

# Media psychology, symbolic power and social justice in Aotearoa

**Darrin Hodgetts<sup>1</sup>**

**Alison Barnett**

**Andrew Duirs**

**Jolene Henry**

**Anni Schwanen**

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CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: Dr. Darrin Hodgetts  
Department of Psychology  
University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105  
Hamilton, New Zealand  
[dhdgetts@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:dhdgetts@waikato.ac.nz)

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## **Media psychology, symbolic power and social justice in Aotearoa**

### **Abstract**

*Psychologists reside in a world saturated by media. We work in professional contexts where guidelines for practice foreground ethical obligations to address issues of social justice. This paper addresses both these contextual dimensions of psychological research and practice. We explore the social significance of increased media production by Maori in challenging the tendency in mainstream media to marginalize Maori concerns while promoting Pakeha perspectives. The analysis focuses on the recent 'Inside Out documentary – Hikoī', which was initiated by two young Maori women as a challenge to media framing of Maori protests as 'unjustified' and 'disruptive' acts. We illustrate how this documentary furthers public dialogue regarding the foreshore and seabed controversy by promoting an alternative depiction of a Maori protest, which emphasize the history of grievances and social unity. The implications of such representations for psychologists working to address issues of social justice and to challenge abuses of symbolic power are discussed.*

For over 100 years psychologists have worked with the media. We have contributed advice columns, written self-improvement books, hosted radio shows, featured as experts on reality TV programmes, and evaluated web-based efforts to educate people about a raft of health concerns (Kirschner & Kirschner, 1997; Hodgetts, Bolam & Stephens, 2005). Increased recognition of such efforts is reflected in the development of media psychology practice guidelines by the American Psychological Association. Media remain ever more relevant to psychological research and practice because public consumption of various news and entertainment forms is a primary leisure activity. From reading newspapers, listening to the radio or surfing the web people come to understand what is happening in different communities, what issues they should be concerned about, and how these issues should be resolved (Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004). International psychological research has documented how such media dependent processes have become central to the psychology of intergroup relations (Livingstone, 1998).

While media use can open up dialogue between different sectors of society we must not forget that not all communities are represented equally or have the opportunity to represent themselves on their own terms. New Zealand psychologists have documented how Maori voices are significantly disadvantaged in mainstream media coverage, which often functions to

silence Maori, while relying on non-Maori voices to frame issues concerning Maori (Barclay & Liu, 2003; McCreanor, 1993; Rankin & McCreanor, 2004). Biases in depictions of intergroup relations in Aotearoa are not new. Print media played a central role in processes of colonization; being used as a tool for convincing colonizing and colonized groups that what was occurring was in the interests of 'everyone' (Spoonley & Hirsh, 1990). Historically, when Maori have asserted rights to land and autonomy, coverage has been partial, providing little background to grievances and dismissing Maori concerns as unreasonable and unnecessarily hostile (Curnow, Hopa & McRae, 2002; Barclay & Lui, 2003). Today, even when contributing to media discussions of health and social concerns faced by their own communities, commentators are forced to continuously defend any references to structural inequalities, racism or colonization (Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004). Recent coverage of the Foreshore and Seabed controversy generally frames Maori claims to guardianship as unreasonable 'threats to Pakeha control' and 'national interest'. Such coverage has contributed to the hasty development of new legislation that once again displaces Maori indigenous rights (*cf.*, Maihi, 2003; Walker, 2002).

The governments' ability to dismiss or regulate 'away' Maori grievances is linked to the settler societies control over media institutions and representations of Maori (Curnow et al., 2002). Control over the framing of conflict between social groups is enacted through the media when protest actions are taken out of context and are presented as pointless disruptive acts (Rankin & McCreanor, 2004). Such expressions of symbolic power involve the ability of the settler society to intervene in unfolding events, and to influence the framing of issues and therefore options available to Maori (*cf.*, Peitikaninen, 2003). This power to name and define issues is linked to economic and social privilege. That is, economically and socially advantaged groups monopolize deliberations regarding issues affecting other peoples' lives and consequently reproduce and maintain their own economic and symbolic privilege (Couldry & Curran, 2002).

