CHAPTER 6

Racism and ethnicity

Chapter aims

- To outline the practice of racism and to describe various forms of resistance to racism
- To provide an analysis of identity, specifically ethnic identity, and its emergence in the late twentieth century as the basis of politics
- To indicate some of the traditional and emerging sociological approaches to issues of racism and ethnicity

Introduction

Sociological views then and now

The sociology of racism and ethnicity has not always been a central – or indeed even a popular – topic in sociology. At sociology's birth in the nineteenth century, it was often thought that the reality of living in an industrialised, urbanised society would dominate social relationships and that the pre-existing concepts of who we are in terms of a specific locality or ethnic identity would disappear. Karl Marx, for example, felt that the identities and politics of the workplace would prevail over those of the community and ethnic group. Max Weber was not so sure: he argued that **ethnicity** would be an important aspect of social status. Ironically, for much of the latter part of the nineteenth and for a good part of the early twentieth century, the world was divided up into nations that were all seen as the products of particular 'races'. What unsettled this view and invited sociologists to rewrite the analysis of identity was the Holocaust. It epitomised the excesses of racism and encouraged sociologists and others to reconsider how classifications like 'race' were used and what alternatives existed. This interest was underscored by the civil rights movements and the interest in colonialism and the impacts of it on colonised peoples.

Ethnicity occurs when a group shares a particular history, a set of cultural practices and institutions, and is conscious of a shared identity as a result.

In the twenty-first century, the political reality of who we are in ethnic terms can hardly be ignored. In many societies – Aotearoa New Zealand included – it is one of the significant dimensions of identity and of difference, and a feature that is shared globally with many other countries. The issues of cultural identity and group rights have been given new significance by the extensive migration occurring in recent decades and by the use of new technologies to sustain and articulate identity across borders. A sociology without an understanding of racism and ethnicity is now unthinkable. Accordingly, this chapter examines how questions of 'race', racism and ethnicity manifest themselves in terms of our personal identities as we interact with others, and in creating inequalities.

Who are we?

The pervasiveness of ethnic identity

Some still feel uncomfortable with matters of racism and ethnicity. However, contemporary debates are framed by concerns associated with ethnic identity – in terms of how we operate in our communities; in terms of national identity and issues, or in terms of social policy. Sport and leisure, for example, involve distinct ethnic traditions, and this often determines which group plays a particular sport. The practices of national teams, such as the use of the haka at the start of an All Blacks game, are examples of such traditions. Our education often requires a declaration of who we are in cultural terms and an exploration of what this means. In the wake of MMP, political differences have yet again come to reflect ethnic loyalties. All of these issues have as great an impact on the residents of rural or provincial Aotearoa New Zealand as they do on people in the larger cities or elsewhere in the world. In London or Wellington, in Sydney or Auckland, in New York, Toronto, Bangkok or Singapore, policy and political issues are often substantially influenced by a cultural ethnic frame. The experiences are not always positive ones. The end of the previous century saw the escalation of major ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda and in Los Angeles and Sydney. But, as sociologists, we want to understand the centrality and significance of these issues and perhaps, if we feel so inclined, do something about them.

Ethnicity vs race

At this point, it is worth drawing a distinction between *ethnicity* and *race*. We need to accept that sociologists will use these and related terms in ways that are quite different from common usage. The common-usage definition of 'race' in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand can often be a long way from what a sociologist might mean by the same term. When we talk about 'race' sociologically, we are essentially describing the common-view classification of people into groups according to biological characteristics. The most visible biological characteristics are things such as skin colour or facial features. It is an easy and relatively quick way to categorise people into groups and a common way of defining and

relating to others, even if there is no racist intent. However, behind this convention is a substantial history of exclusion and even persecution that was 'justified' by a scientific racism which argued that people's genetic background predetermined their behaviour and their potential. It is the continuation and the expression of these ideas that sociologists identify as racism. This label indicates the way in which these classifications lead to negative views (*prejudice*) and behaviours that exclude others (*discrimination*).

In distinct contrast to this is the notion of *ethnicity*. This emerged as a result of the political developments of the latter half of the twentieth century and the growing interest in how cultural identity influences inter-group and inter-personal relations. Ethnicity is a product of how a particular group sees its history, its identity; how it defines membership; how it continues to uphold its practices and beliefs, and how it interacts with others. All of us belong to a variety of groups, including religious and sporting groups, groups belonging to specific localities and age cohorts. Ethnicity is one further dimension of such group identity. It captures the idea of belonging to a particular cultural group and the significance of this identity for an individual. Some people will opt to move out of the group, while others might well join it. The boundaries defining who is a member of a group are often relatively soft compared with the hard and exclusive boundaries imposed on 'races' in a country such as South Africa under the apartheid system. Ethnicity can be an opportunity to glorify your own group and discriminate against others, but equally, it often involves an acceptance of cultural diversity and a pride in an individual's cultural traditions and history. For example, ethnic identity might be reflected in everything from a greeting through to major life events (coming of age; marriage or its equivalent; births and deaths), through to business networks. In fact, it is often so important that for many people it is *the* most significant form of identity.

