one go when assessing ancestry? For example, Kaufman and Cooper (2002) comment on how the US Office of Management and Budget define the Black population in the U.S.. This definition links ancestry back to Africa. But Kaufman and Cooper note that “[i]n the broadest interpretation, all of humanity meets this definition” (p. 292).¹⁸ Equally, if a short time horizon is used for descent some non-Maori people in New Zealand see themselves as being of New Zealand descent as they no longer consider their original overseas-based ancestry (Allan, 2001).

Self-reported information on descent also provides very limited information as to whether particular genes are being passed on through ancestral lines. As Kaufman and Cooper note, despite major advances in the field of genetics information about genes and the variation within them is still very limited. They also argue that the first glimpse of variation in genes provided by the human genome project indicates how inadequate existing racial classification schemes have been (p. 293). In addition, ethnic/racial intermarriage mixes gene pools and adds considerable complexity to any race/ethnicity-based determination of health risk factors. For example, ethnic intermarriage between individuals with Maori ancestry and those individuals who traditionally have lighter

¹⁸ Human Genome researcher Francis Collins (2001b) suggests that everyone in the world descended from a common ancestral pool of about 10,000 individuals who lived in Africa about 100,000 years ago. He argues that most of the genetic variance was already present in those 10,000 people.

skins, such as people with Irish or Scandinavian backgrounds, may be significantly lifting the risks of developing skin cancer for some groups of children in the wider Maori ethnic group.¹⁹ Equally, such intermarriage could be seen as lowering the risks of children of those parents who have such risk factors through their skin pigmentation.

In the New Zealand census, the ancestry question relates only to Maori ancestry. For example, in the 2001 census a question asks whether the respondent is “descended from a Maori”. This is followed by the sentence “that is, did you have a Maori birth parent, grandparent or great-grandparent, etc?”. This type of question, unlike earlier censuses, provides no information on “degrees of blood”. This question is required to be included in the census in order to determine Maori electoral representation (Statistics New Zealand, 1993). The descent question is then followed by a question asking those with Maori descent to name their single or multiple iwi affiliations.

In some other countries, for example Canada, ancestry is still seen as an important element of defining the ethnicity of the whole population in official data collections such as the census.²⁰ Yet, in their research on mixed-heritage individuals in the U.S., Stephan and Stephan found that ethnic identity was not necessarily associated with ancestry (1989, 2000). Individuals may have ancestral ties with a group without identifying themselves or being identified by others as members of that group. Equally, people may have relatively little ancestral linkages with a group, but for a variety of reasons strongly identify with it. While many Maori identify themselves through their Whakapapa, census data has shown some mismatch between those claiming Maori ancestry and those claiming Maori ethnicity. In 1991, 1996 and 2001 a higher number of people claimed some Maori ancestry than chose Maori as one of their ethnic groups. In 2001, the number claiming ancestry was 604,000 while the total Maori ethnic group was 526,000.²¹ This mismatch between ancestry and ethnic identity has been found in other studies of Maori (e.g. Broughton *et al*, 2000).²² As Chapple (2000) notes, a significant number of people claiming Maori ancestry but not ethnicity is one indicator of historical ethnic intermarriage.

In New Zealand there is ongoing debate as to whether people should be able to construct their ethnicity on the basis of nationality, including New Zealand nationality (Allan, 2001: Spoonley, 1993). Examining the questions in recent New Zealand censuses shows there is some confusion as to whether nationality can be a valid ethnic group. The 1991

¹⁹ While public health specialists note there needs to be concern about public health outcomes with the increasing “browning” of children in New Zealand (Kiro, 2002: 3), equally, ethnic intermarriage between Maori and people from European descent could be portrayed as resulting in an increasing “whitening” of Maori children.

²⁰ In contrast the United States census does not have a direct question on ancestry. However, in the 2000 census before the question on “race” a question is asked as to whether the respondent is Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. In some ways this could be considered a question about a particular element of ancestry.

²¹ The ratio of people noting Maori descent to those affiliating with the Maori ethnic group has changed over the last three censuses. In the 1991 the number with Maori descent was 18 percent higher than the Maori ethnic group, this declined to 11 percent higher in 1996 but rose again to 15 percent higher in 2001.

²² Of the 15 percent of individuals in the Christchurch Health and Development Study who identified as having some Maori ancestry, a quarter stated they had no Maori ethnic affiliation (Broughton *et al*, 2000).

and 2001 census questions were almost the same. The one difference was that in 2001 the words ‘New Zealand’ were removed from the category ‘New Zealand Māori’ (Lang, 2002).²³ In 2001 respondents could tick eight possible ethnic groups and/or fill in their own. The choices (in order) were:

- New Zealand European
- Maori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Maori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Indian

A final tick box was “other” and the respondent was asked to “please state”. Three examples, Dutch, Japanese and Tokelauan were provided. While the census “help notes” told respondents that ethnicity is not about nationality some of the examples given in the forms can be both ethnic groups and countries. In published three-digit level data from the 2001 groups ethnic groups include Australians, Germans, Poles and Dutch.²⁴ In a draft report from the review of ethnic statistics, Statistics New Zealand (2003) recommend that the 2001 question be repeated in the 2006 census.

The 1996 census question had some similarities, but also some important differences. The NZ Maori ethnic group was moved to the top of the list of categories. The second choice, New Zealand European, also had the alternative label “*or* Pakeha”.²⁵ After this choice there was also an extra category “other European”. If the respondent ticked this box, then they were directed to another set of tick boxes. These were English, Dutch, Australian, Scottish, Irish and “other”. If they ticked “other” they were directed to print their own ethnic group. This separation of New Zealand European and other European provided some sense that the New Zealand Europeans were “native” New Zealanders. The term Pakeha, while not accepted by all immigrant New Zealanders, reinforced this idea. Finally, amongst the main ethnic choices there was also an “other” tick box, with the examples given as Fijian or Korean. Again, respondents were directed to print their own

²³ In their submission to the 2001 Review of Ethnicity Statistics the Human Rights Commission questions why some groups have the term “New Zealand” attached and others do not (e.g. “New Zealand” European but not “New Zealand” Samoan or “New Zealand” Tongan). The HRC expressed concern that people other than Pakeha were unable to indicate a “New Zealand” aspect to their ethnicity (Barnard, 2001).

²⁴ Australians are then classified at the one-digit level as Europeans. However, there is also a separate category for Australian aboriginals (Allan, 2000: 11).

²⁵ Pakeha is a term that has not been universally accepted in New Zealand (for discussions of this issue see Bedggood, 1997; Pearson and Sissons, 1997; Spoonley, 1993). For instance, in a submission to the 2001 Review of Ethnicity Statistics, the Human Rights Commission records that one of the most common complaints to the former Race Relations Office was from people objecting to being labelled “Pakeha” (Barnard, 2001). The uncertainty about the standing of the term Pakeha can be seen in the book *Tauīwi*. The publishers decided that the term Pakeha should not be capitalized (Spoonley *et al*, 1984). Spoonley (1993: 61) argues “there is considerable confusion about what being Pākehā means for many Pākehā”.

ethnic group(s). This census had more examples of groups that could be considered countries and/or ethnic groups.

While there is an acceptance of overseas nationality as being an ethnic group, there has been resistance to accepting “New Zealand” as an ethnic group. Spoonley (1993: 16), in a chapter on racism, argues that nationality does not replace a specific ethnicity. He sees an appeal to the idea “we are all New Zealanders” as a way of denying ethnicity, adding that “this particular form of nationalism is often contradicted by the racism of its adherents”.

In a paper on the construction of ethnicity in New Zealand, Dupuis *et al* (1999) express concern about measurement problems when individuals do not identify with any particular ethnic group or identify with broad nationality-based groups such as “Kiwi” or “New Zealander”.²⁶ Yet, in their Smithfield project, a large-scale educational research project, the combined group of “Kiwi” and “New Zealander” made up a fifth of responses to a question on ethnicity.²⁷ Dupuis *et al* (1999) conclude that “[t]he use of the term, while not recognised as an act of political positioning by the claimant themselves, must nevertheless be seen as a position that denies recognition of other ethnic groups”. The researchers argue that identifying as a New Zealander is particularly problematic in regards to the position of Maori in New Zealand society. However, this view is somewhat challenged by “values” research undertaken by Webster (2001: 113). When comparing attitudes of Pakeha and New Zealanders to Maori rights, Webster notes that the views of Pakeha were more negative than those of people classifying themselves as New Zealanders.²⁸ This view that allowing settlers to identify with the country they live in will automatically undermine indigenous rights is also a view potentially challenged by an article based on the experience of Australia. Moran (2002) explores the idea that “indigenizing settler nationalism” has potential for supporting rather than resisting the extension of indigenous rights and claims.

In a background paper prepared for the 2001 review of ethnicity statistics by Statistics New Zealand, Robson and Reid (2001: 13) also question the use of the term New Zealander.

²⁶ While a non-response can cause measurement problems there is a need to allow people who do not self-identify with any ethnic group to articulate that choice. For some people, this position has been reached as a consequence of a perception of the dangers of abuse of group concepts of ethnicity and race over the years. Nazi Germany, Rwanda, Former Yugoslavia are all extreme examples of the abuse of ethnic and racial categorisation. Germany provides a particularly useful warning: the 1939 census collection was a primary tool for identifying Jewish people in the following Holocaust.

²⁷ This was an open-ended question that asked “How would you describe your cultural background?” (p. 38). However, this question was preceded by a paragraph providing examples of single and mixed ethnic groups. These groups did not include Kiwi or New Zealander. The researchers notes that with such an open ended question the respondents often provided complex answers involving factors such as language, place of birth, church membership, type of family and family connections in constructing their ethnicity.

²⁸ In parallel, Pearson and Sissons (1997) have explored whether New Zealanders of primarily European ancestry who choose to call themselves Pakeha are more supportive of biculturalism and Maori rights than those who do not use this term. They found only a very weak link between being Pakeha and being bicultural. The authors found that the majority of both those who identified as Pakeha and those who never did were unsupportive of biculturalism and tino rangatiratanga (p. 79).

...currently a small proportion of the New Zealand population disagrees with the ethnicity question and writes 'New Zealander' in the space labeled 'other'. However, strictly speaking, New Zealander is a nationality not an ethnicity.

New Zealanders completing the census can chose the nationality of an outside country but, as already discussed, there has been some resistance to accepting the nationality New Zealander, "Kiwi", or even Pakeha as a valid ethnic category.²⁹ Yet, those claiming to be New Zealanders, Kiwis or Pakeha are not an insignificant group. Individuals in these categories rose from over 55,000 in 1996 to over 80,000 in 2001 (Lang, 2002).^{30 31 32} Statistics New Zealand made the decision to re-allocate all of these people to the New Zealand European ethnic group (Lang, 2002). Thus, this group of New Zealanders were allocated to an ethnic group that they could have chosen from the tick box options presented in the census question, despite having actively chosen to write in another category for themselves. When New Zealand Europeans are reported at an aggregate one-digit level, the "New Zealand" term is dropped and these people become just "Europeans".

This coding decision by Statistics New Zealand appears to be based on the presumption that people noting New Zealander or Kiwi are from majority groups known variously as New Zealand Europeans or Pakeha. While in the early days of colonisation of New Zealand Maori were classified as being "New Zealanders", in the 21st century it is now often assumed it is only non-Maori who are choosing this label.³³ This presumption is lent some support by research undertaken by Dupuis *et al* (1999). In order to further investigate the backgrounds of those claiming to be kiwis or New Zealanders, the researchers followed up on a geographically based sub sample of the original group. They report that 96 percent of those contacted gave responses that indicated that they were Pakeha (p. 45).³⁴ A further 2 percent were seen to be Maori. However, even based on this

²⁹ Migration from non-traditional sources to New Zealand, and in particular from countries that themselves have been the destination of migrants, and where there has been subsequent ethnic intermarriage, creates some major coding problems for Statistics New Zealand. For example, while people from the United States and South Africa can record these countries as their ethnic group on their census form, difficulties can arise when these individuals are coded to a one-digit level. Unless also indicating they are black or from an indigenous group everyone from these two groups is coded as a European. For this coding information see <http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/carsweb.nsf/94772cd5918085044c2567e6007eec2c/2a49e89d6dc96e92cc256b0c006901c6?OpenDocument>

³⁰ Allan (2001: 11) notes that in 1996 46,743 noted New Zealander as their ethnic group, 6,388 New Zealand and 5,483 Kiwi. According to Allan, in 1986 20,313 people recorded 'New Zealander'. In 2001, the group New Zealander, Kiwi or Pakeha represented just over 2 percent of the total population who indicated an ethnic group.

³¹ It may be that some New Zealanders or Kiwis recorded more than one ethnic group. As yet, Statistics New Zealand has not published an analysis of the New Zealander/Kiwi group so this type of issue cannot be explored.

³² Barnard (2000) suggests that the increase in the number "New Zealander" type responses between 1996 and 2001 shows that the inclusion of "Pakeha" on the 1996 census was not the cause of the increase between 1991 and 1996.

³³ Maori in the geographic area that is now New Zealand were defined by early British explorers, colonists, and official data collectors as "Indians", "Aborigines", "Natives" or "New Zealanders", as well as "Maori" (Allan, 2001).

³⁴ While Dupuis *et al* (1999) describe Kiwi and New Zealanders as being mostly from the Pakeha group, later in the paper they go further and label this group as "white" (p. 47).

research by Dupuis *et al* the decision by Statistics New Zealand to recode all New Zealanders as New Zealand European means that over 3000 people were potentially miscoded as New Zealand Europeans in the 2001 census.

