Māori Demography in Aotearoa New Zealand: Fifty Years On

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Abstract

Writing in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* fifty years ago, budding demographer Ian Pool asked: "When is a Maori a 'Maori' "? His assertion that cultural self-identification was the only credible way to define Māori collectively in official statistics was in stark contrast to the prevailing institutional practice of defining Māori by 'degree of blood.' In this article I use key insights from Ian's paper to reflect on contemporary practices of demography, focusing specifically on the construction of Māori as a discrete population for demographic research, and the use of Māori ethnic identification as an independent variable. I conclude with some thoughts on how official statistics might be changed to better reflect the aspirations and needs of Māori in a post-settlement context.

Introduction

Writing in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (JPS) almost fifty years ago, budding demographer Ian Pool asked: "When is a Maori a 'Maori'? (Pool, 1963). The question was a direct response to the 1961 Hunn Report which documented, in detail, the inconsistent usage of blood quantum and ancestry to define Māori for statistical and statutory purposes. In contrast to the report's proposal that the threshold for defining Māori be progressively increased to limit the number able to benefit from public policy, Ian argued that ethnic self-identification was the only credible way forward. The statistical definition of Māori is a topic to which Ian has returned throughout his career (Pool, 1977, 1991; Pool & Pole, 1987), laying the foundations for an interesting and, at times prickly, debate (see, for example, Chapple, 2000; Durie, 2005; Gould, 2000; Kukutai, 2004, 2011; Robson & Reid, 2001).

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While drawing clear parameters around what constitutes a population is integral to the practice of demography, Ian recognised a much broader, and important, set of issues were at stake. One was that the statistical definition of Māori in forums such as the census (e.g., 'half or more Maori blood') bore little resemblance to how Māori, as a people, saw themselves. Blood quantum was conceptually problematic for Ian because it derived from a flawed notion of biologically distinct races and obscured the role of cultural processes in understanding demographic behaviours and outcomes. What mattered was that "in New Zealand there are two distinct cultural groups" and that "some persons feel that they are Maori, others that they are Pakeha – regardless of their exact biological make-up".[1] Self-identification was more likely to yield data on "those people whose behaviour patterns are Pakeha-oriented or Maori-oriented and whose problems are different because of their different cultural backgrounds, living conditions, child-rearing practices, etc." (p. 209).

In this article I use key insights from Ian's JPS paper to reflect on contemporary practices of demography in relation to Māori. Much has changed since Ian's paper appeared. New Zealand has undergone major transformations in population and economy, with implications for the praxis and substance of Māori demographic research. Notable changes include the shift from a tightly controlled to an open market economy, rapid ethnic diversification, rising inequality, the legacy of the Māori cultural renaissance and ongoing efforts to address, through the Wāitangi Tribunal or direct negotiations, historical grievances relating to the alienation of resources. Within the discipline of demography, there is a growing awareness of the need to move beyond the well-worn paradigm of demographic transition theory and to embrace a "comprehensive demography" (Charbit & Petit, 2011) which explicitly addresses questions of causality at the intersection of population and development (also see Rallu, Piché & Simon, 2006). The emergence of a critical indigenous demography has also highlighted the epistemological and methodological shortcomings of applied demographic research on indigenous peoples while expanding its scope to include mixed methods models incorporating ethnographic approaches alongside conventional analyses utilising official statistical data (Altman, 2009; Andersen, 2008; Johnstone, this volume; Kukutai, 2011; Prout, 2011; Axelsson et al., 2011; Taylor, 2008, 2009, 2011; Yu, 2011; for pioneering work in New Zealand, see Douglas, 1977). An

evaluation of the demography of Māori, situated within a broader indigenous context, is thus both timely and relevant. Given the broad scope of such a task, and the inclusion of several papers in this volume addressing aspects of Māori demographic change, I focus specifically on the construction of Māori as a discrete population for demographic research, and the use of Māori ethnic identification as an independent variable. I conclude with some thoughts on how official statistics might be changed to better reflect the aspirations and needs of Māori in a post-settlement context.