Table 6.1: A future Aotearoa New Zealand – hyper-diversity (2013–2038)

	All	**0–14 years**
European/Pākehā	75–66%	71.6–68.2%
Māori	16–18%	25–30%
Asian	12–22%	12–21%
Pasifika	8–10%	13–18%

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2018

The significance of ethnicity

In the same way that feminism has challenged sociology to include gender considerations in our theorising and practice, the anti-racist and anti-colonial movements of the late twentieth century have invited sociology to give much greater consideration to ethnic identity and the products of a colonial past. Ethnicity is now a major consideration in areas such as access to health care, the way in which fishery resources are owned and managed, the

inclusion of cultural practices and institutions into the mainstream of New Zealand society, or the way in which Aotearoa New Zealand should be politically represented and governed. It is a world that Karl Marx might well have recognised, coming as he did from a Rabbinical family and Jewish background, but he probably would not have been supportive of ethnic and nationalist movements. For many Marxists, racism and ethnicity serve as a smokescreen for more fundamental class-related questions. In contrast, Max Weber, who long ago recognised that the status of ethnic groups could be of significant advantage – and disadvantage – would have been much more comfortable with these arguments. The difference between Marx and Weber is certainly repeated among contemporary sociologists. Some might query the significance of ethnicity in New Zealand. Others, and we would like to think that it is the majority, see ethnicity as one of the major dimensions of social life. Its significance also marks quite a substantial social change that has occurred alongside the local economic revolution of the 1980s and 1990s. This would include the 'cultural' revolution of the same period and the ways in which ethnicity has now been inserted into many areas of life and, for many people, is a defining feature of social identity and interaction. This revolution also marks an interesting departure from the colonial links between New Zealand and Britain. **Post-colonialism** is one term that tries to capture the significance of these changes – not as somehow indicating the disappearance of colonialism but as a way of critically understanding what colonialism has done for New Zealand and what we might do differently in the future.

Post-colonialism describes an analytical approach and political position that is critical of the processes and impact of colonialism. It includes the attempt to establish new, non-or anti-colonial institutions and identities. (See also p. 149)

A contemporary sociology must consider how best to understand the implications of such changes. Racism, the way in which people are conceived of negatively and discriminated against, is an ongoing issue that deserves attention in the same way that class differences do in an advanced capitalist (or post-capitalist?) society. How we conceive of ourselves in terms of an ethnic identity, or the way in which some people decline (often strongly) to be identified in ethnic terms, also requires attention, especially given the importance of ethnic claims for questions of public policy and justice. Whether this is best described as post-colonialism or something else will be explored later, but there is little doubt that the New Zealand of the early and mid-twentieth century, with its links to Britain and its deference to all things British, has been replaced by a country in which there is a much greater interest both in local identities and concerns and in the geo-political realities of being part of the Asia-Pacific region.

The local and the global: the reality of 'race' and the resistance to racism

Race and colonialism

The construction and application of ideas about **'race'** were essentially a product of European expansionism and the establishment of colonial empires. As a way of classifying and understanding others, 'race' was used by European nations as a means of justifying their dominance and exploitation of non-white peoples: these peoples were variously seen as pagan, uncivilised, backward, primitive, intellectually inferior and incapable of contributing to modernity. The expansion of the colonial empires, especially those that were capitalist in nature, involved complex arguments about the superiority and inferiority of certain 'races'. This is epitomised in the social and legal circumstances of the slave states of the southern USA, where an absolute division between black and white was constructed and was later justified by the so-called science of 'race'. Scientists supposedly 'proved' that 'races' existed and that there were significant cultural, intellectual and physical differences between them. This tradition continues, particularly – but not exclusively – in the USA, where books like *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein & Murray, 1996) repeat such arguments about 'racial difference', as though the existence of 'races' were real and as though it were possible to quantify intellectual differences. The authors of *The Bell Curve* argue that there is an association between 'race' and intellectual differences, at least as far as IQ tests go. (As discussed later in the chapter, these tests are themselves a product of a particular period of scientific racism.) Of course, 'races' are not 'real' in this sense. They are social constructions and are only made important by our social beliefs and values.

Race is the grouping that results from the practice of classifying others by physical characteristics and the belief that this classification represents some form of innate difference in terms of ability or disposition.

The colonialisation of Aotearoa New Zealand in the nineteenth century occurred during a period when slavery was coming under attack but when views about 'race' were still very powerful and widespread. New Zealand's colonial history is a mixture of patronising benevolence and beliefs about the superiority of the coloniser and the inferiority of Māori. Whatever criticism we might have of the missionaries, for example, many were motivated by a genuinely-felt, if patronising, concern for Māori. The Treaty of Waitangi was, among other things, a recognition of the rights of 'natives', voiced both here and in Britain. The story of nineteenth-century New Zealand includes explicit beliefs about the significance of 'race' and the right of the colonisers to impose their own institutions and beliefs, alongside some limited attempts to recognise and protect Māori – the latter attempts include the Treaty.

Demonstrators at this ‘Stop the Tour 1976’ protest in Wellington objected to the All Blacks’ tour to South Africa where the government enforced a regime of apartheid. SOURCE: AW-1435, ANS WESTRA, SUITE TIROHANGA LTD

Race and nationalism

The history of ‘race’ is a dominant theme of the nineteenth century globally, as it underpins national expansion and the internal and international policies of empires and colonies. It was re-emphasised by anti-democratic movements, especially **fascism**, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The attempt by the Nazi regime in Germany, with the help of other sympathetic governments and movements, to eliminate the ‘landless’ of Europe, the *Untermenschen* (non-humans) represented by Jews and Romanys represents one of the worst (but by no means the only) excesses of racism in history.