Other research undermines the assumption that almost all Kiwis or New Zealanders are from the European New Zealand ethnic group. Te Hoe Nuku Roa (1999: Appendix 5) report that when individuals of the Maori descended adults in the baseline survey had to chose *one* option that best described themselves, 11 percent said Kiwi and 15 percent New Zealander.³⁵ Thus one in every four Maori descended people want to define themselves ethnically primarily as a Kiwi or a New Zealander. This 26 percent figure does not additionally identify those people who wished to identify first as Maori but also wished to identify as a New Zealander/Kiwi.³⁶

Data from a national sample of just over 2000 individuals also suggests some diversity amongst the New Zealander group (Webster, 2001). Respondents were first asked to record a single ethnic affiliation. This produced a sample in which 14 percent were classified as New Zealand Maori; 72 percent New Zealand European/Pakeha; Other European 14 percent; Pacific Islander 2 percent; Chinese 1 percent; Indian 1 percent; and Other non-European 1 percent. These people were then asked to tick one box which best described their *ethnic national identity*. Included on the list was “Above all, I am a New Zealander first, and a member of some ethnic group second” (p. 95). Overall, 46 percent of respondents ticked this New Zealander box. This included half of those who identified themselves as from the ethnic Maori group based on the initial question. As a group, these “New Zealanders” tended to be younger than average and to have some advantage in occupation, income and social class (p. 98).

Allan (2000: 11) reports on the findings of an ACNielsen report commissioned by Statistics New Zealand to evaluate changes to the 1991 and 1996 census ethnicity questions. She notes “that 21 percent of non-Maori and 5 percent of Maori in their study preferred the term “New Zealander’ ” as a response to the ethnicity question.

This search for a “New Zealand” identity, particularly by some groups of Pakeha, is increasingly being recognised by both Maori and non-Maori. As an example, in a wider discussion about the Treaty of Waitangi, Crown Forestry Rentals Trust manager Ben Dalton notes “...Pakeha New Zealanders are on a quest for their own identity. They learned in the post-war period that they are not Europeans...” (Tyler, 2003: A15).³⁷

Some parallel trends and debates can be observed in the United States. Stephan and Stephan (2000) report that data from the 1980 census and the 1980 General Social Survey (GSS) indicate that it was not only “white” people but also African-Americans who

³⁵ Only just over half of Maori descended people in the Te Hoe Nuku Roa project chose Maori as the single identity that best described themselves.

³⁶ The full title of the magazine “Mana” would suggest that Maori are seen as being included in the overall group “New Zealander”. This is a “Maori news magazine for all New Zealanders” (front cover).

³⁷ Dalton goes on to argue that Pakeha New Zealanders identity is tied to the land and this then ties them to Maori (Tyler, 2003: A15).

selected “American” as their ethnic group. Collins (2001a: 44) argues that the high geopolitical power and prestige of America “elevates the prestige of a unitary ethnographic identity”. He suggests that with worldwide migration to the U.S. there is a movement “toward a transracial identity amalgamating a wide variety of ethnic origins”. While he sees a continuing “class based anchoring of a black-white distinction” he argues there is likely to be a shift to a “blended Asian-Euro-Hispanic American”.^{38 39}

Based on Canadian research into possible census questions, Pryor *et al.* (1992) argue that as colonial societies mature and evolve, there is an increasing tendency for the settler populations to see themselves as “indigenous” to the society in which they live. This includes Canadians starting to view the response “Canadian” as an evolving indigenous ethnic category.⁴⁰ In their paper, Pryor *et al.* also provide evidence that mentioning the term Canadian as a possible ethnic group lifts responses to this category, while making it a specific tick box further increases the response. In their trial questionnaires, if Canadian was a tick box the number of individuals ticking this box varied from between nearly 30 percent to more than 50 percent.

It is possible some of the opposition to allowing respondents to record “New Zealander” or “Kiwis” in their answer to the census ethnicity question might reduce if there was also a wider ancestry question. It is likely that many individuals claiming to be “New Zealanders” or “Kiwis” would be happy to acknowledge their ancestry. As an example, a person may be a fourth generation descendent of European settlers or a third generation descendent of Chinese immigrants, but no longer feel a strong affiliation with Europe or China. Examples of this can be found in New Zealand literature. Wells (2001), in his memoir book *Long loop home*, describes how, as a fifth generation descendent of European settlers, he feels no connection with Europe. Asking all New Zealanders about their ancestry would allow respondents to claim to be a New Zealander, yet also allow researchers to assess aspects of their ancestral background. Already it is possible to determine if people born outside New Zealand are claiming to belong to the New Zealander ethnic group.

In some countries nationality, including the country in which the respondent is resident, is seen as a valid part of defining ethnic or racial groups. In Britain, for some groups nationality is mixed with skin colour (either actual or via some cultural or ancestral affiliation) in the census to provide a set of ethnic categories. In the 2001 census, British respondents were asked to choose a single ethnic identity from categories including White British or White Irish, Asian British, or Black British (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Yet, some people do not easily fit these categories. For instance Brannen, Heptinstall, and Bhopal (2000), based on a small-scale study of children, provide an example of Middle Eastern children seeing themselves as “Brown British”. Canadians

³⁸ For more debate about whether ethnicity is disappearing in the United States see Bitzan (2001).

³⁹ While her study is restricted to white Americans, Waters (1990) demonstrates that some respondents to surveys will use the term “American” to simplify some very complex ancestry combinations. She gives an example of someone labelling their children “American” because they had Irish, Italian, Welsh, Lithuanian, French and German ancestries (p. 48).

⁴⁰ In Canada some descendents of immigrants can trace their history in Canada back 300 years. This is considerably longer than the time Pakeha settlers have been in New Zealand.

wishing to choose “Canadian” as one or more of their lines of ancestry have had this choice on the census form and the response has been recorded in official statistics.⁴¹ However, like the British they also bring a mixture of nationality/region of origin and colour into their ethnic analysis. In the Canadian census a further question asks whether a person sees themselves as White, Chinese, Black, Japanese or a number of other listed categories.

In New Zealand, the term New Zealand European signals that the person comes from one part of the world (Europe) but lives in New Zealand. Unlike the British example it provides no direct sense of skin colour. Yet, there seems to be an underlying assumption amongst researchers that this group will be white or light skinned.⁴² This is a simplistic view. For example, for centuries the once geographically separate breeding pools of groups such as Scandinavians, Celts, Mediterranean’s and even Sub-Saharan Africans have been mixing in Europe creating complex lines of ancestry and skin colour (Collins, 2001a). In relation to American data collection, Irish and Italians did not become “white” until well into the twentieth century (Graves, 2001).

In contrast to the New Zealand European example, in U.S. the African American group provides a strong and explicit signal as to both geographic area of origin and association with skin colour. In the U.S., researchers often use the terms African American and black interchangeably. Yet, complicating the idea that the terms black or white are associated with skin colour, there is a small, but increasing, group of people in America who define themselves as black and white (Harris and Sim, 2001).⁴³ Graves (2001) also has problems with the concept of colour coding of populations and notes:

We must build a new common language that accurately describes individuals within our populations. We must abandon the practice of describing ourselves as “black,” “brown,” “red,” “white,” or “yellow”. In particular, historically oppressed populations should stop describing themselves utilizing such worn euphemisms such as “minorities” or “persons of color”.

There is also research to suggest that how people define the racial group they belong to can change according to how questions are asked as well as the context in which they are asked. In addition, the ethnic group a person belongs to may change over time. In the U.S., Harris and Sim (2001) use data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to examine patterns of racial classifications among multiracial populations. The survey had four main indicators of race. These were questionnaires completed at home, at school, by an interviewer who recorded their own observation of racial group, and a questionnaire completed by a primary caregiver. Harris and Sim found that: around 12 percent of youth provided inconsistent responses to the nearly identical questions; context and age affected the choice of a single race identity; and youth who classified themselves

⁴¹ Kukutai (2001: 26) argues that Statistics Canada discourages the response “Canadian”.

⁴² There is also often an assumption that Pakeha will be “pale skinned” (see Allan 2000: 10 for a brief discussion of the term Pakeha)

⁴³ In an article published in the Washington Post, Harris describes the problems of choosing the ethnic classifications of his own children (Harris, 2001). Other examples of such problems can be found in the American media (e.g. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A21758-2001Apr15.html>). Unfortunately, the New Zealand media has not dealt with these issues in the same depth.

as from mixed racial group were far more likely to be misclassified by the interviewer than those identifying as being from just one racial group. They also found that the processes of racial classification depend on what combination of racial groups were involved. For example, biracial youth with an Asian parent had more flexibility in choosing their ethnic identity than black/white youth.

Harris and Sim also found that when compared to youth who lived with both biological parents, those who did not were more likely to report being multiracial. They suggest that studies that focus on intact two parent families may underestimate the proportion of children that are multiracial. Finally, they confirm earlier research that showed that having parents of different races is not a sufficient condition for expressing a multiracial identity (Davis, 1991). Equally, only two thirds of those youth with known multiracial parents identified themselves as multiracial.

Waters (1990) also reports on a number of American surveys where people were asked about their ethnic identity at two or more different time periods. In all of these surveys a significant number of people changed their ethnicity over time. While there tended to be a higher level of consistency amongst some minority groups, even amongst these groups there was some switching. The relative fluidity of ethnic or racial classification by individuals over time can, in some circumstances, reflect changes in incentives or disincentives to belonging to particular groups. In Canada, a census taken during WW2 showed that very few people classified themselves as German when compared with censuses taken prior to the war (Ryder, 1955). For a variety of reasons the growth of American Irish in the U.S. has been far faster than natural population growth would predict (Hout and Goldstein, 1994), as has the growth of Native Americans (Light and Lee, 1997). Waters (2000) demonstrates that the large growth in Native Americans in the last couple of censuses has been primarily due to switching from the “white” group. Part of the fluidity reflects past intermarriages and reflects that many people have a diverse ethnic ancestry. They can therefore choose their ethnic identities from amongst a range of groups. In the U.S., detailed qualitative research, set alongside data from official sources, shows that fourth, fifth and later generations of immigrants who were the offspring of several intermarriages would choose either single or multiple ethnicities from the many available to them. In narrowing down their choices these people often did not employ any straightforward process of prioritisation (Waters, 1990).

The complexity of constructing ethnicity can also be seen in New Zealand literature. In a poem with the title “Race Relations”, Colquhoun (1999) lays out a complex set of components of ancestry, kinship and country of origin regarding the individual the poem is about. This background includes Australian, English, Scottish, German, Jewish and Maori roots. He notes that historically many of these groups have been in conflict with each other. Referring to his English and German background he remarks that “[o]ne half of me lost a war the other half won” (p. 38). Similarly, describing Scottish and Maori connections, he writes “[s]omewhere along the line/I have managed to colonise myself”.

Given that there is now much international migration, individuals may be classifying themselves, or be classified in surveys, in a variety of ways across their lifecourse

according to which country they are residing in. As an illustration, Stephan and Stephan (2000) note how a light-skinned mixed-ethnic person could be classified as white in Brazil, coloured in South Africa, and African-American in the U.S. (p. 542). Fears (2003) reports that in the U.S. 2000 census Latinos, many who are immigrants and who frequently have mixed ancestry, often found it difficult to answer the racial origin question. Many also find that in everyday life they are constantly placed in ethnic categories they themselves would not have chosen. He argues that “[i]n the U.S., if you are not quite white, then you are black” (p. 29).

In its 1983 review of ethnicity statistics; in background documentation to the 2001 review of ethnicity statistics; and in the draft report resulting from this review, Statistics New Zealand notes that ethnicity is self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group. This idea of creating one’s own identity has popular support in New Zealand. For example, in a paper setting out a Maori perspective for the 2001 review of ethnicity statistics Robson and Reid (2001:24) note “[i]t is our right to name our own identity and to have our ethnicity recorded as we wish.”⁴⁴ Yet, as already discussed, in recent censuses this has not included people being able to have their ethnicity recorded as Kiwi or New Zealander.

A further complication in measuring ethnicity is that even though individuals are theoretically able to construct their own identity, based on research of U.S. censuses it is observed that “the categories provided on the census form and the instructions given to respondents can have a large effect on people’s answers to the census” (Waters, 2000: 1736). Waters shows how “English” was the largest ethnic-ancestry group in America in 1980, but this response declined by 34 percent when it was not listed in 1990. In New Zealand, when the “English” group was listed as a possible ethnic category on the census form in 1996 there were over 281 thousand responses to this group. In contrast, when this group was not listed in 1991 the responses were just over 53 thousand. Similarly, in 2001 they were just over 35 thousand (Lang, 2002). It is highly likely that if the choice “New Zealander” was listed on the New Zealand census form within the ethnicity question that it would attract a high number of responses. As will be more fully discussed in the section entitled “*recording and reporting multi-ethnic people in the census*”, whether the ethnicity question allows, encourages or possibly discourages people choosing more than one ethnic group is very important: for the construction of ethnic categories in a population; for ethnic counts; and for subsequent ethnic projections.

High-level groupings of ethnicity

Researchers, policy makers and statistical agencies recognise a need to reduce the complexity of large-scale data collections so they commonly regroup the many possible responses to a much smaller number of categories. Ethnicity is no exception. While regrouping solves some problems it increases others when studying the effects of ethnicity. Statistics New Zealand classifies individual ethnic groups into progressively broader

⁴⁴ While it assumed that in America people are naming their own identities, in fact in the short census form one person in the household completes the form for all household members. While this is an understandable practice in relation to very young children, it undermines self classification for older children and adults.

ethnic groups according to geographical location or origin, cultural similarities, and the size of the group in New Zealand. As will be indicated, in some situations assessment of skin colour appears to be part of a decision as to where to allocate a response to a higher-level group.