Constructing the Māori Population

Ian's observation that the categories used to classify and count Māori in official statistics were disconnected from Māori self-concepts of identity and belonging raises deeper questions about the relationship between statistics, population and institutional power arrangements. The role of statistics as a tool of modern administration has long been the subject of social science inquiry. Theorists have linked census-taking technologies and population statistics to bureaucratic control and surveillance; state-facilitated interventions upon the national citizenry; and elite goals of nation-building through the use of legal or cultural criteria to forge "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983).

The relationship between the presumed rational, scientific nature of official statistics and the politically informed and socially constructed nature of the categories underpinning those inquiries produces a particular set of challenges for applied demography. In *The use of official statistics in sociology: A critique of positivism and ethnomethodology*, Hindess (1973) argued that the evaluation of social statistics could not be reduced to a purely technical evaluation. Dismissing "true" categories as a "figment of the empiricist imagination" (p.40), he argued that the use of social statistics for scientific purposes was unavoidably a theoretical exercise. As such, "... different theoretical problematic must produce different and sometimes contradictory evaluations of any given set of statistics" (p. 47; also see Caldwell, 1996 for a critique of the conflation of statistical categories with the underlying social reality). Since then various scholars have illustrated how official categories portray a particular vision of social reality that tends to privilege the discourses and concerns of those in power. Such discourses include what an ideal society ought to look like;

how it ought to function; and who should be included within the bounds of nationhood and citizenship (Andersen, 2008; Kertzer & Arel, 2002).

It is hardly contentious to state that data collection by governments or elites has often been undertaken with a view to providing numerical proof of pre-existing hypotheses about social mechanisms (Woolf, 1989, p. 590). Certainly one does not have to look far for examples of how population data were integral to efforts to civilise, assimilate and integrate indigenes. In New Zealand, for example, the statistical interest in so-called Māori-European 'half-castes' was clearly linked to colonial polices of racial amalgamation. With time and effort it was anticipated that Māori would eventually lose their separate identity and become absorbed into what one government minister described as a "…white race with a slight dash of the finest coloured race in the world" (cited in Belich, 2001, p. 190). The relative proportion of half-castes to Māori full-bloods was seen as an important indicator of the rate of amalgamation. As the Under Secretary of Native Affairs observed in the 1906 census report (Registrar-General, 1907, p. lv).

> It is an idea of many people that the ultimate fate of the Māori race is to become absorbed in the European. Whether any tendency is shown in this direction must be gathered from the increase or decrease in the number of half-castes.

The Hunn Report (Hunn, 1961) marked a deliberate shift away from an explicit focus on civilising and amalgamating Māori to an emphasis on helping Māori to meet the demands of a changing economy and society. Rural population pressure and post-war labour demands provided compelling incentives for change of tack towards the Māori 'problem'. The emphasis on the benefits of European culture, habits and style of life were supplanted by an emphasis on economic integration and productivity.

Nowadays it is less common for Māori to be framed as a problem to be solved, than as a population with particular kinds of problems (Kukutai, 2011). In the Australian context, Taylor (2009) has argued that the relationship between the data and methods of demography and indigenous affairs policy has never been stronger, with Closing the Gaps (CTG) policies developed largely around a discourse of policy failure and deficit (for critiques see Altman, 2009; Jordan, Bulloch & Buchanan, 2010; Kowal, 2008; Taylor, 2008, 2009, 2011; Prout, 2011; Yu, 2011). Though CTG has been disbanded in New Zealand, much of the analysis of social and

economic wellbeing continues to position Māori as a homogeneous, disadvantaged ethnic group. For Māori, the main criticism of gaps-oriented research is that it implicitly positions the outcomes of non- Māori, and Pākehā/European specifically, as the ideal to which Māori ought to aspire. This is problematic when statistical inequalities are interpreted as evidence of Māori deficiencies – in terms of deviant families, culture, lifestyles and so forth – with little cognisance of the ongoing impacts of inequalities in past and present institutional arrangements.