Fascism is the political philosophy of a totalitarian party or government that adopts an extreme form of exclusionary nationalism and may, as in the case of Nazism, pursue policies of genocide or ethnic cleansing.

The latter half of the twentieth century has seen some interesting politics emerge. Anti-

colonial, civil rights and ethnic groups have challenged the ideas about ‘race’ and the institutions and practices that have underpinned them. ‘Racism’ and ‘institutional racism’ have entered the sociological and popular vocabulary as a way of identifying, critiquing and dismissing the use of ‘race’ as a means of demeaning and disempowering others.

Challenges to ideas of ‘race’

How did former colonised peoples escape from the disempowering ideologies and labels that had justified their subservience? A group of writers, mostly from French colonies or former colonies, had a major influence. They included Aimé Césaire and, above all, Frantz Fanon. These writers drew upon various sources for their theoretical inspiration, including Freud, Marx and existentialism. Fanon (1970) provided a number of powerful arguments about the internalisation of racist beliefs by those identified as inferior; about the disempowering and exclusionary ideas and strategies of colonialism and racism; and about the need for decolonisation and the powerful forces that were going to be released as colonised peoples regained their confidence and cultural identity. While he was a significant influence on those former colonies that were fighting for their independence, Fanon was also equally influential on the growing civil rights movements of the USA and elsewhere. The sociological interest grew with the riots in various US cities in the 1960s and the growing influence of the black civil rights movement. Here was a set of arguments and strategies that denied the validity of ‘race’, or the policies and institutions that had sustained racial advantage and disadvantage, and they were to have a profound effect on many countries – including Aotearoa New Zealand.

Institutional racism

Institutional racism was a concept that identified the way in which organisations, especially those that were responsible for health, education and justice, discriminated against particular groups, either intentionally or unintentionally. It was coined in 1967 in the midst of the civil rights movement in the USA, and first appeared in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1970 to be used by a group of young Māori activists. They were the children of a generation of post-war migrants who had moved from their traditional iwi locations to the cities, who had limited contact with Māori culture and institutions, and who were inspired by the emerging arguments and strategies of anti-colonial and anti-racist movements. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, they highlighted and attacked anything that was deemed racist, challenged Māori leaders and institutions to provide leadership and a defence of **tikanga Māori**, and sought to establish an acceptance of things Māori in the public domain. By the late 1980s, biculturalism had emerged as the basis for public policy and tino rangatiratanga as an ambition that embodied the notion of Māori control. These politics are epitomised in Donna Awatere’s book *Māori Sovereignty* (1984) and described by Ranginui Walker in *Ka Wawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End* (2004). In both books, the influence of Frantz Fanon can readily be seen in the arguments about colonialism and the need for decolonisation. The

notion of who we are, individually and collectively, has not been the same since.

Tikanga Māori refers to the whole that is Māori culture.

Influence of labour migration

The various emancipatory movements have been reinforced by one other development in the post-war period: the migration of large numbers of people in response to the demands of an expanding – and then restructured – capitalism. By the early 1970s, the significance of migration in altering the urban communities of advanced capitalism was apparent, and a group of neo-Marxist sociologists, including Stephen Castles and Bob Miles, developed an approach that focused on the political economy of **labour migration**. At the centre of this analysis was the role of labour migration in capitalist production, especially in the post-war environment when capitalism was expanding but there was a shortage of semi-skilled and unskilled labour. Large migration flows resulted, with former colonies providing labour to the metropolitan centres. Significantly, many of these migrants were non-white. The labour needs of capitalism led to a new cultural diversity, and particular migrant groups were identified by the largely white host communities as responsible for social problems such as increased unemployment, the decline in particular urban areas, and the difficulty of obtaining resources in areas such as health and education. These groups were **racialised** – seen as a 'racial problem'. The working-class communities that the migrants entered were increasingly divided over how these migrants should be perceived and treated, and in many instances a resurgence in explicitly racist political movements occurred in countries such as France, Britain and the USA.

Labour migration describes the flows of workers (unskilled in the 1960s and 1970s, skilled since the 1980s) in search of employment.
Racialisation is the process whereby a group is classified as a race and defined as a problem.

In the 1980s, the arrival of semi-skilled and unskilled labourers was replaced by the recruitment of skilled or wealthy migrants in countries like Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada and Australia. The need was for those who would contribute to a knowledge- and service-based economy. Those arriving were increasingly from Asia, were well educated and experienced and could fill skill shortages. Labour migration was still involved, but of a very different sort. Anti-immigration parties, such as New Zealand First, made their opposition to immigrants explicit in the 1996, 2002 and 2017 elections. There was a constituency for such politics as many were concerned at the rapid ethnic diversification of New Zealand, alongside the new emphasis given to Māori as tangata whenua.