Five ethnic groupings are commonly used in New Zealand social science and policy making.⁴⁵ These are European, Maori, Pacific Island Peoples, Asian, and “Other”. However, there is a sixth group that is important. This is the combined “no response” or “not defined” group. Respondents may be categorised as being in this group for a number of reasons. One is that an individual simply fails to fully complete the census form. Another is that, for whatever reason, a respondent does not want to record their ethnic groups(s). In 2001, just under 4 percent of respondents did not state their ethnic group.

Statistics New Zealand notes that, technically, apart from Maori all the one-digit ethnic groups are not individual ethnic groups but collections of groups (Allan, 2001).⁴⁶ However, the general public would not be generally aware of this important distinction. While New Zealand European is a box that can be “ticked”, the higher-level groups of European, Pacific Peoples, Asian are not groups that can be “ticked” in census responses.

The European group covers a wide range of nationalities and ethnic groups from these countries. These include English, Irish, Greek, Australian, Corsican, French, Greenlander, Hungarian, Ukrainian, American (US), New Caledonian, South African, Russian, Maltese, Norwegian, New Zealanders, and Kiwis.⁴⁷ For many people, the term European is not an ethnic group but simply a collection of countries. It is also a collection that, for many people, often excludes the United Kingdom and Ireland.^{48 49} The United Kingdom and Ireland are the stepping off point for the ancestors of most New Zealanders, both Maori via inter-marriage over the last 200 years, and non-Maori via both migration and inter-marriage.

⁴⁵ Statistics New Zealand has also had a level 0 for ethnicity output. This did not include Asians as a separate group. Statistics New Zealand (2003: 8) has now recommended that this higher-level classification no longer be used.

⁴⁶ Pearson (1990) notes that there can be an “ethnic category” which is not an “ethnic group” or an “ethnic community”. The “Other” group, is a prime example of a category rather than a group or community.

⁴⁷ If someone from the U.S. recorded only “black” in the New Zealand census they would be allocated by Statistics New Zealand to the “other” group at a one-digit level. Similarly, if an Australian aboriginal person recorded this as their sole ethnic group they would be allocated to the Pacific Peoples group. If an American of mixed ethnicity recorded black and white it is not clear which group they would be allocated to.

⁴⁸ A dictionary definition of “Europe” and “European” provides further confusion. One definition of Europe is “a continent in the Western part of the land mass lying between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans separated from Asia by the Ural Mountains on the East and the Caucasus Mountains the Black and Caspian seas on the South East”. The dictionary goes on to note that in British usage the term Europe is sometimes used to contrast with England. A European can be seen as either a “native or inhabitant of Europe, or a person of European descent” or “a white person in a country with largely a non-white population” (Anon, 1997a).

⁴⁹ In the 2001 census 225,120 people were recorded as having been born in either the UK or Ireland as against just 59,500 recorded as having been born in continental Europe.

This term European may be problematic for a range of people from some of these countries, particularly in the case of settler societies where there has been ethnic intermarriage. For example, a “coloured” South African is likely to be classified as European unless they specifically listed themselves as black.⁵⁰ Allan goes on to note that there are many people who describe themselves as New Zealanders but “do not have European descent, white skin or cultural roots in Europe. There are recent immigrants from non-traditional source countries such as Malaysia” (p. 12). If these people recorded New Zealander in the census they would be recorded in the 2001 census output as Europeans at a one-digit level.

The Asian group includes Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese, Gujarati, Japanese, Korean, and Afghani people. The Pacific Peoples includes Samoan, Cook Island Maori, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Hawaiian, Nauru Islander, Papuan/New Guinean/Irian Jayan, and Tuvalu Islander/Ellice Islander.

The “other” group is somewhat of a residual “catch all” and includes Arab, Israeli/Jewish/Hebrew, Jordanian, Kurd, Palestinian, Turkish, Venezuelan, Nigerian, American, Ugandan, West Indian/Caribbean, Inuit/Eskimo, Native American. It therefore covers the Middle East, elements of both North and South America and Africa. A European who had originally migrated to South America and then onto New Zealand would be classified in the “other” group, whereas the same person who had directly migrated to New Zealand or moved from Australia would be classified as European.

Statistics New Zealand face some difficult choices when making these allocations, even when considering cultural similarities. For example, it can be argued that Native American, Australian Aboriginal and Maori, each indigenous peoples in their own country, have some common cultural values. Yet, the New Zealand one-digit classification places them in three distinct groups. These are “other”, Pacific Island Peoples, and the Maori ethnic group.

There is ongoing debate as to the usefulness of some of these broad groupings. For instance, there is much variation amongst the groups aggregated to the Pacific Peoples ethnic category. Separating out the main component groups is possible when using census data, but there are major problems when using sample surveys such as the Household Labour Force Survey. Such surveys have too small sample sizes to accurately report on a wide range of ethnic groups and combinations.

The choice of boundary affects the size of the one-digit groups. For instance, it has recently been noted that the Asian ethnic group in New Zealand has reached a similar size to that of Pacific Peoples. However, if the U.S. one-digit classification system had been used, the Asian group would have included Pacific peoples. If this system had been used the “Asian” population would have been of similar size to that of the Maori ethnic group. Similarly, the European group could be reduced in size if it was to be divided into

⁵⁰ In South Africa there are four main ethnic groups. These are white, Asian, coloured and black. Therefore a coloured South African is unlikely to describe themselves as black.

two groups of British/Scottish/Irish and continental European or, alternatively, New Zealanders and other Europeans.

It is, of course, possible for policy makers and researchers to regroup ethnicity data to their own high-level categories. However, in reality, this option is limited in New Zealand, given the difficulties in accessing unit record data from official data collections.

Finally, the allocation to high-level categories becomes more complex when individuals are able to affiliate with more than one ethnic group. The next section focuses on this issue.

Recording and reporting multi-ethnic people in the census

Throughout history when previously isolated ethnic groups have come into contact with each other there is some amount of inter-ethnic marriage. When somatic differences are very marked in a country, the cause must be either recent migration from a remote part of the world (such as recent migration from Somalia to New Zealand), or social processes that maintain separation between different groups (Collins, 2001a).

For some groups of people, such as visibly white middle-class Americans, having a mixed ancestry has little influence on self-identity and everyday life (Waters, 1990). But for other groups, being the product of inter-ethnic marriage can be very important. For example, a study of Afro-Amerasians found that most of the individuals interviewed indicated that their “mixed” heritage was the “linchpin to their ethnic and racial identities” (Williams and Thornton, 1998: 264). Fears (2003) discusses problems of identity in the U.S. for mixed ancestry Hispanics. However in New Zealand, O'Regan (2001: 89) provides an example of how it is possible to recognise and value a mixed ancestry, but also have a strong sense of identity with a particular group.

It is valid therefore for modern day Kāi Tahu to have just as strong a sense of identity derived from their Māori heritage as from their Pākehā whaler or sealer heritage.

Equally, in New Zealand Kukutai (2001: 191) argues that:

Having a higher socio-economic status or acknowledging non Maori ethnicity, does not make one any ‘less Maori’.

How statistical agencies decide to record people of mixed ethnicity can therefore be very important. In America, 1870 and 1890 census officials created new groups for those of mixed black and white racial backgrounds based on the amount of “blood” a person received from each parent. The classifications were mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon.⁵¹

⁵¹ According to the 1870 census instructions, “the word ‘black’ should be used to describe those persons who have three-fourths or more black blood (sic); ‘mulatto,’ those persons who have from three-eighths to five eighths black blood (sic); ‘quadroon,’ those persons who have one-fourth black blood (sic); and ‘octoroon,’ those persons who have one-eighth or any trace of black blood (sic)” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2001: 19).

For a variety of reasons these new racial groups did not endure and there was a shift back to single racial groups. However, more recent examples of the creation of new ethnic/racial groups can be found. In America, the group “Chicanos” is an amalgam of Indios, mestizos, Spaniards and others (Collins, 2001a). The group “Hispanic” is a further evolving group that includes Chicanos.

Early New Zealand census data identified and separated out “half-castes”, an official indication that a mixed Maori-European population was becoming important (Brown, 1984). “Half castes” were defined as persons who reported half Maori and half European descent and were allocated to the Maori or European population according to their “mode of living”. Persons reported as more than half Maori were allocated to the Maori group regardless of their mode of living. It appears that decisions about what a half caste actually was in practice and “what living as European” meant when the Maori population itself increasingly dressed, worked and housed itself along European lines, were often left up to the vagaries of individual enumerators (Brown, 1984: 160; Pool, 1991: 18). Like the U.S. this category “half caste” did not endure, and from the 1926 census all persons of half or more Maori descent were categorised as Maori.

When reviewing more recent changes in American data collections, Hirschman, Alba and Farley (2000) argue that in the short term changes in ethnic reporting to include multi-ethnic categories may influence both litigation and legislation, more particularly with regards to affirmative action policies. However, they suggest that in the long run the official construction of new ethnic categories, including blended identities, will “...influence ethnic consciousness and identities in ways that cannot be imagined today” (p.391).⁵² As part of these changes they suggest that when government statistical agencies recognise multi-ethnic/racial people in official record keeping, then more people may be willing to acknowledge, or even discover, such identities. This view recognises that official data collections not only record ethnic or racial categories but also can create them. Graves (2001: 196) suggests that counting multi-racial people in official statistics helps break down racism in a society.

One could argue that one important measure of the United States’ movement toward an antiracist society would be the growth of its “multiracial” category. The OMB⁵³ now recognizes sixty-three different racial combinations. These combinations will better describe the complexities of American social life in the twenty-first century, and the number of individuals who consider themselves of multiracial ancestry should be reported in each census by category.

Again in America, Collins (2001a: 43) also predicts major possible changes in society with a growing recognition of a mixed race group. He argues:

The key to the racialization of the continuum of ethnic distinctions is the cultural definition of the offspring of mixed breeding as belonging exclusively to the nonlegitimate category. That cultural definition appears to be dissolving at the turn of the twenty-first century. In the 1990s there was growing recognition of a category of mixed race. The effect of such a change in categorical

⁵² There is the potential for the U.S. to fracture along new fault lines. One possible division is Muslim America versus Christian America. This crosses ethnic lines with, for example, in the 1990s only a third of U.S Muslims being Arab-Americans (Kulczycki and Lobo, 2001).

⁵³ Office of Management and Budget.

boundaries would be far-reaching. In the absence of further differentiation of institutional segregation in terms of ranked degrees of racial purity such as have existed in Brazil and elsewhere, the breaking up of the rigid distinction between black and white has potential for the entire category scheme to lose its centrality as a marker.

In some situations it will be immigrants who bring with them multicultural attitudes. For instance, in the U.S. Waters (2000) notes that immigrants from countries such as Latin America come from multicultural societies where there are ethnic categories that fall between black and white. According to Waters, these immigrants have fewer reservations about listing all their backgrounds in surveys.

In America, the 2000 census was the first time that respondents could record more than one racial group. Pool (2002) notes that America and New Zealand represent two of the few examples of where people can record multiple responses to the census. The decision to allow this in the U.S. was not without controversy with some groups concerned that it might “dilute” the counts of some important minority groups (Bitzan, 2001; Korgen, 1998). Data from the 2000 census showed that four percent of children under age 18 years were recorded as having more than one racial group, compared with two percent of adults (Lee, 2001). Based on both qualitative and quantitative research in the U.S., Waters (2000) notes that as people age they report fewer ancestries and that less educated people also tend to report fewer identities.⁵⁴ Many researchers, however, suspect that the number of people who could consider themselves to be in the multi-racial groups is far higher. For example, Graves reports on research that estimates that as much as 30 percent of the African American gene pool is derived from Caucasoid or Mongoloid origins. However, he also notes that “[m]ost of the genetic admixture between African Americans and Euro-Americans occurred during the time of chattel slavery” (p. 31). Kennedy (2002: 103) notes that the physical characteristics “of millions of Americans bear witness to interracial sexual encounters” He acknowledges that many of these involved rape during the period of slavery, some were through choice, while “[o]thers contained elements of both choice and coercion”. This helps explain the reluctance amongst many people in the U.S. to acknowledge such a mixed heritage.

In New Zealand, the ability to record more than one ethnic group was first possible in the 1991 census. Using 1996 data Gould (2001) demonstrates that in New Zealand, as in the U.S., there is a higher rate of multi-ethnic responses amongst children. He argues that many of these responses will have been made, or at least influenced, by parents or guardians. His data show that in 1996 while the median age of the total population was 32.3 years; for two-ethnicity Maori/European it was only 18.1 years; for Pacific/European 16.4; and for Maori/Pacific 11.2 years.

While recording more than one ethnic group has been possible in the 1991, 1996 and the 2001 censuses, there have been significant changes in the questionnaires that affect how people respond. The three critical questions have been:

⁵⁴ A range of factors, including simply a greater ability of well-educated respondents to understand and self-complete complex survey forms, could influence the link between education and the number of ethnic groups recorded.

1991 - Which ethnic group do you belong to? *Tick the box or boxes which apply to you.*
1996 – Tick as many circles as you need to show which ethnic group(s) you belong to.
2001- Which ethnic group do you belong to? *Mark the box or boxes which apply to you.*

The 1991 and 2001 questions are similar, but both contain a simple, but extremely important, grammatical error that made the question internally inconsistent as to whether people could have single or multiple ethnic identities. The main thrust of the question in both 1991 and 2001 was to ask which ethnic group the respondent belongs to. The use of “group” in the singular implied that only one ethnic group should be chosen. In both 1991 and 2001 the second part of the question was underneath the first part and in italics. In both 1991 and 2001 the question was ambiguous, and tends to direct people away from multiple responses.

The 2000 U.S. census also provides the same potential for confusion. The first part of the race question asks “What is person 1’s race?” This implies a single group should be chosen. However, the question goes on to ask the respondent to “mark one or more races”.