To that end demographers in New Zealand elsewhere have shown little interest in complex theoretical arguments about indigeniety and rights-bearing *indigenous peoples*, focusing instead on the analysis of statistically or administratively defined *indigenous populations* (Andersen, 2008; Taylor, 2009).[2] This is unsurprising. Key historical experiences such as colonisation are difficult to operationalise in ways that are amenable to demographic theory and conventional demographic techniques (see Johnstone, this volume). Increasingly, however, there is a growing recognition of the need to do so, both within demography (Axelsson et al., 2011) and within related disciplines (e.g., population health, see Gracey & King, 2009). Within the demographic literature, Ian's work is somewhat unique in that it has tried to account for the impacts of colonisation, notably land alienation processes, on Māori demographic outcomes (Pool, 1991; also see Kukutai, Sceats & Pool, 2002).

Māori as an Independent Variable

Having explored the ways in which Māori are constructed as a discrete population and object of scientific inquiry, it is useful to consider how indigenous identity categories are deployed in demographic research. This topic gains importance in the context of the widespread practice of using Māori ethnicity (or, more specifically, Māori ethnic identification) as an independent variable in statistical research on wellbeing and health. The meaning and significance of ethnicity and race in statistical research has been the subject of much debate in the social sciences (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2002; Zuberi, 2001), and in the sciences generally (Kaufman & Cooper, 2001; LaVeist, 1994; Koenig, Lee & Richardson, 2008). Recent studies have highlighted how such categories are used as proxies for an assortment of historical or current social, political or environmental factors. Biomedical researchers, for example, may be more inclined to see

ethnic and racial identification as a proxy for an endogenous quality of individuals while sociologists typically look for social structural explanations such as concrete political and economic conditions and relationships. In many instances, there is a lack of clarity about what ethnicity 'stands for' when used as an independent variable, or the mechanisms linking it with the outcome of interest.

Here I return to Ian's observation that identification as a Māori provides insights into underlying cultural differences in behaviour, living conditions and outcomes. Studies from the last decade suggest the boundaries between Māori and Pākehā/European have become increasingly complex, influenced by many decades of intermarriage, New Zealand's rapid ethnic diversification, changing ideologies about the nature of ethnicity (broadly construed), and what it means to be Māori (see, for example, Webber, 2008). There is also considerable ethnic, cultural and socio-economic difference between Māori, with those most strongly identified as Māori appearing to have the least favorable outcomes (Callister & Blakely, 2004; Chapple, 2000; Cunningham et al., 2002; Kukutai, 2004). In my doctoral dissertation I further explored this association (Kukutai, 2010), combining census indicators to construct a spectrum of Māori sub-group categories, ranging from those identified as Māori solely on the basis of ancestry (the 'periphery'), to those identified as Māori by ancestry, tribe, and exclusive ethnicity (the 'core'). The use of a core-periphery model was not tied to any socially meaningful distinction (i.e., the sort of categorical reification that Hindess cautions against), but was merely a heuristic device for conceptualising Māori identification in more complex ways beyond the usual Māori/ Pākehā binary. The analysis yielded compelling evidence of ethnic and socio-economic segmentation between Māori. In each census, those in the 'core' were the most disadvantaged across a wide range of socio-economic indicators; while those on the 'periphery' were the most advantaged. Pronounced differences in Māori language ability and intra-Māori partnering were also evident, even after controlling for residence in a proportionately low (< 10 percent), medium (10 – 19.9 percent) or high (20 percent or more) Māori area (Figures 1 to 3).