Aotearoa New Zealand has experienced two quite distinct recent waves of non-European migrants: Pacific peoples in the 1960s and 1970s, and those from Asia after 1990. Pacific communities in New Zealand are now dominated by the New Zealand-born; they are no longer migrant communities in the way that they once were. Sociologists talk of their ethnic identities in terms of their *hybridity* or *creolisation*, as elements are borrowed from both migrant homelands and the current residence. The struggles of these migrants concern their location as non-white communities in white-dominated societies and what citizenship might mean for them in this context. The issues have become more complex with that advent of global networks. Immigrant communities are now much more transnational as they maintain linkages between their place of residence and a homeland, especially using new information technologies. This has supplemented historical transnational connections with the UK by linking New Zealand communities with the Pacific and Asia. But New Zealand also has its own diaspora. By 2001, around 800,000 New Zealanders lived outside the country. In New Zealand this has provided new identities, and what it means to be tangata whenua, tangata Pasifika or Pākehā are significant social issues.

The social and the personal: ethnic identity and notions of citizenship

Cultural identity

One of the most interesting – and challenging – developments of recent decades has been the growing significance of cultural identity. It is a universal phenomenon, even for those who once did not have to consider such matters. Jeremy Paxman (*The English*, 1998) describes the English as once having been the top dogs in the world's top-dog empire who did not need to know who they were; but faced by devolution within Britain and membership of the European Union, the question of Englishness now has an immediacy and importance that cannot be ignored. The vote to leave the European Union in 2016 (Brexit) highlighted these politics and the resulting divisions. It provides an interesting counterpoint – and overlap – with marginal identities.

> . . . the term 'black' was coined as a way of referencing the common experience of racism and marginalisation in Britain and came to provide the organisational category of a new politics of resistance amongst groups and communities with . . . very different histories, traditions and ethnic identities. (Hall, 1995, p. 223)

Whether one belongs to a majority or a minority group, the question of cultural identity is an important one in modern societies. Who we are as cultural beings and what this means in terms of social and economic opportunities, self-esteem and social interaction are central social and political questions. Social identity comes – for many – to be expressed through membership of an ethnic group. We are continually asked the question 'to which ethnic group do you belong?' as we begin school or go to hospital. The nature of the question and the

categories provided for the answer are all regularly contested. Social policies are routinely constructed around notions of ethnic need, and the targeting of services typically addresses ethnic issues. Sport, music and the media all reflect the way in which our respective ethnic identities are played out in public spaces – sometimes in a celebratory and positive way; at other times, in varying degrees of offensiveness or marked by silence. These developments are reflected in the move from a citizenship that was defined in welfare-state societies largely by notions of universal need and national welfare to a situation where a much more limited conception of social and economic rights prevails. The move to attach rights and citizenship to membership of ethnic or indigenous groups has also invited a political backlash, as the anti-immigrant politics and the dismissal of ethnic rights of Trump's America or Marine Le Pen's France demonstrate.

The effect of economic rationalism

There is an interesting tension in recent developments. As countries like Aotearoa New Zealand re-structured through the 1980s and 1990s, the arguments of an **economic rationalism** have come to determine policies. Issues of economic efficiency and a limited role for the state dominate, together with the emphasis on being competitive in a global economy. Central to these political ideologies is an assumption that individuals will act rationally in a self-interested way when faced by choices in one market or another. The reality is that most of us live our lives as members of groups and communities where social considerations exist alongside strictly personal ones. A powerful example is ethnic groups where collective interests are internally negotiated – not always amicably – and come to influence how the members of that group live their lives. Ethnicity requires a degree of loyalty and collective agreement in order for it to work. Any benefits are collectively shared, whether in the personal sense (enhanced self-esteem) or through access to common resources such as capital to establish a business or buy a house. Being a member of an ethnic group can be frustrating and disempowering; but equally, it can be a significant and positive aspect of social identity. It influences what sports we play, how we celebrate significant events in our lives, what schools we attend and our educational performance, what jobs we get, and how we are perceived in public situations. The current significance of ethnicity for many people – certainly not all – is a major determinant in identity and social interaction. This reality contradicts the assumptions of an economic rationalism.

Economic rationalism is the monetarist-inspired politics of the 1980s and 1990s which assumes that individuals and markets act in economically rational ways (see also p. 284).

Revival of the importance of ethnicity

There is no better example in a New Zealand setting than the resurgence of Māori identity

and culture in recent decades. Dismissed for much of last century as irrelevant to a modern society, tikanga Māori was relegated to an interesting but quaint element in education, and some token expressions such as the All Blacks haka. It was sustained within Māori communities and on marae, but the migration of more than half the Māori population in the post-war period from traditional iwi areas to the cities constituted yet another factor in undermining the reproduction of a language and a culture. The realisation that this was the case and the strategies of an urban-raised generation produced a more assertive politics that combined traditional cultural concerns with the strategies of feminism and the civil rights movement. In the wake of these politics, the numbers claiming Māori identity – including both the urban Māori who do not claim an association with a particular iwi as well as those who do – has grown substantially and had reached more than 700,000 by the late 1990s. This identification as Māori is reflected institutionally by such activities as a Māori-managed education system (kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, whare wānanga) to the Māori Party and its parliamentary representatives. The Treaty of Waitangi is back as a constitutional document that identifies the rights of Māori as tangata whenua. It is much more difficult to ridicule or dismiss Māori culture in the public domain, and the language and culture are recognised in a range of policies and institutions (Walker, 2004).