The change in wording between 1996 and 2001 in the New Zealand censuses clearly had a major impact on responses, with 2001 data showing that the multi-ethnic response decreased from 15.5 percent in 1996 to 9 percent in 2001.⁵⁵ This is a significant decline, when parallel indicators point to the multi-ethnic group in New Zealand actually growing over this period. In its draft recommendations from the review of ethnic statistics, Statistics New Zealand (2003) suggests that the 2001 question be repeated again in 2006. If it is repeated, it would be desirable that the wording be changed from “which ethnic group do you belong to?” to “which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?”

There were two further background changes, one of which may have altered the final count. The first was that in 2001 up to six ethnic responses were captured and coded compared with a maximum of three responses in 1991 and 1996. In 1996 11.7 percent of respondents provided two ethnic responses while 3.8 percent provided three. In 2001 the figures were 7.9 two, 0.9 three, 0.2 four and 0.1 five. In the second change, in 2001 a warning edit alerted operators where respondents had given a multiple response to the question, and operators checked as to whether it was a genuine multiple response. In 1996 there was no warning edit, leading to both marks and crosses on the form being read as positive responses (Lang, 2002).

In their draft report, Statistics New Zealand (2003) recommends that in the next census the choices of ethnic groups be limited to three based on the rationale that only 0.3 percent of people responded with more than three ethnic groups.⁵⁶ While this is consistent with 1991 and 1996 censuses, this will be a variation on the practice for 2001. Statistics

⁵⁵ As a comparison, Pryor *et al* (1992) report that 28 percent of Canadians recorded two or more ethnic groups as part of their background.

⁵⁶ While few people in New Zealand do record more than three responses, data reported from the 1986 Canadian census shows that 3.9 percent of respondents recorded four or more responses (Pryor *et al*, 1992). It is not clear why this is so much higher.

New Zealand recognises the potential for respondents to record more ethnic groups than are able to be captured and have recommended that a statistically sound method for input prioritisation be developed to deal with this problem.

Before examining data from the census, it is worth noting that there is much uncertainty as to how respondents might go about deciding whether to record singular or multiple ethnic backgrounds. For instance, an individual with a mixed ethnic ancestry, which includes Maori, might decide on census day to record only one ethnic group, yet in another context or in a future census may affiliate with other ethnic groups. Metge (1976: 42) provides examples of individuals recording themselves in the census as “full Maori” even when they have non-Maori grandparents. This is because they “feel full Maori”. Equally, on census day a person who normally sees him or herself as having a very strong Maori identity may still record the influences of other ancestry by choosing more than one ethnic group.⁵⁷

Table 1 shows the proportion of each total ethnic group who recorded just one ethnic identity. It shows both changes over time and differences between groups. In both 1996 and 2001, people in the Maori ethnic group were the least likely to record just one ethnic identity. Of all those people who recorded Maori as one or more of their ethnic groups, only 56 percent recorded only Maori in 2001.⁵⁸ The relatively high rate of mixed responses by both the wider Maori and Pacific Islands group is a first indication of high ethnic intermarriage rates both in the past and currently by individuals affiliating with these groups. However, even amongst the one-digit level ethnic groups where single responses are high, there are subgroups where the single responses are much lower. For example within the wider European group, in the total responses for Italian only 35 percent of respondents recorded only one ethnic group. The figure for Irish was 38 percent. Amongst Pacific Peoples, 46 percent of Niueans and 13 percent of Hawaiians recorded one ethnicity. Within the Asian group the figure was 59 percent for both Malays/Malaysians and Hong Kong Chinese, and within the “Other” group only 46 percent of the Israeli/Jewish/Hebrew group recorded one ethnicity. Potentially reflecting the high rate of outmarriage by Native Americans in the U.S. only half of those who noted this ethnic group in New Zealand claimed Native American as a sole group.⁵⁹

Table 1: Single ethnicity responses by each ethnic group, 1991-2001

Ethnic group (total responses)	1991	1996	2001
European	94.6	82.7	89.9
Maori	74.4	52.2	56.0
Pacific Island Peoples	77.9	61.4	67.5
Asian	87.8	81.5	88.1
Other	68.0	59.9	75.1

Source: Lang (2002) based on census data.

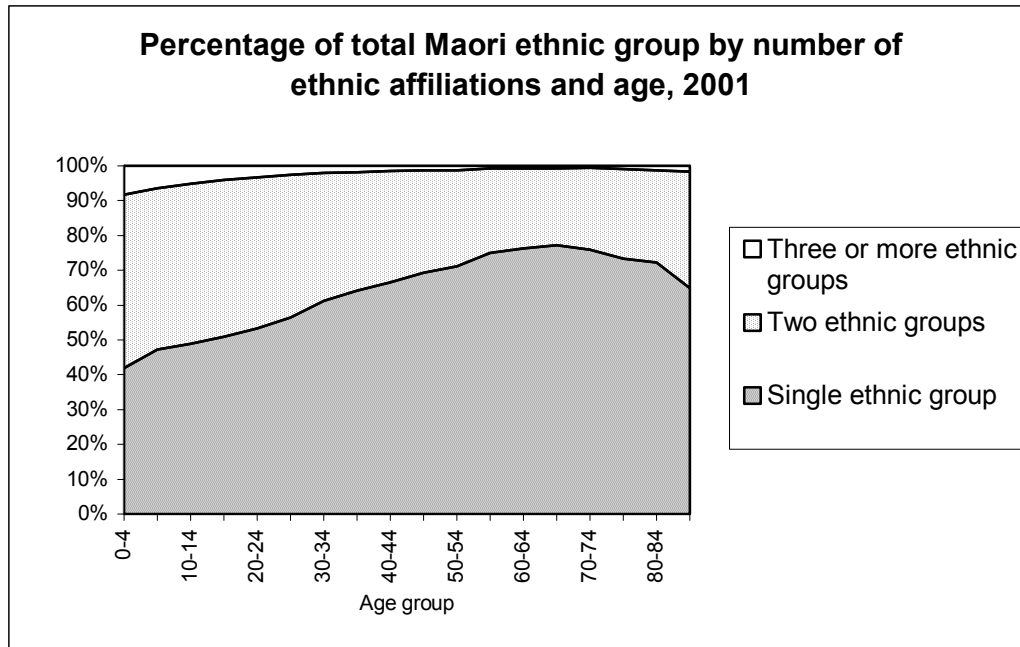
⁵⁷ It would be possible using census data to draw up some indicator of the strength of Maori identity. This could use a combination of information on ancestry, whether one or more of the respondent’s Iwi were recorded, whether they noted they spoke Maori, whether they completed the census form in Maori, and perhaps if living in a couple household, whether their partner was also Maori.

⁵⁸ The census multi-ethnic Maori group is much larger than that recorded in the HLFS (Chapple, 2000: 105). Chapple sets out a number of possible reasons for this difference.

⁵⁹ The term “outmarriage” refers to choosing a partner from another ethnic group.

Figure 1 shows the affiliation to one or more ethnic group also varies by age for the wider Maori ethnic group. While it is not a simple linear relationship, overall younger people from the wider Maori ethnic group are less likely to record, or have recorded for them, their ethnicity as sole Maori.^{60 61} In the younger age groups less than half the Maori ethnic group are sole Maori. In a study of Hawaiian children, Labov and Jacobs (1998: 481) argue that “[t]he assignment of a child to one race or ethnic group is clearly problematic in a context where almost half of all children have mixed ancestry.”

Figure 1



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census of Population and Dwellings

In 2001 in the two ethnic groups category, the majority of responses were Maori/European. For example, 88 percent of children aged 0-4 who recorded two ethnic groups recorded Maori and European. In this age group, a further 12 percent had Pacific Peoples and Maori as their two ethnic groups. These combinations change with age, with the combination Maori/European increasing in importance. In the three ethnic group category, of which one ethnic group was Maori, the combination European/Maori/Pacific Peoples was the most common amongst young people.

Factors other than age also matter in relation to multiple ethnicities. For example, Lang (2002) notes that recent arrivals in New Zealand from other countries are less likely to belong to multiple ethnic groups than people who have been in New Zealand for some time.

⁶⁰ One possible reason for this not being a linear relationship is that sole Maori do not live as long a Maori with dual or multiple ethnicities.

⁶¹ For younger children it will be generally the parents or guardians rather than the child who filled in the census form. As these children grow up they may well construct their ethnicity in a different way.

When only one ethnic group is collected, reporting membership of ethnic groups is straightforward. When more than one group is collected then reporting becomes more complex. In the period during which more than one group has been recorded, Statistics New Zealand (as well as many researchers) has relied primarily on the prioritisation of ethnic groups in order to simplify the presentation of the data. As Statistics New Zealand (2003) notes, New Zealand has been unique in using a system of prioritisation of ethnic responses.

Allan (2001) comments that “[b]etween level one groups, Māori have priority coding, followed by Pacific peoples, then Asian, other ethnic groups besides European, followed by ‘Other European’, and finally NZ European” (p. 18).⁶² This prioritisation system has meant that, for example, if a person records himself or herself as belonging to both Maori and Samoan ethnic groups they will be classified as belonging just to the Maori ethnic group. As another example, under this system of prioritisation if an individual puts down the three ethnic groups of Irish, Samoan and German they will be recorded as belonging to the Pacific Island ethnic group. In this system of prioritisation, the numerically dominant ethnic group in society becomes the residual category.

According to Allan the underlying rationale of the ethnicity priority recording system was that it should (p. 18):

- ensure that important but numerically small groups are identified from the largest ethnic group;
- ensure that Māori and Pacific Island continue to be identified as this data provides information for policy decision-making; and
- ensure those shown statistically to be disadvantaged in some way are known, for the same purpose.

The prioritisation system echoes back to the “one drop” classification system used in the U.S.. Graves (2001) notes the rule where one “drop” of black blood made a person black has no biological rationale but instead “*was a social convention originated to keep the progeny of master-slave liaisons as slaves*”(original emphasis p.31).⁶³

Variations on this process of prioritisation have been used by other New Zealand researchers. As an illustration, Dupuis *et al* (1999) provide examples of how they constructed single ethnic groups from responses that indicated affiliation to two or more ethnic groups. Sometimes they used the order of the groups listed, but generally Maori took precedence. For example, for the response “Jane is Pakeha and Maori” they

⁶² Allan goes on to note that ethnic groups within the same category at level four of the classification (e.g. Indonesian and Thai) are prioritised according to the size of their population within New Zealand. Allan notes that the prioritisation system in New Zealand was developed based on 1991 census data and there was no revision to take account of 1996 and 2001 Censuses’ data, or to capture the change in the ethnic make-up of New Zealanders.

⁶³ Fears (2003: 29) reports that the “one drop” rule was reinforced by a 1896 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court. This ruled that a “white-complexioned Louisiana shoemaker, could not ride in the white section of a train because a single ancestor of his was black.”

classified the individual as Maori, but “Jane is European with a little bit of Maori blood” they classified Jane as Pakeha (p. 45).

There are both advantages and disadvantages in this process of prioritisation. The one major advantage is that ethnic counts equal counts of the total population. However, this advantage is greatly outweighed by the disadvantages. The disadvantages are that (1) there is no underlying logic in the order of prioritisation, (2) it is not ethnically neutral (that is it elevates one ethnic group over another), (3) it undermines the preferences of people (4) it helps perpetuate myths of pure ethnic groups and (5) it biases population estimates. Pool (2002) notes that the choice to use a prioritisation system is a political one and has the effect of lifting the numbers of particular groups. In a research note, Gould (2002) provides some numerical examples of the problems of using the prioritisation system.

A number of other alternatives are available when reporting multi-ethnic data responses. These include:

- Let people choose their own prioritisation: This option was pursued in the Te Hoe Nuku Roa research project for people of Maori descent (Te Hoe Nuku Roa, 1999). Its advantage is that it explicitly values people’s preferences. It is ethnically neutral but adds complexity for respondents. Its disadvantage is that it forces people to make choices between groups and in this sense nullifies the subjective self-identification criteria. Respondents have to subjectively self-identify with one group rather than allowing the right to equally identify with several. It also raises possible respondent burden problems.⁶⁴
- Publish total counts. Many of the tables from the 2001 census on the Statistics New Zealand website are reported in this way. The States Services Commission (2002), when assessing progress towards equal opportunities in government, allows respondents to choose up to two ethnic groups but has published total counts in reports. However, there are some problems with the total count solution. First, the total counts sum to more than the population, since multi-ethnic people get counted in all the groups to which they belong. This can be confusing. Second, multiple ethnicity remains hidden in total count data. Ethnic groups with higher proportions of multi-ethnic people remain favoured by total counts, so total count data is still ethnically biased, if less so than by the current prioritisation.

⁶⁴ In the census it would be possible to have two ethnicity questions. The first could be similar to the current question and allow individuals to affiliate with more than one ethnic group. A second question could then ask these respondents to nominate one group they affiliate most strongly with. This is the approach used by Waikato University in its *New Zealand women: Family, employment and education study* (Kukutai, 2001). Given that some people would refuse to prioritise, there would need to be an option for those who did not value one (or more) ethnic group(s) over another, or some prioritisation algorithm may have to be imposed on any residual multi-ethnic people. In a study of youth by Harris and Sim (2001), when black/white respondents were asked to prioritise their ethnic group 8.5 percent either did not know which took priority or refused to answer. Of this group 75 percent chose black and 17 percent white. For the white/Asian group there was a more even split between the two groups. In their draft recommendations from the review of ethnicity statistics, Statistics New Zealand (2003) does not favour introducing a question that requires respondents to prioritise their ethnic group.