Figure 1: Percentage of adults with no formal qualification, [a] by percent of Māori in territorial authority,[b] Māori categories and non-Māori, 2006
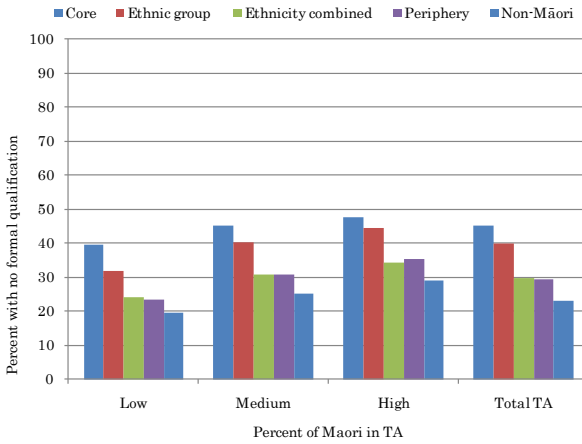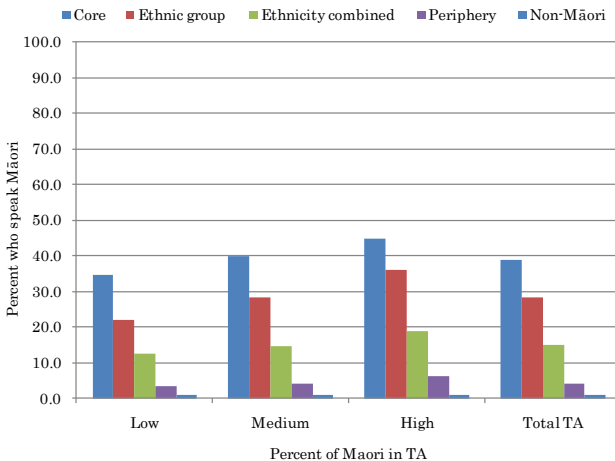

Source: Statistics New Zealand: Census of Population and Dwellings
Notes: a) People aged at least 15 years with recorded education.
b) Low TA = 0 to 9.9 percent; medium TA = 10.0 to 19.9 percent; high TA = 20 percent and more.
Key for Figures 1 to 3: Core - Māori by exclusive ethnicity, descent & iwi; Ethnic group - Māori by ethnicity, alone or in combination; Ethnicity combined - Māori by ethnicity combined with at least one other ethnicity; Periphery - Māori only by descent; Non-Māori - not Māori by ethnicity or descent.

Figure 2: Percentage of adults able to speak Māori,[a] by percent of Māori in territorial authority,[b] Māori categories and non-Māori, 2006
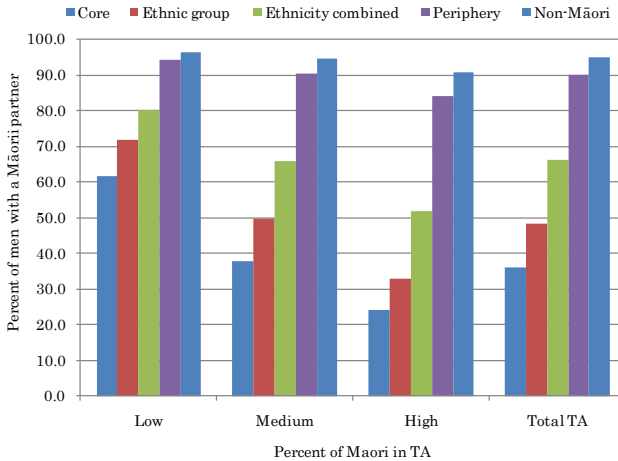

Source: Statistics New Zealand: Census of Population and Dwellings
Notes:
a) People aged at least 15 years with recorded language.
b) Low TA = 0 to 9.9 percent; medium TA = 10.0 to 19.9 percent; high TA = 20 percent and more

Figure 3: Percentage of partnered adult males with a Māori partner,[a] by percent of Māori in territorial authority,[b] Māori categories and non-Māori, 2006.