The resurgence of Māori culture and the claiming of Māori ethnicity is just one example of the **ethnic revival** that has occurred among indigenous peoples who have been colonised, as well as among minority ethnic groups who migrated at some point in the past. Settler societies such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the USA must now address the policy implications of a renewed importance given to ethnic identity; and increasingly, notions of citizenship encompass the differential rights attached to membership of an ethnic group (Spoonley, 2017). In Aotearoa New Zealand, legislation, the courts, parliament and policies have confirmed that Māori, as members of iwi and hapū, have certain citizenship rights that differ from the rights attached to individuals as New Zealanders. Treaty rights and bicultural policies have changed constitutional understandings, to the consternation of conservatives. What is left largely unconsidered is an appropriate multicultural policy framework that will address the needs of a much more culturally diverse community. Kymlicka (1995) distinguishes between a *multination state* and a *polyethnic state*. The first refers to the situation where an indigenous group is able to make territorial claims and seek autonomy as part of the contemporary state in order to redress the negative impacts of colonialism. Meanwhile, polyethnicity acknowledges the cultural diversity that exists in a state as a result of immigration; rights are accorded to such groups, but they are not the same rights as those of indigenous groups/nations. New Zealand has, in effect, elements of both. The right of indigenous people, those of Māori, have been the subject of debate and policy development since the 1980s but the issues of polyethnicity are underdeveloped.

Ethnic revival encompasses the resurgence in ethnic identity of the past decades and the significance of this in political debates.

• • •

Māori identities in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand

By Tracey McIntosh, University of Auckland

Identity is created in social, political, historical, economic and cultural spaces and responds to diverse pressures and tensions. Whether individual or collective, ethnic or cultural, gendered or sexual, occupational or religious (to name a few of the ways in which we may look at our own identity orientation), identity is formed in the social reality in which we, as individuals, live. At any one time we will have multiple identities, often aligned to the multiple roles we have in our life course; for example, mother, daughter, husband, friend or employer. Whether we examine identity through a personal or a collective framework, sociologists would note that these identities reflect, and are shaped and informed by, the socio-political realities in which they are embedded.

Identities then, by their very nature, are dynamic. Yet there is a tendency to try to apply rigid labels. These labels are often informed more by the way we are perceived rather than the way we see ourselves. For some groups, the imposed label may dominate all other identity markers. The Māori historical experience of colonisation, and the contemporary reality of marginalisation and over-representation in nearly every negative social indicator in everyday life, have meant that ethnic identity in Aotearoa New Zealand has been a site of struggle, resistance and revival. In considering contemporary Māori identity, it may be useful to look at a number of ways in which these identities may be articulated currently. I have called these categories *fixed*, *fluid* and *forced*, both for the sake of simplicity and to highlight what makes them distinctive from one another. It is important to note that in all three categories, the experience of marginality is present, though the form and responses may be different. This underscores the fact that Māori identity remains a marginal identity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The *fixed* identity is often perceived of as a ‘traditional’ Māori identity. This is not a reference to Māori identity prior to European contact but rather reflects contemporary identity that focuses on particular cultural markers of identity. Whakapapa, mātauranga Māori, proficiency in te reo and tikanga are all seen as important. This identity is often articulated by prominent Māori who have power as leaders, as spokespeople, as scholars, and who are recognised as individuals of significance in their own communities and by the wider society. It is constructed by culturally and politically adept Māori who consciously work towards ensuring that Māori values and aspirations receive wide coverage. This group is important in responding to and challenging racial stereotypes.

The *fluid* Māori identity can be seen as a fusion or hybrid set of identities that demonstrate a greater level of flexibility/fluidity with cultural markers such as language, custom and place but which reconfigures them in a way that gives them both voice and currency in their specific social environment; an attempt, if you like, to ‘keep it real’. Often, this means the fusing of different ideas and practices from a diversity of cultural backgrounds to articulate a Māori identity that is strongly grounded in its particular social landscape. This identity may be more prominent among urban and young people who are aware of, and proud of, a mixed heritage.

The *forced* Māori category is where identity is largely imposed upon the individual or group and is characterised by a marked marginalisation where deprivation due to social, economic and political factors is entrenched and far-reaching. This category is informed by racist stereotypes and assumptions. All identities are formed externally and internally, but this one is predominantly based on the perceptions of the dominant outsider group, Pākehā. While identities are always social constructions, this example is one where the individuals labelled have little control over the process.

Categorising the identities in this fashion is, of course, overly simplistic but it gives us a pathway to explore Māori identity formation rather than to describe it simply as a given. Sociology offers techniques and concepts to help in this task.

Having read Tracey McIntosh’s piece, answer the following questions.

1. In terms of a ***fixed*** Māori identity, provide a list of the key identity markers (e.g. ability to speak te reo). Which Māori (in terms of age, geographical location, socio-economic status, etc.) are most likely to represent this identity?

2. What would categorise a ***fluid*** Māori identity? It might be helpful to consider a contemporary Māori performer. Note the point made about mixed heritage (often referred to as ***hybridity***).
3. What are the key elements in a ***forced*** identity? Key concepts include 'race', racism, institutional racism, prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination.
4. In relation to the events of the 1970s to the 1990s, what were the main influences in the recasting or renegotiation of Māori identity/identities?
5. What are the important contemporary influences on Māori identity formation? This might include influential individuals or organisations (an iwi), events (kapa haka festivals), a context (popular music) or political concerns (kura kaupapa Māori).
6. How do these Māori identities inform debates about identity generally and nationally?