- Randomly allocate prioritisation. This option would involve random allocation of multi-ethnic people to a single ethnic category. As an example, people who were both Maori and European would have half a chance of being allocated in either box. People who are Maori, European and Samoan, would have a 1/3 chance of being in any one of three boxes. This approach also has the advantage of being simple, readily understood, and imposes no additional burden of complexity on respondents. It is ethnically neutral. It still undermines the preferences of people, but less than the current method or any method that is biased in favour of a particular ethnic group. The total sum of all ethnic groups adds up to the population and the method induces no bias in the relative median ages of various ethnic groups.
- A fractional ethnicity model (see Gould, 2001, 2002). This would count the number of times each ethnicity was claimed. However, unlike total responses options, the response of each individual would be given equal weight, a total value of one for his/her ethnicities. This would be achieved by adding to each ethnicity a coefficient equal to the reciprocal of the number of affiliations claimed. Thus, a respondent ticking only Maori would be coded (1/1) Maori; but a respondent ticking both the Maori and the NZ European options would be (1/2) Maori plus (1/2) NZ. The total of the responses would then equal the total population.
- Do not prioritise ethnicity: This option is attractive in terms of neutrality and the principle of self-identification. The approach would be to list all permutations of single and multi-ethnicity individuals. It is ethnically neutral and respects people's self-identification. Potentially it would lead to a proliferation of group identities that hinders presentation of aggregate statistics; this proliferation would be likely to increase over time as new migrants groups establish more of a presence in New Zealand. Assuming the European one-digit category remains, a first start would be to include in the list of ethnic groups the group Maori/European (see Table 2).

Statistics New Zealand (2003) notes that the majority of the submissions to the 2001 review of ethnicity statistics were against the concept of prioritising ethnicity. Statistics In their draft report, New Zealand state in that the prioritisation of ethnic data is no longer standard practice for their agency and therefore recommend a complete discontinuation of the practice.⁶⁵ However, if they have access to unit record data, individual researchers will be able to continue prioritising ethnic data.

Shifting away from the current system of prioritisation and to a more complex, but potentially more realistic, portrayal of ethnic groups makes the analysis of time series more difficult. However, in relation to this Stephan and Stephan (2000: 547) note:

A common argument against creating more elaborated measurements is that they will provide categories inconsistent with those from previous measures. In many cases, however, stable definitions are inaccurate, because inconsistency of self-categorization is the consequence of unstable subjective definitions of ethnic identity. The government's concern should be with accuracy of categorization, rather than with measurement stability. The best classification systems may well yield the most inconsistencies over time and with previous measures, because they will

⁶⁵ There has been an earlier shift away from prioritisation when considering the ethnicity of households. Statistics New Zealand no longer assigns, via a process of prioritisation, one ethnic group to a household (Allan, 2001). This primarily reflects recognition of the high rates of ethnic intermarriage.

allow the respondent the freedom to state felt identification at a given moment in a particular setting.

Labov and Jacobs (1998: 482) when discussing ethnic intermarriage in the U.S. also note:

The social reality we document is one of an increasingly mixed world. We believe that social scientists need to make provisions for the complex categories of mixing, as the simple heritage categories have become progressively less able to describe the actual social world in which we live.

Yet, while promoting concepts of complex ethnicity, many U.S. researchers are not adapting their language to this new reality. As an example of this, researchers still often use the term biracial in relation to individuals who clearly acknowledge more than two ethnic backgrounds. An article entitled *The Tiger Woods phenomenon: A note on biracial identity* illustrates this (Hall, 2001). Woods has attempted to downplay race as a primary factor in his identity, but acknowledges African-American, Asian American, Caucasian American and Native American ancestry (ibid).⁶⁶ However, the author after listing these four groups describes Woods as biracial (p. 334).

Statistics New Zealand (2003: 14), in the draft recommendations from the Review of Ethnicity Statistics, has suggested that in standard publication output nine single/combinations be adopted. These are: European, Maori, Pacific People, Asian, Other, Maori / European, Maori / Pacific People, two groups not elsewhere identified, and three or more groups. It is not clear why Statistics New Zealand has left out the combination European / Pacific People given that, according to 2001 census data, this group is almost double the size of the Maori / Pacific People combination and larger than the single ethnic group "Other". In addition, the combination European / Asian is only a little smaller than the Maori / Pacific Peoples group (Table 2). In the proposed Statistics New Zealand classification system, in 2001 22,449 individuals recording Maori as one of their ethnic groups would "disappear" within the combined categories "two groups not elsewhere identified" and "three or more groups". Table 2 also shows that ethnic combinations for the youngest section of the population in 2001. In this age group, there is even greater justification for extending the two ethnic group outputs.

⁶⁶ Woods refers to this mix as being "Cablinasian" (Hall, 2001).

Table 2: Main one, two and three-group census ethnic combinations, 2001

Ethnic combination	Total of all age groups	% of total	No of children under 5 years	% of total
Sole European	2,610,408	72.8	150,912	57.8
Sole Māori	294,726	8.2	28,275	10.8
Sole Pacific People	165,645	4.6	18,090	6.9
Sole Asian	213,561	6.0	13,197	5.1
Sole Other	19,553	0.5	1,440	0.6
Māori / European	193,500	5.4	29,508	11.3
Māori / Pacific People	15,606	0.4	3,867	1.5
European / Pacific People	30,018	0.8	5,448	2.1
European / Asian	12,711	0.4	2,940	1.1
European/Māori/Pacific	14,103	0.4	4,143	1.6
Total specified	3,586,734	100.0	261,039	100.0
Total Maori ethnic group*	526,281	14.7	67,560	25.9

*This is the total count of all individuals who recorded Maori as one or more of their ethnic groups

While the option of listing and analysing all major ethnic combinations is feasible with a large-scale dataset such as the census, this option becomes more problematic with sample surveys such as the Household Labour Force Survey. For this type of survey, options such as the random prioritisation should be explored. However, often the sample size is large enough to include some important ethnic subgroups. For example, a number of researchers have created two groups of “Maori” (e.g. Chapple, 1999; Kukutai, 2001). The first are those who recorded only Maori as an ethnic identity. These are usually described as “sole Maori”. The second group reported Maori as one ethnic identity, but also recorded a further identity (or identities). These are generally referred to as “mixed Maori”. In the next section on intermarriage this system of classification is used. However, it is worth keeping in mind that “mixed Maori” under a different system of prioritised naming would not have been classified as Maori. Many could, for example, be classified as “mixed European”, or “mixed Pacific Island” group. If the naming prioritisation were based on European being the highest order group, many would be reclassified as belonging to a “mixed European” ethnic group.

Finally, in New Zealand, as in other countries, there is a natural tendency amongst official agencies to want to develop single measures of ethnicity across data collections and to not change questions over time. However, in these ongoing debates about ethnicity it is worth keeping in mind the warning of Smelser, Wilson and Mitchell (2001) that:

- (1) there is no single master descriptor or measurement
- (2) different descriptors and measures should be used according to the analytical purpose at hand
- (3) whatever descriptor or measure (or whatever combination) is used, it should be regarded as a contingent analytic strategy rather than a reflection of some fixed social reality

Ethnic Intermarriage

Background

There is an increasing interest in ethnic intermarriage in most industrialised countries. This reflects rising rates of intermarriage in many countries including the U.S. (Snipp, 1997) and Australia (Birrell, 2000). While much of the early work in the U.S. focused on intermarriage among people with European ancestry (e.g. Kennedy, 1944), a wide range of groups are now considered. Currently this includes intermarriage by groups who have traditionally had very high rates of outmarriage, for example Native Americans, through to those with low rates such as blacks and whites (Kennedy, 2002; Korgen, 1998). While much of the attention in the U.S. focuses on so-called “biracial” people (e.g. Korgen), other researchers are delving into much more complex patterns of intermarriage (Waters, 2000). In addition, in the U.S. there is some movement away from a focus on minority-majority intermarriage toward complex inter-minority marriages, such as Afro-Amerasians (Williams and Thornton, 1998). In Australia, Birrell shows the high and growing rate of intermarriage by aboriginal people.⁶⁷ In a subsequent paper, Birrell and Hirst (2002) note also that intermarriage helps widen the economic base of Aboriginal families.⁶⁸

While intermarriage between a range of ethnic groups in New Zealand is of potential interest, this section focuses on intermarriage between Maori and non-Maori.⁶⁹ This is for three reasons. First, Walker (1997: 81), in a review of “gaps” in New Zealand social science, identifies marriage between Maori and non-Maori as an important issue. Second, no social scientist has recently studied this form of partnership between Maori and non-Maori. Third, after European, Maori are the largest one-digit ethnic group and, of all ethnic groups, has the highest rate of outmarriage.

Historically, in New Zealand there have been a number of studies that have discussed marriage between Maori and non-Maori (Ausubel, 1960; Beaglehole and Beaglehole, 1946; Belich, 1996; Butterworth and Mako, 1989; Harré, 1968; Metge, 1967, 1976;

⁶⁷ Birrell compares Aboriginal outmarriage rates with those of Blacks in the United States and notes that the Aboriginal rates are very high. However, a better comparison would have been with the indigenous populations of the United States. Kennedy (2002) notes that in the United States an estimated seven percent of married black men have non-black wives, while Birrell reports that in the mid 1990s of those married couples with a black partner, in 91 percent both partners were black. In contrast, 1990 census data reported by Kennedy shows that in the 25-34 age group 53 percent of Native American husbands and 54 percent of wives had white spouses (ibid). Waters (2000) notes that when determining ethnic intermarriage it can also be important to have information on whether a person is foreign born. In the United States foreign-born blacks have higher rates of intermarriage, while the reverse is true for Asians.

⁶⁸ Birrell and Hirst (2002: 28) finish their paper on ethnic intermarriage with a warning to researchers and policy makers who want to understand disparities between ethnic groups. That is “[a]ssessments of Aboriginal issues in Australia which generalise across the universe of those who identity as Aboriginal obscure, rather than illuminate, the search for answers”.

⁶⁹ Miscegenation is a wider issue than marriage, whether legal or defacto.

Ritchie, 1963; Vaughan, 1964).⁷⁰ Metge (1967), using 1950s data, reports on the proportion of Maori children with a European parent, which is one indicator of the level of intermarriage between Maori and European. In a specific, but short, discussion of intermarriage in her book, Metge (p. 301) notes that “[i]n the 1970s intermarriage has become so relatively common that it no longer attracts particular interest or public attention”. These studies suggest that while there are examples of resistance amongst some groups of Maori and non-Maori to intermarriage, in recent decades there has been a high level of acceptance within communities and families for such marriage. Metge (1976) reports examples of parents expressing concern about the intermarriage of their children, but with these attitudes breaking down when the parents got to know the chosen partner.

Although not specifically studying intermarriage, Butterworth and Mako (1989: 1) argue that all Maori have some degree of non-Maori ancestry. This suggests high rates of historical intermarriage.

In his book on Maori, Pool (1991) directly discusses the high historical rate of ethnic marriage. He notes that the (p. 4):

Maori population history is clearly interlocked with that of Pakeha New Zealanders. There have been 8-9 generations of co-residence and intermarriage with post-1769 immigrant populations.⁷¹

However the topic of intermarriage is not analysed in any great depth and the book contains no indexed item on inter-marriage.

Harré (1968) has produced the most detailed empirical work on ethnic intermarriage. He used Auckland marriage registration data and shows that, in 1960, 3.6 percent of Pakeha married a Maori, while 42 percent of Maori married a Pakeha. He notes that these are lower percentages than random sorting would predict. He also presents historical registration data that indicate (although based on low numbers) that from 1890 through to 1960 there was an overall strong increase in outmarriage by Maori.⁷² His data show that in 1960 it was more common for a Pakeha man to have a Maori wife than for a Maori man to have a Pakeha wife. However, this imbalance was lower than that found in 1950. He also found that immigrant men were more likely to have a Maori wife than locally born men. He also studied a group of intermarriages that took place in 1925 and examined how many had divorced by 1961. While warning readers that his numbers were very small, he suggests that such mixed marriages did not seem to be particularly likely to break down relative to marriage within ethnic groups.

⁷⁰ In the first volume of the history of New Zealand Belich (1996) contains a detailed discussion of Maori inter-marriage, which covers the period up to about 1900. But the subject is absent from the second volume that takes readers from 1900 to the present day (Belich, 2001).

⁷¹ Pool (1991: 4) nevertheless goes on to state “[i]n spite of this interdependence New Zealand has also seen two very different population histories: the Maori, and the Pakeha, the latter a population predominantly of European descent”.

⁷² Although there was a low point in 1910.

Harré's empirical study of Maori intermarriage was conducted over three decades ago and it is surprising that no major study on ethnic intermarriage has been carried out since this time.⁷³ Even the base information is lacking. Statistics New Zealand has, to date, published no information on inter-ethnic marriage and families. This is a major gap, and is in contrast to the U.S. where data on interethnic marriage is regularly published.

Despite the lack of recent research on the topic of ethnic intermarriage, examples can be found of researchers who think the topic is of some importance. "Maori-Pakeha intermarriage as an ameliorating factor in race relations", has been identified by Walker (1997: 81) as one of the significant gaps in knowledge in Maori studies.⁷⁴ Indeed, one might go further than Walker and say that it is one of the more significant knowledge gaps in New Zealand social science.

Intermarriage between ethnic groupings has long been used as an indicator of the process by which groups become more similar and less distinct. It has the potential to bring together "two worlds" (Rata, 2003). Inter-ethnic marriage is an indicator of an important form of bridging social capital. Additionally, inter-ethnic marriage has been seen as a site through which future generations become more acculturated. It has been described as both an indicator, and a final outcome, of acculturation. Yet, it can also result in two (or more) cultures being valued with strengths being drawn from both backgrounds.

Finally, inter-marriage links wider family members. Having an uncle, granddaughter or other relative of a different ethnic group has the potential to make individuals less discriminatory and stereotype driven. The "other" becomes "us" by family ties.