The association between Māori identification, cultural ties, and socio-economic status (SES), suggested that the statistical relationship between Māori ethnicity and SES might be better explained by costs and opportunities associated with specific kinds of ties to Māori identity, rather than identification with an ethnic category *per se*. This proposition was explored using data from the unique longitudinal study of Māori households, *Te Hoe Nuku Roa*. The Massey University study, which began 1995 and is ongoing, was developed in conjunction with Statistics New Zealand (for more detailed reports about *Te Hoe Nuku Roa* see Durie 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1996). Data were collected over a wide range of domains including lifestyle, cultural identity, Māori language, health, education, employment, income, housing, and household. Due to time and resource constraints, the scope was initially limited to four Regional Council areas: Auckland, Gisborne, Manawatu, and Wellington. The baseline cohort comprised 461 households and 950 individuals, of whom 880 were aged at least 15 years. Households were eligible for inclusion if they contained at least one permanent householder of Māori ancestry (the filter question asked: Are you of Māori ancestry?)

Table 1 shows descriptive variables from the first three waves, covering the period 1995 to 2002. Respondents were classified into one of three identity categories based on a question asking about the identity that best described them. The original response options (Kiwi, New Zealander, Māori /Pākehā, part Māori, a Polynesian, a Māori and Other) were collapsed into three categories: Māori alone, New Zealander/Kiwi, and Māori /Other (for details of coding, see Kukutai, 2010). The results clearly showed that people choosing Māori as their preferred identity label had stronger ties to Māori identity in terms of network ties, financial interests in Māori land, Māori language capability and so forth, than those choosing some other label. There were also modest associations between preferred identity label and SES indicators although the marked attrition across the first three waves appeared to diminish SES variation within the sample over time.

In more complex multivariate modelling not shown here, several SES outcomes (e.g., attaining at least a secondary school qualification) were modelled as a linear function of a set of variables representing individuals' preferred ethnic label, ties to Māori identity, and demographic controls. In general Māori identification was a less salient predictor of variation in outcomes than specific ties to Māori identity. However, while some ties to Māori identity appeared to be associated with high socio-economic costs (e.g., being raised in a Māori-speaking household prior to the 1970s), other ties were inconsequential, or advantageous (e.g., being able to speak Māori well). Taken together, the analyses highlighted the limitations of relying solely on measures of ethnic self-report, and the need for more careful theorising and interpretation of ethnicity variables in analyses linking Māori identity to socio-demographic and wellbeing outcomes.

Table 1:   Cross-tabulation of select variables by preferred ethnic label, Te Hoe Nuku Roa survey of Māori Households, Waves 1 to 3, 1995 - 2002

Wave One (n=656)

	Māori n=337	Māori /Other n=148	New Zealander n=174
Demographic			
Age (yrs)	36.1	32.8	37.8
Male	35.5	23.5	30.7
Region			
Auckland	53.4	54.7	39.8
Gisborne	13.3	11.1	21.7
Manawatu	14.9	13.5	27.6
Wellington	17.0	20.7	10.8
Main urban area **	70.2 **	73.3	49.5
Principal householder			
Couple with children	54.4	51.2	61.1
Sole parent	26.9	26.9	24.9
Other family type	18.6	17.9	14.3

Wave Two (n=452)

	Māori n=229	Māori /Other n=102	New Zealander n=121
Demographic			
Age (yrs)	37.9	35.2	41.1
Male	32.7	26.7	31.3
Region			
Auckland	43.1	45.5	27.8
Gisborne	19.1	21.3	26.6
Manawatu	21.8	16.8	27.5
Wellington	15.9	16.5	18.1
Main urban area **	55.8	61.5	45.2
Principal householder			
Couple with children	58.5	52.3	52.5
Sole parent	28.6	31.3	26.3
Other family type	12.9	16.4	21.2

Wave Three (n=422)

	Māori n=238	Māori /Other n=85	New Zealander n=99
Demographic			
Age (yrs)	39.2	35.2	39.2
Male	32.1	15.3	36.1
Region			
Auckland	47.5	64.5	46.6
Gisborne	19.1	15.6	15.8
Manawatu	12.8	9.2	26.9
Wellington	20.7	10.7	10.8
Main urban area **	67.3	73.8	57.3
Principal householder			
Couple with children	56.5	44.6	68.4
Sole parent	37.8	29.4	21.1
Other family type	11.8	13.0	10.5