A sociology that does not address such issues fails to include one of the central developments of recent decades. However, it is not simply the ethnicity of minority and indigenous groups that is of interest. In countries like Aotearoa New Zealand, the bicultural policies and assertiveness of Māori have challenged what it is to be a member of the majority group. This question was given focus with the publication of Michael King's book *Being Pakeha* (1985), and the label 'Pākehā' and what it means in terms of personal identity attracted a lively and, at times, angry debate in New Zealand in the late 1980s and 1990s. The simple process of naming yourself establishes certain claims, both about how social membership is defined and about what that membership means in terms of rights and resources.

Differences and divisions: a racist society?

Invalidating racism

The charge that a society, an institution or an individual is racist is now a politically powerful one. In seeking to undermine the monoculturalism that dominated many Western societies for most of the twentieth century, anti-colonial and anti-racist movements invested the notion of racism with a critical accusation. To be racist was to have broken a social code. Of course, that social code of non-discrimination towards other 'races' had to be defined and legitimated – a difficult task when quite the opposite had prevailed historically. The task was helped along by post-Holocaust developments that established that the notion of 'race' was scientifically invalid; by the politics of the newly independent countries and their activists; by the civil rights movement in the USA; by the promotion of universal human rights by international agencies such as the United Nations; and by the ethnic revival. Sociologists contributed to these debates.

In the UK, some sociologists took an interest in the arrival of non-white migrants in major urban areas from the 1960s onwards. They included John Rex and Robert Moore who, influenced by Weber, used the notion of **housing classes** to examine the way in which these new Asian and Afro-Caribbean migrants were being excluded within an urban housing market. Arguments about class divisions were combined with an interest in racial

disadvantage, and empirical research was used to demonstrate the extent of black exclusion from access to various sorts of housing in particular urban areas. It was part of a move to challenge commonly held assumptions about the equity and acceptance of cultural difference within British society from the late 1960s onwards.

Housing classes is a neo-Weberian term that assumes that position in a housing market is broadly equivalent to class.

Other sociologists also contributed to these emerging debates, especially by documenting the exclusionary ideas and practices of a colonial past. Michael Banton, for example, wrote about the history of the idea of ‘race’. The evolution of the idea, its support by the emerging biological sciences, the way in which the ideas about ‘race’ were used to justify slavery or genocide and the unscientific nature of the concept and its supporting arguments were all extensively critiqued by sociologists. This was broadened by the contributions of others from the late 1980s onwards. In particular, Edward Said argued that Europeans constructed a dualism between the West and the Orient in a way that strengthened ‘Western cultures and imprisons those of the Orient’ (Malik, 1996, p. 227). Orientalism helped define the ‘Other’: those who could justifiably be seen as different and/or inferior in some way, and thereby excluded. Said also analysed the various forms of resistance to these notions and extended the interest of Fanon in the process of decolonisation, the growing plurality of contemporary states and how this plurality is encompassed (or rejected) in civic life.

Wellingtonians hold a protest against the racist National Front in 2006. SOURCE: DYLAN OWEN

New forms of racism

In the wake of monetarist-inspired New Right governments in Europe and North America, new forms of racism have emerged that owe little to the crude biological racism of the past but rather are couched in the arguments of preserving cultural traditions and the importance of national unity and institutions. If you read the 'letters to the editor' columns of your local newspaper, you will see plenty of evidence of these evolving forms of racism. One interesting development has been the attempt to invert the meaning of racism. Instead of being used to indicate the classification of others in racial terms and then discriminating against them, some members of majority groups use the term racism to describe anything that recognises minority ethnic or indigenous group identity and practices. They think that the majority group is being excluded and want to use racism as the privileging of minority and indigenous groups. In this case, the definition of who is the 'victim' of racism is reversed. The 2004 speech in Ōrewa by then National Party leader Don Brash reflected these sentiments (O'Sullivan, 2007). This speech stressed the importance of treating everyone as New Zealanders, and of not 'creating' differences by using ethnic labels; the idea that Māori

had been given too much attention or resources; and that Pākehā (Brash did not use this term) were being blamed and treated unfairly. In fact, the empirical evidence demonstrates the nonsense of this position. Even though ethnic and indigenous groups have become more widely recognised in policy terms, the sociological research demonstrates that they continue to face disadvantage in a way that is not true for majority groups such as Pākehā. Whether in the area of access to health care, or education, justice, employment or housing, Māori and Pacific people typically experience much higher negative rates than is true for Pākehā. A crude but reasonably consistent measure is to say that the rate for Māori/Pacific people will be twice to four times worse than Pākehā rates. This is also apparent in areas such as unemployment, illness, imprisonment or sub-standard housing. The question is whether this state of affairs is primarily the product of racism.

The answer is a lot more complex than one might expect. In the case of the health statistics, some of the difference can be accounted for by class. Death or illness resulting from accidents or certain diseases is a direct product of the class position of individuals and families. If working-class Māori and Pākehā are compared, then the differences are reduced. However, proportionately more Māori are working-class for historical reasons, which is one reason that more Māori appear in negative statistics. Demographically, Māori have a much younger age profile and constitute a greater proportion of the ‘at-risk’ age groups. If teenage males are responsible for burglary and car accidents, and Māori make up a much greater proportion in this group (compared with the proportion of the total population in this age group), then more Māori will end up in court or hospital. Māori also migrated to urban areas in the 1950s and 1960s when urban manufacturing industries were expanding, and are now to be found in the declining and de-industrialising sectors of these urban economies, with the result that they have faced significant levels of redundancy, unemployment and underemployment in the 1980s and 1990s (Durie, 2005) and again since 2008 when the Global Financial Crises (2008–2012) occurred.