In all societies there are some who oppose ethnic intermarriage. In the U.S., Kennedy argues that as white opposition to white-black intermarriage has weakened, black opposition has become stronger. Kennedy sets out three positions African-Americans have adopted towards white-black marriage. One group, which he suggests is relatively small, argues that such mixing will:

...decrease social segregation, encourage racial open-mindedness, enhance blacks' access to enriching social networks, elevate their status, and empower black women in their interactions with black men by subjecting the latter to greater competition in the marketplace for companionship (p 104).

A second, and, he suggests, the largest group, sees this as purely an issue of personal choice and it is not viewed as "good" or "bad".

⁷³ Callister (1998), in a paper focussing on the role of education in assortative mating, briefly touches on interethnic marriage using data from the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, Kukutai (2001) provides some basic data from the 1996 census on marriage between Maori and non-Maori as an introduction to more detailed data on the transmission of ethnicity to children.

⁷⁴ Linked to understanding intermarriage, Walker also suggests another gap in Maori Studies is "the extent of the identification of children of mixed marriages as Māori" (p. 81). This topic is explored by both Callister (2003) and Kukutai (2001).

The third group opposes marriage between blacks and whites. The reasons for this are:

...that it expresses racial disloyalty, suggests disapproval of fellow blacks, undermines black culture, weakens the African-American marriage market, and feeds racist mythologies, particularly the canard that blacks lack pride of race (p. 105).

This group has often been vocal in their opposition to black civil rights leaders marrying whites. This has led to slogans such as “[t]alking black and sleeping white” (p. 105). In New Zealand, Awatere (1984: 105) in her book *Maori Sovereignty* also urges Maori to “[t]ake each other as partners”.

It is doubtless for some of the reasons listed above, in combination with the widespread social value judgments in New Zealand that ethno-cultural differences are nevertheless good and ethno-cultural assimilation - whether it is caused by grass roots interactions of people or public policy imposed from on high - as bad, that so little recent New Zealand social science has been undertaken on a topic as important as ethnic intermarriage. Whatever the merits of the political value judgments, a failure to examine the issue leads to poor social science and public policy.

Based on their work in the U.S. Lieberman and Waters (1988: 164-165) argue that whether ethnic intermarriage takes place depends on four factors.

- The existence of formal legal barriers to intermarriage or of traditional ethnic taboos against intermarriage.
- The relative availability of partners from within and without the group. This is influenced by (a) group size relative to the total population (b) the distribution of groups geographically and (c) the degree of segregation or contact that particular ethnic groups have with each other.
- Informal attitudes and views about ethnic intermarriage.
- The degree of overlap between ethnic membership and non-ethnic characteristics. For example, class based endogamy may seem like ethnic based endogamy if particular ethnic groups are concentrated in particular socio-economic classes.

Some of these factors are not independent of each other. For example, education is an important factor both in determining social class and in determining earnings. Earnings, in turn, often help determine where an individual lives.

Maori and the groups making up the Pacific Peoples and Asian ethnic groups are relatively small in terms of the total New Zealand population. This will tend to encourage higher rates of inter-ethnic marriage by individuals within these groups.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Qian and Lichter (2001) make the point that if population sizes are quite different then it is not possible by looking at intermarriage rates to assess whether groups exhibit discriminatory behaviour relative to another group. For example, in New Zealand it would be possible for 100 percent of Pacific Peoples to have a European partner but, given the much larger size of the European ethnic group, relatively few Europeans would be able to have a Pacific Peoples partner.

Unlike the U.S., in New Zealand there have never been any laws that prevented ethnic inter marriages. In the U.S., Foeman and Nance (1999) report that 40 of the 50 states had, at various times, statutes preventing ethnic intermarriage. Even when such marriages became legal, Foeman and Nance suggest that early researchers tended to see such marriages as problematic “deficit models”. Examples given by these researchers include blacks marrying not for “love” but for reasons of status or whites wanting to make a social statement. However, generally when concerns are being expressed about ethnic intermarriage these focus on issues of intermarriage of people with different skin colours. For instance, in the U.S. Korgen (1998) argues there is little concern about mixing amongst persons of “colour” such as Native Americans and Blacks, Latinos and Blacks

The level of inter-ethnic marriage will depend, in part, on the classification systems used to define ethnic groups and the level of aggregation. For example, in the U.S., if the broad “European” ancestry category is used, then there is much marriage within the ethnic group. But when intermarriage is analysed at a finer level some important differences emerge. For instance, in first half of the 20th century in America there was relatively little inter-ethnic marriage between Western and Northern Europeans and those from Southern, Central and Eastern European backgrounds.

Labov and Jacobs (1998) argue that family history is often ignored in most studies of ethnic intermarriage. Most studies treat individuals as having only one ethnic group, therefore ignoring the mixed ancestry that they may already be bringing to an inter-ethnic marriage. For example, discussions of black-white marriages in the U.S. often ignore the fact that one or both partners might already have mixed ancestry.

Educational level is an important variable in marriage markets in industrialised countries (Mare, 1991). New Zealand research using 1986 and 1996 census data on the partner choices of couples in the 25-34 age group show that both partners tend to have similar broad levels of education (Callister, 1998). While not the primary focus of the research, it also showed that in this age group while marriage between Maori was much higher than would be expected by random sorting, there was still a high level of outmarriage by Maori. This outmarriage was higher amongst well-educated Maori. Given that historically fewer Maori than non-Maori have gained higher educational qualifications, this further lowers the pool of potential similarly qualified partners for those Maori who have a higher qualification.

In the U.S., in 1990, black men were more likely to marry outside their ethnic group than black women and ethnic intermarriage increased with level of education. The 1990 census data show that 6 percent of Black men aged 25-34 who were high school dropouts were married to non-blacks, but that this rose to 13 percent for men with some graduate education (Anon, 1997b). For black women, the comparable figures were 3 percent and 6 percent. Crowder and Tolnay (2000) now talk about a “marriage squeeze” for black women, with the effects particularly acute for well-educated Black women. This is based on the finding that well-educated black men are increasing their outmarriage rates, “leaving those with the poorest socio-economic characteristics to constitute the pool of

Black men available to unmarried Black women”. At the same time, and for a variety of reasons, well-educated white men are not tending to marry black women (p. 804).

U.S. research also indicates that children of mixed ethnic marriages are themselves more likely to intermarry (Lieberson and Waters, 1988). Thus intermarriage becomes self-reinforcing. As the pool of individuals with mixed ancestry increases then there is a greater chance of marrying someone with at least some mixed ancestry. However, it is worth keeping in mind that marriage can alter ethnic affiliation. Waters (2000) draws on lifecourse research to show that when some people marry they change their ancestry to match their spouse. According to Waters, this raises the issue of whether studies that are trying to assess whether ethnicity affects the choice of partner may be measuring the opposite phenomena. That is, the choice of partner affects an individual’s choice of ethnic identity.

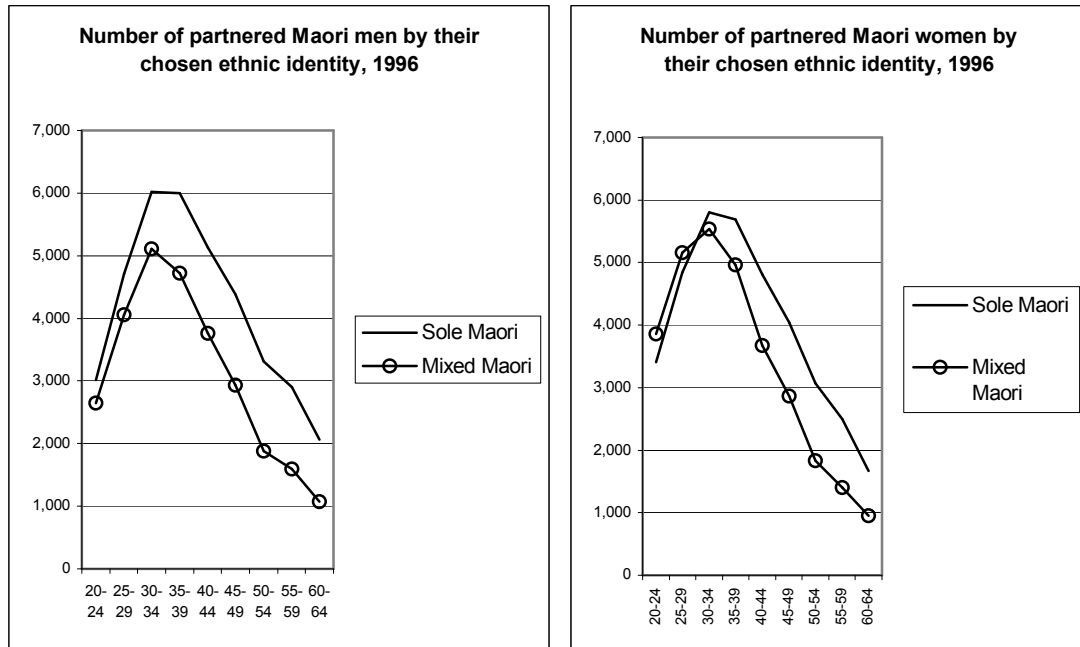
New Zealand census data

The following data show the ethnic intermarriage rates of Maori men and women aged 20-64. They are taken from the 1996 census. They include both married and defacto couples. The “not specified” group is excluded in both the numerator and denominator in all the calculations.

In viewing these data it needs to be kept in mind that there are two stages to assortative mating. The first stage involves whether or not someone actually forms a couple. Research indicates that ethnicity is associated with differing rates of marriage in this first stage. Amongst men in their early 20s, 1996 census data show that sole Maori were the most likely of the main ethnic groups to live in a couple household. However, by their mid 30s through to their 60s, this group was the least likely to live in a couple (Callister, 2000).

Figures 2 and 3 show the number of Maori men and Maori women who lived in heterosexual couple households in 1996. It shows Maori who identified themselves as solely Maori (sole Maori) and those who indicated Maori as one of their ethnic groups (mixed Maori). The low numbers in the 20-30 age group simply reflect delayed couple formation and these lower numbers need to be kept in mind when assessing trends in this age group. Both figures show that in the young age groups there were nearly equal numbers of sole and mixed Maori individuals living in couples, but in the older age groups sole Maori outnumber mixed Maori.

Figures 2 and 3



Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996

Table 3 shows the percentage of partnered Maori (sole and mixed groups combined) men and women who had a Maori partner (sole or mixed Maori). The patterns are almost the same for both men and women. In the middle years, around half of Maori men and women had a Maori partner, but this rises slightly in the older age groups. This represents a significant level of outmarriage from the wider Maori ethnic group with about half of this group having a non-Maori partner. In 1960, Harré (1968) found that intermarriage rates in Auckland were higher for younger Maori, but these 1996 data show rates are not as sensitive to age. In 1960, it appears that young people were breaking new ground in their marriage patterns, whereas now the patterns of outmarriage by younger cohorts are similar to that of their parents.

Table 3: Percentage of Maori men and Maori women with a Maori partner, 1996

Age of Maori men and women	% of Maori men with a Maori partner	% of Maori women with a Maori partner
20-24	56	55
25-29	50	51
30-34	49	51
35-39	50	50
40-44	50	48
45-49	51	49
50-54	52	52
55-59	55	56
60-64	61	54

Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996

Note: For the numbers in each cell of this and the following tables please contact the author. In addition, a copy of the full database will be supplied if requested.

Figures 4 and 5 show the association between education and having a Maori partner. Again, these figures show the whole Maori ethnic group with sole and mixed Maori categories combined. Those Maori men and women with no formal qualification were more likely to have a Maori partner.⁷⁶ It is likely that there is some geographic influence underlying this pattern. The higher outmarriage by educated people is in line with trends in inter-ethnic marriage in the U.S. A more detailed breakdown by educational qualifications shows this pattern to be even more pronounced amongst those with university qualifications (Callister, 1998).

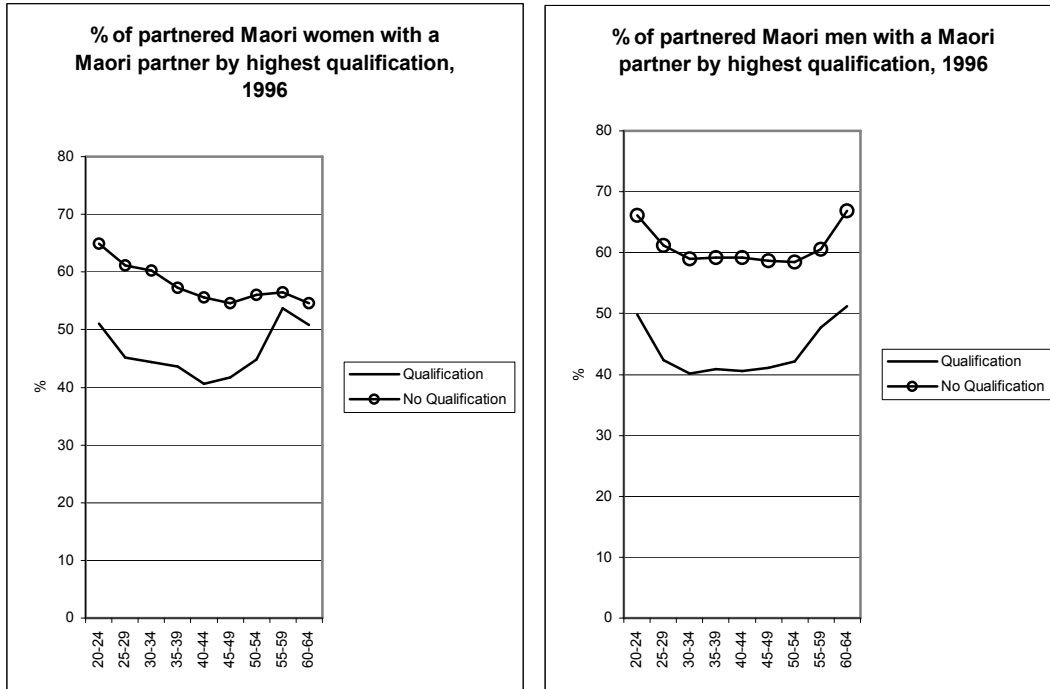
The data for the total group Maori (sole plus mixed Maori) show some differences to the U.S. experience for blacks and whites, but strong similarities for whites and Native Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998).⁷⁷ Unlike the situation for blacks, in 1996 there was very little difference between outmarriage rate of Maori men and women and in the U.S. between Native American men and women.⁷⁸ While the 1996 data include both married and defacto couples, these data also seem to be in contrast to Harré's findings for Auckland in 1950 and 1960. At this time it was more common for a Pakeha man to have a Maori wife than for a Maori man to have a Pakeha wife. If, despite his small sample size, Harré's data was somewhat representative of patterns of intermarriage across the whole of New Zealand, then this suggests the gendered nature of intermarriage has substantially declined.