Wave One (n=656)

	Māori	Māori /Other	New Zealander
	n=337	n=148	n=174
Māori Identity			
Knows sub-tribe name	63.7 ***	47.6	32.4
Knows ancestry genealogy (3 gens)	34.2	32.6	30.7
Financial interest in Māori land	64.2 **	46.7	45.3
Contacts mainly Māori	65.0 ***	50.4	31.4
Raised in Māori speaking h.hold	46.9 ***	26.4	27.3
Māori language is good to excellent	49.9 ***	38.9	23.1
Māori electoral roll[1]	50.7 ***	35.7	28.4
Socio-economic status			
Has secondary qual.	38.6	49.1	47.4
Employed	55.4 *	51.5	69.3
Is a home owner	38.9 **	36.5	60.1

Wave Two (n=452)

	Māori	Māori /Other	New Zealander
	n=229	n=102	n=121
Māori Identity			
Knows sub-tribe name	71.7 *	56.2	48.5
Knows ancestry genealogy (3 gens)	37.8	44.8	31.3
Financial interest in Māori land	66.5 *	55.7	45.9
Contacts mainly Māori	50.5 **	46.7	27.2
Raised in Māori speaking h.hold	66.6 ***	31.2	36.5
Māori language is good to excellent	45.3 ***	24.6	18.2
Māori electoral roll[1]	75.8 **	70.0	44.2
Socio-economic status			
Has secondary qual.	41.6	57.1	49.8
Employed	66.0	61.0	77.5
Is a home owner	51.6	37.6	60.0

Wave Three (n=422)

	Māori	Māori /Other	New Zealander
	n=238	n=85	n=99
Māori Identity			
Knows sub-tribe name	66.7 *	65.7	33.9
Knows ancestry genealogy (3 gens)	33.8	26.7	15.2
Financial interest in Māori land	50.9 *	29.1	28.1
Contacts mainly Māori	74.1 **	66.2	34.9
Raised in Māori speaking h.hold	48.1***	17.7	22.7
Māori language is good to excellent	35.2***	14.3	7.2
Māori electoral roll[1]	79.3 **	60.4	40.5
Socio-economic status			
Has secondary qual.	39.4 *	57.1	55.4
Employed	71.0	76.5	77.3
Is a home owner	45.9	30.6	56.6

Notes: *** p <.001 ** p <.01 * p <.05 + p <.10. Two-tailed test. Weighted and adjusted for survey design. (1) In wave 1, those not on the Māori electoral roll included people who were eligible for enrolment but did not specify which roll they were on.

For Whom are the Categories Intended?

Notwithstanding the tarnished legacy of state enumeration, and foregoing critiques of the statistical treatment of Māori in population research, Māori continue to generally seek inclusion in official statistics, both to address long-standing inequalities and self-determining aspirations, and to cement their position in the national imagination. Many Māori organisations and communities have a strong interest in, and ongoing need for, high-quality statistical data to inform decision-making and well-being initiatives, particularly in a post-settlement context (Walling, Small-Rodriguez & Kukutai, 2009). Some iwi (tribes), such as Whakatohea and Waikato-Tainui have engaged in their own data collection activities. However, while Māori-driven statistical initiatives are both worthwhile and necessary, they also face considerable challenges relating to resources, capabilities, diasporic migration (particularly iwi where the majority of their members lives outside the rohe, or customary homeland), and internal politics. For various reasons, not the least of which is the need to maintain visibility, opting out of official statistics is not an option. Instead, finding ways to indigenise official statistics in tandem with building robust statistical practices within indigenous communities seems to be a more fruitful path. I conclude with a brief consideration of some key principles that might inform such an endeavour.

Framing

A key theme explored in this paper is the relationship between how collective identities are classified and counted in official statistics and the consequences of those constructions. How indigenous peoples are framed can occur at various points in the data process – from high-level principles embedded in official documents; to the nomenclature and categories used on census forms; the classification and coding schemas used to aggregate responses; decisions about which data and comparators to use; and the dissemination of official data in public reports and media releases. Combined, these decision-making points shape how Māori are constructed and reported in the public domain.