These factors – class, age, location in labour markets and in certain communities – all contribute to the negative statistics and poor social/economic outcomes. But the cumulative effect, especially when combined with the marginalisation of indigenous cultures and institutions, and a history of colonisation, is to produce disadvantage that can justifiably be labelled as racist. Some of these issues are being addressed, by both the state (in a limited way) and by Māori (in a more significant way), but the extent of the problems faced is such that these inequalities are not going to be easily addressed or eliminated.

Theorising racism and ethnicity

A number of approaches to the theorisation of racism and/or ethnicity have already been canvassed in this chapter. For example, the political economy of labour migration has helped revolutionise the way in which sociologists, and others, have viewed contemporary racial and ethnic relations. Theorists such as Miles, Castles and Vertovec have encouraged social scientists to look critically at the use of ‘race’, to take care with the concept racism, and to recognise the significance of contemporary forms of resistance and cultural identity. In

addition, they have combined an analysis of racism with the demands of capitalism, and focused attention on the migration and settlement of culturally different groups in the main centres of capitalist production.

Views on migration in Aotearoa New Zealand

Relatively isolated countries such as Aotearoa New Zealand have been as much affected by the global movement of people as any other. Colonial New Zealand had explicit laws and policies to exclude Asians, exclusionary policies that existed until World War II. In the post-war period, labour migration began with that of Māori from the rural hinterland. This was followed in the 1960s by the arrival of various groups from the Pacific Islands, which supplemented the ongoing immigration of British and Dutch migrants. Polynesian migrants were welcomed in the expanding industrial sector because of the demand for semi-skilled and unskilled labour. However, by the 1970s, with an economic downturn signalled by the oil crises in 1973, some of these groups were racialised. Local problems such as growing unemployment, what was perceived as a decline in law and order, and the deterioration of certain city areas were interpreted by many as associated with the arrival of 'Pacific Islanders' (see box). The campaign against overstayers that took place during the mid-1970s through to the late 1980s explicitly linked Pacific migrants with illegal overstaying, despite the fact that many overstayers were North Americans and Europeans. The police, immigration officials, politicians and the media all contributed to the common-view racism that justified the targeting of Pacific Islanders as 'problem' groups. Miles refers to this as *racialisation*, the process of defining some groups as 'races' and then seeing their presence as problematic in some way. This aids understanding of the processes and politics of a period of mass labour migration that took place in many countries between the 1950s and 1970s.

• • •

The term *Pacific Islanders* used in the context of this book is a convenient, if problematic, way of referring to those who were born in the Pacific Islands and have migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand, or those who have been born in New Zealand of Pacific Island descent. There are a number of problems associated with the use of the term: for many New Zealanders, it has associations with some of the stereotypes that were deployed in the 1970s and 1980s and the racialisation of Pacific people as 'problem migrants'. For Pacific Islanders themselves, the term collapses important cultural differences as well as reproducing a negative label. Recently, alternative terms such as *Pacific peoples* or *Tagata Pasifika* have been used.

The label *Asian* is likewise problematic, for many of the same reasons.

Capitalism had changed significantly by the late 1980s, with the nature of production being subject to new global pressures, the withdrawal of state support and the deregulation of the labour market. The demand for semi-skilled and unskilled labour evaporated as de-industrialisation occurred and the geo-political interests of Aotearoa New Zealand swung

from Europe to the Asia region. The migration flows changed again, with an increased flow of migrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea entering New Zealand between 1990 and 1995. There was then a decline in migration from Asia for several years; but since 2000, migrants from India and China, along with those from Britain, have dominated migration to New Zealand. These migrants, often wealthy and skilled, were also racialised and seen as a threat to the cultural 'homogeneity' of New Zealanders. When political candidates, especially from parties such as New Zealand First, used the word 'immigrant' during the 1996 election campaign, and talked of the problems that immigrants had created, audiences understood that it was 'Asian' immigrants to whom reference was being made. These anti-immigrant politics were also apparent during the 2002 election as New Zealand First made immigration a major plank in its campaign, along with an anti-Treaty position. Once again, immigrants were racialised and political struggles around 'race' became significant.

Addressing migrant-based racism

Stuart Hall, a Gramscian-inspired, British-based black sociologist, is one who has contributed to an understanding of these contemporary struggles. Hall, as a neo-Marxist, continues to focus on the capitalist and class nature of Western societies, but then goes on to examine the forms of resistance adopted by Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities to racist ideas and practices. The use of music to critique racism is one interesting example. Hall focuses on the role of the state and of institutions such as the media in sustaining racism. As a Gramscian, he is interested in the establishment and maintenance of **hegemony**, and Hall examines the role of state agencies such as the police, or the contribution of the media, in creating and circulating certain ideas about non-whites (and whites, for that matter). Since the 1960s those marginalised or colonised have fought back, and Hall highlights the resistance of non-white communities to the disempowering effects of racism. Ranginui Walker, using similar arguments to Hall, provides an analysis of hegemonic struggles between the state (and institutions such as the media) and Māori in New Zealand (Spoonley, 2009).

Hegemony is a concept developed by the Marxist Antonio Gramsci to describe a form of power won through ideological dominance.