⁷⁶ When broken down by sole and mixed Maori, this relationship between education and outmarriage holds for all age groups amongst men. For female sole and mixed Maori this relationship holds also in most age groups. However, in the 55-59 and 60-64 age groups there is a slightly higher chance that sole Maori women will have a Maori partner when they are qualified rather than unqualified (for the 55-59 age group 70 percent of qualified sole Maori had a Maori partner versus 67 percent of mixed Maori. For the 60-64 age group, the figures are 67 percent versus 65 percent).

⁷⁷ The official U.S. data are only for legally married couples. Harris and Ono (2000) note that the rate of interracial partnering is higher among cohabitations.

⁷⁸ In New Zealand there are some groups where intermarriage rates are quite different for men and women. For example, census data shows that Asian women are far more likely to have a European partner than Asian men (Callister, forthcoming).

Figures 4 and 5



Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996

Tables 4 to 7 divide partnered men and women into those who are sole Maori and those who are mixed Maori. They then show the percentage of each group who had a sole Maori or a mixed Maori partner as well as a total for those with a Maori partner.

In each age group, sole Maori women and men are far more likely to have a Maori partner than are mixed Maori women and men. If a sole Maori does have a Maori partner it is also far more likely to be a sole Maori partner (like themselves). Mixed Maori women and men are also slightly more likely to have a mixed Maori partner, again partners like themselves. The data suggest that for Maori with more than one ethnic group, there is a far greater chance of “marrying out” and that even when they marry a Maori partner this partner is also likely to be part of the mixed Maori group.

Table 4: Percentage of sole Maori women with a Maori partner, 1996*

Female age group	% with a sole Maori partner	% with a mixed Maori partner	Total % with a Maori partner
20-24	56	12	69
25-29	55	11	65
30-34	56	10	66
35-39	54	9	64
40-44	55	8	62
45-49	55	7	62
50-54	58	7	65
55-59	60	8	68
60-64	58	7	65

Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996

*Note: Due to rounding, totals in this and the following three tables may not exactly match the sum of the two sub-categories.

Table 5: Percentage of mixed Maori women with a Maori partner, 1996

Female age group	% with a sole Maori partner	% with a mixed Maori partner	Total % with a Maori partner
20-24	19	25	43
25-29	16	22	38
30-34	14	21	36
35-39	14	20	34
40-44	13	17	30
45-49	13	18	31
50-54	14	17	31
55-59	14	20	34
60-64	13	20	33

Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996

Table 6: Percentage of sole Maori men with a Maori partner, 1996

Male age group	% with a sole Maori partner	% with a mixed Maori partner	Total % with a Maori partner
20-24	49	18	67
25-29	48	16	64
30-34	48	13	62
35-39	50	13	63
40-44	53	11	63
45-49	55	10	65
50-54	56	8	64
55-59	59	8	68
60-64	65	10	75

Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996

Table 7: Percentage of mixed Maori men with a Maori partner, 1996

Male age group	% with a sole Maori partner	% with a mixed Maori partner	Total % with a Maori partner
20-24	14	29	43
25-29	10	25	35
30-34	11	22	33
35-39	11	22	32
40-44	11	20	31
45-49	11	18	29
50-54	12	20	31
55-59	13	21	33
60-64	14	20	34

Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996

Many of these couples have children (Callister, forthcoming; Kukutai, 2001). While the children are dependent, the parents will generally determine their ethnicities. However, as they age, these children will be determining their own ethnicities in everyday life and in social surveys. In the decades ahead they will be part of the population projections that are now being made. The intermarriage data presented here suggest that in the future a significant proportion of individuals who had Maori parent(s) will be able to select from more than one ethnic ancestry group.

Population projections, social policy and our emerging multi-ethnic society

In a paper on challenges to ethnic identities, Waters (2000) notes that with continuing migration the future composition of the U.S. population will reflect how new immigrants and their children identify themselves; how much intermarriage there is; and how children of ethnic intermarriage identify themselves. She also notes that history should make us cautious about ethnic projections. She observes that in the 19th century the Irish were seen as a separate race from other Europeans. At this time, the stereotype of the Irish population was of the group having high rates of crime; a lack of education; and negative family values. Waters suggests that if population predictions had been made in the early 20th century, the growth in Irish, along with Southern and Central Europeans, would have made white Protestants a future minority. Yet, according to Waters, such predictions failed to take into account both the decline in ethnic boundaries between Europeans and the rise in education and income amongst Irish and other groups. She comments that “[t]hese social and cultural changes have interacted with ethnic intermarriage to produce an ethnic fluidity that would have been unthinkable then” (p. 1736).

Both the increasing fluidity of ethnic/racial boundaries and the problems of classification systems can be seen in U.S. media discussions. In an article in the *New York Times* (Clemetson, 2003), the headlines announce that the number of Hispanics now outnumbers blacks. The political and social implications of this shift were then discussed. However, later in the article it was noted that the number of Americans who declared

themselves as black "in combination with one or more other races" is actually slightly higher than overall figure for Hispanics. Based on projections prepared by the Population Research Center in Portland, Oregon, and highlighted in the *Atlantic Monthly*, by the end of the century just under 40 percent of African-Americans will claim mixed ancestry. Over two thirds of Latinos are also expected to claim more than one ethnic background (Rodriguez, 2003). These articles illustrate the increasing problem faced by U.S. demographers, policy makers and the media in accurately counting and reporting the current population and in making population projections.

Projections of the total New Zealand population are subject to considerable error over the short term, let alone over 50 years. The potential for error relates to the fact that such projections involve major assumptions about fertility and mortality rates, as well as migration flows. Yet, such projections are routinely made and are used when debating topics like the sustainability of public pension schemes (Callister and Rose, 2001; Stephenson and Scobie, 2002). Projections of sub-populations are subject to even higher errors, particularly given that assumptions also need to be made about how people will record their ethnicity in future times. Even in short time spans errors can be significant. The Maori population was estimated by Statistics New Zealand at 598,000 in December 2000, while the actual census outcome in March 2001 was around 523,000. This error, over just a matter of months, is not small.

This paper has already demonstrated that there are high rates of inter-marriage between Maori and non-Maori ethnic groups. The data on the Pacific Island Peoples group also suggest a relatively high rate of intermarriage. Moreover, given trends in the U.S., it can be expected that Asian migrants will also increasingly intermarry with other New Zealanders.⁷⁹ However, recent ethnic population projections in New Zealand have been problematic because of the prioritisation principle. Primarily on the basis of prioritisation of ethnicity to single groups, Maori and Pacific populations have been forecast to significantly increase their shares of the population.

Chapple (2000) provides an example of the problem of using a process of ethnic prioritisation in projections. He notes that Te Puni Kokiri (2000: 14) have calculated youth dependency rates for Maori by dividing the number of Maori children by the number of Maori adults. They argue that this "provide[s] a crude indication of how many people in the core working age groups may be supporting those in age groups that require financial assistance". As Chapple points out, one problem with the calculation is that many children who have been prioritised in the Maori category have non-Maori parents. While relatively few New Zealanders have Maori ancestors far more will have descendents who can claim some Maori ancestry. For instance, Rata (2002:26) notes that "...all my ancestors are Pakeha and all my descendants are Maori..."

Another example of the problems of prioritisation in population projections can be found in an article on racism and cultural intolerance published by the Human Rights Commission (2002: 6). This article notes:

⁷⁹ Rodriguez (2003: 96) notes that, in the U.S., while only 13 percent of foreign-born Asians marry non-Asians, 34 percent of second-generation and 54 percent of third-generation Asian Americans do.

The key to addressing racism and the problems that come with it is education – starting in schools. New Zealand’s most ethnically diverse group is our youth. The population of Pakeha youth continues to fall while Maori and other groups rise.

Yet, much of the projected growth in the proportion of the population who are Maori is a consequence of the already demonstrated very high rates of outmarriage by Maori and the (implicit) allocation of the children of this inter-marriage (mixed ethnic people) to the Maori group via ethnic prioritisation. The often quoted “browning” of New Zealand, could easily, through a different system of prioritisation, be seen as a “whitening” of the Maori (and Pacific) populations.⁸⁰ However, both these conceptualisations are problematic as they are based on increasingly outdated concepts of single ethnic identities. More helpful is the concept of a complex emerging society where a significant number of people claim to have dual or multi-ethnic ancestry. The Human Rights Commission’s education program appears to be based on concepts of single prioritised ethnicities and tends to perpetuate myths of pure ethnic/racial groups. While clearly a range of strategies are required for helping breaking down racism, one objective could be assisting the growing number of dual or multi-ethnic youth take pride in being able to draw on a range of ethnic affiliations.

Other examples of policy-related research that fail to acknowledge a high rate of intermarriage in New Zealand can easily be found. In such papers there is a tendency to see groups as being very separate and having quite distinct characteristics. For example, a paper with the title *Social Capital and Voluntary Activity: Giving and Sharing in Māori and Non-Māori Society* portrays distinct differences between the way Maori and non-Maori individuals operate in terms of giving and sharing (Robinson and Williams, 2001). While at the extremes such differences in attitudes and actions are likely to be found, in the Robinson and Williams paper no consideration is given to the behaviour of people who span both ethnic groups either through being multi-ethnic individuals or through living in a mixed ethnic household and therefore potentially exhibiting a mixture of behaviours. There may in fact be three or even potentially more, broad groups rather than the two identified by Robinson and Williams. The three possible groups are those that exhibit primarily Maori ways of giving and sharing; those who exhibit characteristics of non-Maori; and those who have a mixture of characteristics.⁸¹ Again, the data for young people in New Zealand suggest that in the future the first and last groups would be of about equal size.

This idea that Maori and non-Maori have very distinctive characteristics has been discussed more fully by Rata (2003). She sees this “two worlds” approach as culturalism or the ideological construction of cultural identity for political purposes. According to Rata, this two-worlds approach defines the experiences of Maori and Pakeha solely in terms of ethnic differences. She argues that the process of “ethnic boundarisation” which supports the concept of two separate worlds has been successful “[d]espite extensive

⁸⁰ In the U.S. commentators also often talk about the “browning” or “creolization” of America (Kennedy, 2002).

⁸¹ Even this simple three-way breakdown assumes there is little variation of behaviour within groups.

Maori-Pakeha intermarriage, and the widespread acceptance that all Maori have one or more Pakeha ancestors” (p. 22).

Over and above the guarantees provided by the Treaty of Waitangi’s provisions of partnership and participation, the “two worlds” approach strongly supports the idea that a “Maori perspective” is needed in research, policy making and service delivery. Past and present ethnic intermarriage does not undermine the need for a range of perspectives in all these areas. But it does mean that “both worlds” will, at times, influence what is commonly seen as a Maori perspective. Intermarriage will also, of course, at times influence what might be seen as a Pakeha perspective.

Ethnic intermarriage also raises some difficult issues when social policies use ethnicity as a means of targeting. In discussing affirmative action policies in the U.S., Korgen (1998: 104) questions programs that were devised before the biracial baby boom began in 1967.⁸² She asks whether these biracial baby boomers should qualify for affirmative action. Korgen goes on to say:

Today, whether they appear black, mixed racial, or white, biracial persons do qualify for affirmative action. All persons who declare themselves to be a racial minority are eligible for preferential consideration. Under affirmative action, both corporations and certain individuals benefit from ambiguous racial designations. Companies meet their quotas more easily when persons with mixed race backgrounds qualify for affirmative action. There is a danger, however, that mixed racial Americans may be the first to fill positions set aside for monoracial minorities. Because they may appear “whiter”, biracial employees may be more palatable for an employer under pressure to hire racial minorities.

Korgen concludes that the increasing multi-racial population in the U.S. undermines traditional affirmative action policies.⁸³

Waters (2000: 1737) notes that in the U.S. there are already problems with ethnically targeted social programs:

American Indians may be a model for what we might expect with other groups as intermixing and reporting of intermixing grow. Much of the growth in the self-identified American Indian population in recent decades has been due to “potential” American Indians, previously self-identified as White, claiming American Indian racial identity. To receive certain government benefits, Indians have to “prove” their identity – either through blood quantum certification or tribal enrollment in a federally recognized tribe. Self-identification as an Indian is not enough. This is an extreme model of what might happen in the future if the rates of intermarriage become very high and identity choices become unstable across racial groups and if the government continues to allocate some resources to individuals because of their racial and ethnic identities.

⁸² In a footnote, Kukutai (2001: 29) outlines that, unlike the U.S., in New Zealand there is no statutory basis for granting preferential treatment to Maori. She notes Maori and Pacific Peoples quotas in some tertiary education institutions are the exception rather than the rule. Historically, there are examples where Maori have been discriminated against. For instance, Pearson (1984: 211) records how in the early 1930s Maori unemployed received lower benefits than Pakeha because it was argued that “they could live off the land”.