In terms of changing how Māori identities are framed or represented in forums such as the census, the work of Mason Durie (2005b) and Linda

Smith (1999), combined with the various reviews of the official ethnicity statistical standard, provide two clear pointers. First, Māori want to be explicitly and meaningfully recognised as rights-bearing indigenous peoples, rather than one of many ethnic minority populations with special needs (Department of Statistics, 1988; Mako, 1998; Robson & Reid, 2001). Though the Treaty of Waitangi and the unique status of Māori are recognised in Statistics New Zealand's strategic policy documents, the term 'indigenous' (or any equivalent term such as mana whenua or tangata whenua) is noticeably absent from the many statistical products that the agency creates and disseminates. The majority of statistical and policy formulations continue to rely solely on ethnicity, despite the expansion of census definitions in 1991 to include ancestry and iwi identification.[3]

The indigenous status of Māori could be readily acknowledged in a number of ways in official statistics including the use of an indigenous identifier in the census and on other administrative forms; wider and more flexible dissemination of iwi and Māori ancestry data; and the use of indigenous nomenclature to frame statistics about Māori in public forums. This argument is not unique to Māori. In Canada, for example, Andersen (2008) has argued that racialised categorisations of Métis identity in the Canadian census ought to be replaced with a definition that explicitly recognises this group's status as a distinctive indigenous nation (also see, Taylor 2009, for a critique of the construction of Australian Aboriginal identities in official statistics).

Relevance

A second guiding principle is that of relevance. In short, practices of counting, classifying and dissemination ought to reflect the diverse realities of Māori, and be relevant in terms of their evolving needs. Flexible data disaggregation practices are especially important. The default to national scales and other administratively defined spatial boundaries tends to mask, and even distort, dynamics within and across localised communities. As a thoroughly urbanised indigenous people (85 percent of Māori live in administratively defined urban areas), issues relating to remote or rural demography are less of an issue perhaps than issues around data disaggregation pertaining to iwi.

The iwi identification question in the census comes closest to approximating customary Māori conceptions of group membership based on whakapapa which connects individuals to a specific place and locates them within a broader network of kin relations. As more iwi have reached financial settlements with the Crown and moved more decisively into development mode, their governance bodies have expressed an urgent need for timely, relevant and accurate data about their populations (Walling, Small-Rodriguez, & Kukutai, 2009). However, current statistical practices do not offer a great deal of flexibility in terms of data disaggregation. For some iwi authorities, the official Statistical Classification of Iwi is ill-suited because it constitutes iwi populations with little regard for their internal definitions (e.g., relating to constituent marae and hapū/sub-tribes etc.) or the legislative definitions that iwi must adhere to. The iwi question in the census is based entirely on self-report and is thus distinct from the concept of registered or enrolled tribal status. In the case of Waikato-Tainui, for example, the result is a significant mismatch in the size and characteristics of its register and census populations (Walling, Small-Rodriguez & Kukutai, 2009). While Statistics New Zealand compiles basic iwi profiles from each quinquennial census, access to more detailed data is restricted and can incur significant costs.

Some commentators have questioned whether iwi data should be exclusively owned and controlled by the government (Robson & Reid, 2001). Indeed, in terms of self-determining aspirations, Māori continue to remain largely peripheral to the main channels of power through which consequential decisions about Māori statistics are made. Others argue that the census question on iwi should be changed to include an additional prompt for registered tribal status, and that iwi data should be more closely aligned with iwi aspirations and strategies (Mako, 1998; Walling, Small-Rodriguez, & Kukutai 2009). The inaugural Māori Social Survey, to be held after the 2013 census, will greatly improve the relevance of cultural data collected in official statistics, and provides some options for exploring wellbeing at the level of whānau/family. However the sample size of about 5,000 will preclude iwi-specific analysis for all but the largest groupings.