Stuart Hall has been influential in an approach that has collectively been labelled 'post-colonial'. The term is confusing because it implies that colonialism has been replaced, whereas in fact it is accepted by those interested in **post-colonialism** that new forms of colonialism are occurring, often as an outcome of new types of economic or cultural sovereignty. Post-colonialism refers to the 'process of resistance and reconstruction' (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 2) that results from the interaction between the 'imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices' (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 1). In the case of a revisionist history, the aim is to give voice to those groups who have been silenced, who have

not been able to have their story told, and also to adopt a much more critical understanding of the actions of the colonists. The experiences of the colonised are discussed, and the ideologies that have sustained colonial oppression, especially those that are racist, are challenged. It is this challenge to the racism of colonialism that has been an important characteristic of post-colonialism (Walker, 2004; Maaka & Fleras, 2005). It obviously encompasses the resistance of Māori but also includes the activities of supportive Pākehā. Indeed, the label itself indicates a willingness to resist the ideologies and practices of a colonial past, although the term is problematic in that not all who use the label are sympathetic to the politics of resistance or to Māori ambitions for tino rangatiratanga. As members and beneficiaries of a settler colonial culture, majority group members (Pākehā) are 'poised . . . between the centre from which they seek to differentiate themselves and the indigenous people who serve to remind them of their own problematic occupation of the country' (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 152).

Post-colonialism involves a critical understanding of the experiences and effects of colonialism, as well as resistance in various forms. It does not mean 'after colonialism'.

New and multiple identities

Another element of post-colonialism involves the often multiple identities that occur in culturally diverse or **superdiverse** societies. In some cases, new ethnic identities emerge as locally born descendants of migrants adopt and adapt ethnic traditions and values from their new location (Spoonley, 2017). In other cases, new identities merge as a result of being born into multi-ethnic families. Sociologists have contributed to an understanding of these new *subaltern* or *hybrid identities*, especially as they develop new forms of popular culture. A New Zealand example might be television programmes such as *bro'Town* (2003) or films like *No. 2* or *Sione's Wedding* which explore the identities of New Zealand-born Pacific people and the clashes with both traditional cultures and the authorities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ethnic identity is never static, and post-colonial politics provides an opportunity to explore new forms of identity expression in ways that resist the racism of dominant groups and institutions.

Superdiversity refers to the intensification of the diversity of populations and the implications for inequality, prejudice and segregation, as well as policies.

Conclusion

Ethnic identity and racial exclusion are a central focus for contemporary sociology, especially

the ethnic identity politics that emerged as a major expression of resistance and community mobilisation in the late twentieth century. Looking back over the twentieth century, racism has been an enduring thread, from the genocide that was a product of European fascism, to apartheid in South Africa, to the beliefs and practices of racism in many countries. Equally important have been the various forms of resistance, such as the black civil rights movement in the USA and Māori expressions of tino rangatiratanga. In this century, mass migration has reinforced the cultural diversity of societies, assisted by the interconnectivity of new technologies and travel. The issues of colonialism and indigeneity are made more complex by the multiculturalism that results from this migration and what might be called true 'politics of rejection' from nationalist and nativist politicians and political parties in countries like the USA, Australia or Hungary. It is our task as sociologists to provide a convincing analysis of such developments, and to write racism and ethnicity into the very core of sociological understanding and practice.

Study questions

6.1 In relation to the twentieth century, what have been the major expressions (or examples) of racism?

6.2 In thinking about your own identity, how would you describe your ethnicity (or ethnicities)? How would you define ethnicity sociologically?

6.3 What are the key features of a post-colonial approach to issues of racism and ethnicity?

6.4 What are currently the key issues in intergroup relations? What are they likely to be in the future?

6.5 Sociologists talk of *hybridity* as groups adapt their cultural practices and adopt new identities. What are some examples of hybridity in a New Zealand context?

6.6 Are the issues associated with indigeneity and ethnicity the same? Are there important differences?

FURTHER READING

Butcher, A. (2018). What does New Zealand's changing demography mean for its place in the world? In R. G. Patman, I. Iati, & B. Kiglics (Eds.), *New Zealand and the world past, present and future* (pp. 83–99). Toh Tuck, Singapore: World Scientific.

Durie, M. (2005). *Ngā tai matatū. Tides of Māori endurance*. Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

Liu, J. H., McCreanor, T., McIntosh, T., & Teaiwa, T. (Eds.). (2005). *New Zealand identities: Departures and destinations*. Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press.

Macpherson, C., Spoonley, P., & Anae, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Tangata o te moana nui. The evolving identities of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore.

Miles, R. (1989). *Racism*. London, England: Routledge.

Spoonley, P. (2009). *Mata toa: The life and times of Ranginui Walker*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin.

Spoonley, P. (2017). Renegotiating citizenship: Indigeneity and superdiversity in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand. In J. Mann (Ed.), *Citizenship in transnational perspective* (pp. 209–222). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Spoonley, P., & Bedford, R. (2012). *Welcome to our world? Immigration and the reshaping of New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Dunmore Publishing.

Walker, R. (2004). *Ka whawhai tonu matou. Struggle without end* (rev. ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin.
Wong, H. (2016). *Being Chinese*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.

Useful websites

Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand: http://www.teara.govt.nz
The International Metropolis Project: http://www.international.metropolis.net/