⁸³ In New Zealand, it would be possible to explore whether mixed Maori and Pacific Peoples were over-represented in total, and in key positions, in the Public Service relative to sole Maori and Pacific Peoples because the State Services Commission collects up to two ethnic groups when assessing the effect of EEO policies (State Services Commission, 2002).

O'Regan (2001), while strongly supporting the idea of self identity through cultural affiliation, nevertheless notes that to receive benefits from Kāi Tahu, recipients need to prove their ancestry (see footnote 15). When resources are at stake, biological links, through ancestry, often override cultural affiliations.

While generally supporting the benefits of ethnic intermarriage in the U.S., Kennedy (2002: 110) draws on the experience of ethnic intermarriage in Brazil to raise the potential for a “pigmentocracy that continues to privilege whiteness.” He suggests there is the possibility this will be an outcome of increased ethnic intermarriage in the U.S. He goes on to note:

Various people of color – Latinos, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and light skinned African-Americans – could well intermarry with whites in increasingly large numbers and join them in a de facto alliance against darker-skinned blacks, who might remain racial outcasts even in a more racially mixed society.

While not specifically relating this to affirmative action policies, this concept of “pigmentocracy” raises the issue of whether such policies need to specifically focus on factors, such as skin colour, that potentially lead to discrimination by employers, landlords, and other potential gatekeepers.

In their paper on ethnic intermarriage in Australia, Birrell and Hirst (2002: 26) also ask questions about policies targeted at the indigenous population:

People are free, of course, to identify themselves as they wish, but should government programmes for Aborigines extend to all the children of the mixed households in the capital cities? Say a household is made up of an Aboriginal man of mixed descent (one of his four grandparents may have been Aboriginal) and a woman of non-Aboriginal descent. If their children identify as Aboriginal should they be eligible for special programmes to benefit Aborigines?

However, in such discussions there needs to be a separation between policies targeted by ethnicity that are developed by government and those of “private clubs”. Maori, Pacific Island, Indian, Chinese or any other ethnic groups can set up institutions that are the equivalent of private clubs and can chose their own criteria over the allocation of their own resources. Ethnic ancestral links can be a valid determinant of membership of these clubs and the allocation of their resources.

Ethnic intermarriage adds complexity to investigations of discrimination and/or disadvantage and the association of such disadvantage with broad measures of ethnicity. It also adds complexity to the design of policies, including affirmative action type policies, such as tertiary education quotas, aimed at helping disadvantaged groups and individuals. This does not mean that ethnicity data should no longer be collected, analysed and reported on. But it does mean that these types of data need to be carefully scrutinised in order to better assess what factors result in disadvantage and how policies should be designed to overcome such disadvantage. Already in New Zealand Chapple (2000) has raised the idea that the disadvantage amongst Maori is concentrated in a particular subset, that is those who identify only as Maori; who have no educational

qualifications; and who live outside of major urban centres.⁸⁴ As Baehler (2002) notes, this idea that a particular sub group are “truly disadvantaged” while another group have moved into the middle class parallels the work of Wilson (1987) in the U.S. Further research is needed to explore this hypothesis. More complex data collections also need to be developed in order to understand what factors influence outcomes for individuals and groups. As an example, the 2002 Detroit Area Study, undertaken by researchers from Michigan University, requires interviewers to rate the respondent on a colour chart (Hill, 2002). This, along with questions on both “race” and “ethnicity”, potentially allows researchers who use such methods to test the concepts such as the possible emergence of a “pigmentocracy”. Finally, when social policy analysts are considering factors that lead to disadvantage it needs to be remembered that self-assessed ethnicity is only one aspect of the creation of ethnicity in a society. Other people are also creating ethnic categories in which to place individuals. In a U.S context, Harris and Sim (2001: 25) warn that in order to fully understand “racial inequality and our ability to enforce civil rights law” we need to understand more fully the level of mismatch between how we view ourselves and how others view us.

Conclusion

Increasingly both physical and social scientists are rejecting the concept of pure races. This is because phenotypic variations between races are swamped by phenotypic variation amongst races. Intermarriage is a key reason for this variation. In New Zealand we have gone further than many other countries and have rejected the concept of race when collecting data and undertaking research. Yet, as Collins (2001a: 13) has noted, “analytical understanding of ethnicity is one of the weak spots in the social sciences”. Throughout the world concepts of ethnicity are undergoing continuous transformation. The difficulty in finding a universally accepted definition of ethnicity can be seen in national and international research literature on ethnicity as well as submissions to Statistics New Zealand regular reviews of ethnic statistics. However, while discussions of the complexity of ethnic identification can now regularly be found in the mainstream U.S. media they are not common in New Zealand.

In New Zealand official definitions of ethnicity now revolve around culture. Yet, for many New Zealanders factors including nationality, descent, country of birth, religion and the expression of distinctive physical characteristics, including skin colour, continue to influence the definition of ethnicity among individuals and groups. Issues of descent often come to the fore when ethnic classifications determine resource allocations, and there is an ongoing debate about how important descent is in health research. It is also becoming clear that on some key influences on ethnicity, such as culture, there are as strong *within* group variations as there are *across* group differences. Like the concept of

⁸⁴ The New Zealand Treasury, while recognising that Maori and Pacific Peoples are over-represented amongst the disadvantaged in New Zealand, also recognise the need to target within these overall groups. They argue that policy makers should place the highest priority on initiatives which are most likely to improve outcomes for those Maori and Pacific peoples whose outcomes are currently worse than the population median (Treasury, 2001).

pure races, the concept of pure ethnic groups is being substantially undermined. This does not mean that the collection of ethnic data should be discontinued. It simply means that great care is needed when collecting and using ethnicity data.

This paper has explored some aspects of collecting and reporting on ethnicity data in both New Zealand and the U.S. It suggests that some aspects of the way in which Statistics New Zealand has been collecting and reporting ethnic data are outdated and disguise the increasing diversity and complexity of New Zealand society. It also shows that measurement of ethnic groups by Statistics New Zealand directly and indirectly creates ethnicity by providing people with categories under which to classify themselves, and by validating or not validating perspectives on ethnic identity. In other words, the way Statistics New Zealand, as well as other collectors of data, measure ethnicity both *creates* and *reflects* ethnic groups.

Statistics New Zealand recognises many of the problems with ethnic data and, as a result of its latest review of ethnicity statistics, has suggested some changes in how data is collected and reported (Statistics New Zealand, 2003). It has also recommended further long-term research on many aspects of the collection of ethnicity data. This parallels research being carried out in many other countries.⁸⁵

One of the key recommendations by Statistics New Zealand is that “New Zealander” should be allowed as a valid response to the ethnicity question at the most detailed level of classification. That is to say, New Zealanders should be allowed to construct their ethnicity on the basis of their nationality, or cultural affiliation with New Zealand, in the same way as non-New Zealanders. This is likely to provide useful information on social cohesion, social capital, national identity and cultural similarities, which, as social scientists, we are interested in as much as we are interested in differences. Those people who have a very strong non-national ethnic identity will naturally retain the right to choose only a non-New Zealand national ethnic group or to note this in combination with the New Zealander category.

Statistics New Zealand, however, has proposed that unless a person indicates another ethnic group (such as Maori or Chinese) they will be coded to European at the one-digit level. It is unclear at this stage how a respondent will be coded should they indicate three groups. This coding decision will still be of concern to a group of New Zealanders, many who feel no connection to Europe. This separation from Europe may be through having complex mixed ancestry (such as having more than the three ethnic groups Statistics New Zealand is recommending collecting) or through living in New Zealand for a number of generations. Like Canada, it is likely there will be an increasing tendency for long-term New Zealand settler populations, other than the original Maori settlers, to see themselves as “indigenous”. It is therefore likely that there will be continuing calls for a one-digit “New Zealand” ethnic group to be reported in official statistics. In parallel, it is likely there will be continuing debate as to the name of such a group, specifically whether it is called Pakeha, New Zealander or some other name. There is concern amongst some

⁸⁵ For examples of the research agenda in the U.S. see <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-03-057.html>

researchers that classifying non-Maori as New Zealanders will undermine the identity and rights of Maori. Further research and debate is needed on this issue. Such research and debate is an important aspect of the ongoing construction of national identity.

Allowing “New Zealander” as an ethnic identification, particularly at a one-digit level, potentially places more value on collecting ancestry data across the whole population. Therefore, Statistics New Zealand should investigate whether the ancestry question should cover all of the population. If it did include such a question in the census, it should be open ended and not direct respondents to particular groups.

New Zealand has been one of the first countries to allow respondents to choose more than one ethnic group when completing the Census of Population and Dwellings. Although changes in questions over time have generated differing proportions of multi-ethnic individuals, it is clear from the data that the group who affiliate with more than one ethnic group is significant. That people can claim more than one ethnic identity reflects past and present ethnic intermarriage. Data from the 1996 census show that such intermarriage is continuing, particularly for those who chose Maori as one or more of their ethnic groups. The incidence of intermarriage between Maori and non-Maori is similar to rates seen amongst indigenous populations in the U.S. and Australia. In New Zealand, the high rate of Maori/non-Maori intermarriage means that, increasingly, the two populations cannot be seen as two entirely distinct groups. Intermarriage brings together “two (or more) worlds” and, for Maori and non-Maori, can be an example of partnership and/or biculturalism at a very personal level.⁸⁶ The data show that mixed Maori are far more likely to have a non-Maori partner than sole Maori. Given that the proportion of adult Maori, and non-Maori, who affiliate with more than one ethnic group is expected to increase in the future, ethnic intermarriage is likely to increase further in the future. This has many implications for social scientists, policy makers and the designers of surveys.

While most people within these groups are aware of the high rate of marriage between Maori and non-Maori, this awareness is often forgotten in policy debates. Instead, concepts of single ethnic groups, with impermeable boundaries, generally come to the fore. While the data, and often personal experience, show that New Zealand is becoming more of a multi-ethnic society, we lack confidence when dealing with multiple ethnic identities. This type of narrow thinking has been encouraged in recent years by the system of ethnic prioritisation used by Statistics New Zealand and, before that, by the recording of single ethnic groups in surveys. If New Zealanders continue to lack confidence about embracing a multi-ethnic society we could have a situation where, based on descent and, ultimately, biology New Zealand may be becoming more of a multi-ethnic society but, in official statistics, might continue to appear more like a society with a number of single ethnic groups.

⁸⁶ In fact, many New Zealand families may live in “three worlds”. These can be the Maori world, the Pakeha world and the global world. For instance, O’Regan (2003) in a radio interview noted how a grandchild, a product itself of historical intermarriage, spans three worlds by living in London and attending a Kohanga Reo at New Zealand House. The New Zealand Diaspora includes families who are ethnically intermarried.

When more than one ethnic group response was first collected in the Census of Population and Dwellings, Statistics New Zealand introduced a system of prioritising the ethnicity of multi-ethnic people. Increasingly, it is recognised that when using large data sets ethnic prioritisation hides, rather than brings to the fore, important social facts. The process of prioritisation has been a key factor behind predictions of a “browning” of New Zealand (or whitening of Maori and Pacific Peoples); projections that unnecessarily simplify our view of how society is changing. Statistics New Zealand now recommends the abandonment of this practice. Rather it is proposes that ethnic reportage from large datasets such as the census include counts of multi-ethnic people. The most important combination is Maori / European, but the combinations Maori / Pacific Peoples and Pacific People / European are also significant.

There does, however, appear to be some argument for the use of some form of prioritisation of individuals affiliating with small target populations when using smaller sample surveys. If prioritisation of ethnic groups continues to be used when reporting data from these surveys, methods such as random allocation of multi-ethnic people to one group should be investigated.

Changes in the census ethnicity question have altered the proportion of people who claim to affiliate with more than one ethnic group. In its draft recommendation from the Review of Ethnicity Statistics, Statistics New Zealand (2003) suggests that the 2001 question be repeated again in 2006. One of the main reasons is to allow researchers to construct time series; a process that is undermined with constant question changes. While gathering time series data is an attractive goal, it should be a subsidiary goal to that of collecting information that best reflects a complex social reality. Statistics New Zealand should develop a simple, open-ended ethnicity question that permits single or multiple responses and that does not direct respondents to either. However, if Statistics New Zealand proceeds to repeat the 2001 question it should make one minor change to the wording. The main instructions on the form should be changed from “which ethnic group do you belong to?” to “which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?” or “which ethnic group or groups do you belong to?”. It is clear that wording of census questions can influence responses and Statistics New Zealand should avoid influencing respondents, even if in a somewhat subtle way, to select a single ethnic group.

The rise of a multi-ethnic New Zealand, whether acknowledged or not, provides a major challenge for the design of social policy aimed at helping overcome disadvantage amongst particular groups. New Zealand ethnicity data needs to be carefully scrutinised by policy makers, and the media, in order to better assess what factors may result in individuals facing disadvantage and how policy should be designed to overcome such disadvantage. Collecting, analysing and reporting more complex multi-ethnic data may help in this process. However, it is increasingly likely that ethnicity, whether based on single or multi-ethnic affiliations, will become a relatively poor predictor of social outcomes. This simply reflects the increasing diversity within groups, whether the group is defined by ethnicity, gender, age or some other single variable. Kukutai (2001) has identified the complexity of the Maori population, and within group differences can also

be found in other populations. This diversity includes much variation in lived cultural practices

Ethnicity is increasingly complex and fluid. This does not mean the collection of ethnicity data should be abandoned, but it does mean that ethnicity statistics need to reflect this increasing complexity and fluidity. In New Zealand, as in other countries, there will be continuing debate as to how ethnicity statistics should be collected, aggregated and reported. Measuring, reporting, discussing and, at times, challenging assumptions about the changing ethnic composition of New Zealand will continue to be an important part of an ongoing process of understanding our identity as individuals, as groups, and as a nation.

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