Inclusiveness

A third guiding principle for indigenising official statistics is that of inclusiveness. As the preceding section showed, Māori are internally diverse with regards to demographic characteristics, class, and identification with group norms and symbols. Māori are not just an "imagined community", but a constellation of communities based on shared descent or whakapapa (e.g., hapū), interests, values, experiences, status, culture or propinquity. These overlapping boundaries evoke diverse Māori realities that require different approaches.

As I have written elsewhere with my colleague, Melinda Webber (Kukutai & Webber, 2011), the potential to reify or exclude arises when core symbols of Māori identity are treated as fixed characteristics of individuals, rather than flexible, evolving entities able to accommodate change. In seeking to undertake research befitting Māori communities or subjects, care must be taken not to conflate "model" Māori (i.e, those who fit the symbolic core criteria) with modal Māori. For example, though the innovative Māori Statistics Framework emphasises well-being from a Māori world view, it does not impose a tight definition on what capabilities Māori, as individuals or collectives, ought to value, or what Māori identity ought to look like. Rather, Māori development is seen as a process of enablement which extends people's scope for improving their own lives through expanding opportunities, choices, and participation (for a more detailed description of the framework, see Wereta & Bishop, 2006).

Capability

A fourth principle that is integral to the task of indigenising official statistics is that of capability. Transformative change will not be effected without attending to building capabilities within key government departments, as well as within Māori organisations committed to advancing Māori development and wellbeing. For the latter, there is little point in pouring a great deal of effort into changing how data are categorised, collected and disseminated if there is no capability to engage with those data on their own terms. Over the last decade, iwi and urban Māori authorities have been quick to recognise the value of lawyers, project managers and financial managers in negotiating settlements and managing the financial assets that have flowed from them. But there has

been little effort to build capability in terms of managing and analysing information flows, or developing the requisite skills to use statistics in ways that meet strategic and aspirational goals related to collective wellbeing. This is important if tribes wish to lessen their dependence on external consultants and government agencies, and begin to build a robust and relevant statistical evidence base with which to make informed decisions.

Conclusion

Using insights from Ian Pool's earlier writing on Māori population dynamics, this paper has sought to reflect both on his contribution to Māori demography, and to engage in critical thinking on what remains to be done in order to move forward. It is indicative of Ian's legacy as a scholar that the questions he raised at the beginning of his career remain relevant half a century later. While not shying away from tackling the hard, and sometimes unpopular, issues, Ian's work was first and foremost underpinned by a commitment to and passion for demography. For that, we have much to be grateful.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1.   Pākehā is a historical term that evolved to describe British settlers and their descendants. Though a popular colloquial term, Pākehā has not been institutionalised as a statistical term. In the census, for example, the majority group is labelled New Zealand European, and simply European at Level 1 of the Statistical Standard for Ethnicity.

2.   Most definitions of indigeneity invoke four criteria: historical precedence, non-dominance, cultural distinctiveness and self-ascription. Historicity denotes a group's prior occupation of a geographic area that is partly or wholly subsumed, but not necessarily aligned with, the boundaries of the nation-state. Non-dominance is usually understood in the political rather than demographic sense though, in the settler states of North America and

Australasia, the two are synonymous. Colonialism and the attendant diminution of indigenous sovereignty are central features of non-dominance, usually underpinned by contemporary political claims for some form of self-determination (Maaka & Fleras, 2005). Cultural distinctiveness refers to patterns of social organisation, beliefs and customs that have an historical basis but which have typically been affected by colonialism. Self-identification denotes the power for groups to define their own parameters using criteria that are meaningful to them.

3.   The introduction of Māori descent and iwi questions in the 1991 census illustrates the political nature of ethnic counting. The descent question was introduced to meet legal requirements under The Electoral Act (1993) for determining electoral representation. The iwi question was influenced by the proposal to devolve resources to Māori via iwi, and the attendant need to monitor the status of iwi over time. While the initiative and related legislation (Iwi Runanga Act 1990) was subsequently repealed, the iwi question remained in the census.

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