The relevance of media to the continued subjugation of Maori, and the need for psychologists to address imbalances in symbolic power should not come as a surprise to readers of this journal. Recent keynote addresses to the New Zealand Psychology Society by notable Maori leaders Tariana Turia and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and prominent community psychologists Raymond Nairn and Linda Nikora have also foregrounded such concerns and our professional obligation to support Maori efforts to obtain social justice. Other community psychologists have proposed that critical engagements with the media are necessary for raising public consciousness and for preventing the negative social and health consequences of imbalances in symbolic power (Hodgetts, Masters, Robertson, 2004; Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2003).

To this point we have considered the social psychological function of mainstream media in shaping race relations and the dismissal of Maori concerns in Aotearoa. Let us now consider the social and psychological consequences of Maori media as an alternative site for dialogue and community, and as a possible source of alternative representations. From print and radio to television and the internet, Maori have a history of using media to preserve cultural practices and to resist colonization (Fox, 1990; Stuart, 2003; Walker, 1990). In fact, Maori quickly realized the need for media production, developing the first Maori language newspaper in 1842 and producing radio broadcasts from 1942. These developments constituted efforts to assert rights, and to engage a wider audience in deliberations regarding indigenous rights. They exemplify the initiation of a community based production tradition that has continued intermittently through to the present day (Curnow et al., 2002; Whaanga, 1990; Fox, 1992). Recent increases in Maori media production have proved crucial for providing direct links within Maori communities, for nurturing a sense of community, for education, and for fostering a shared agenda necessary for continued advocacy for social justice (Stuart, 2003). As a site for social intervention, Maori media have also provided a training ground for Maori journalists and media professionals, and a wider understanding of news-media processes among Maori. Such understandings are central to democratic participation today (Couldry & Curran, 2002; Walker, 2002).

Despite exemplifying such positive features within society at large, Maori media have often been marginalized and under resourced. Maori media have not displaced the regulatory power of Pakeha institutions (Fox, 1992; McGregor & Te Awa, 1996). Sole reliance on Maori media allows mainstream media to sidestep their obligations to represent Maori concerns in an equitable manner (Whaanga, 1990). Challenging the symbolic power held by the settler society, and ensuring participation by both Treaty partners in public decision making processes necessitates Maori gaining a legitimate voice within mainstream media (Barclay & Liu, 2003). As Walker (2002) writes:

The Maori agenda of politicisation and struggle against historic injustices is, in Freire's (1972) terms, an act of liberating not only themselves but their oppressors as well. The aim is to get those entrusted with power over the lives of Maori to act justly as promised under the Treaty of Waitangi (p. 225).

This link between *conscientization* and media power necessitates more balance in coverage of collective action and expressions of unity and agency among Maori, as well as attempts to educate the general public about the origins of such events (*cf.*, Aron & Corne, 1996; Spoonley & Hirsh, 1990). Maori participation in mainstream media coverage is necessary because the resources communities have to address social inequalities and to maintain psychologically healthy communities capable of responding to the legacy of colonization are determined by

policy processes often occurring through the media beyond the borders of our communities (Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004).

The recent documentary 'Inside out – Hikoī' provides an example of Maori negotiating self-representation through mainstream media. This documentary has its origins in the longstanding traditions of Maori media production. What makes this documentary unique is that it was constructed from the perspective of two young Maori women involved in organizing the Hikoī, and constitutes an attempt by Maori to inform both Maori and the wider public about the catalysts for and rationale behind the recent Hikoī. We explore how this documentary's portrayal of a Foreshore and Seabed protest as a positive action departs from the tendency in mainstream media to frame Maori news as bad news and as being socially disruptive (Rankine & McCreanor, 2004; Stanley, 2002; Walker, 2002).

### **Methodology**

With adults in Western societies spending around 25 hours per week watching television, it remains a salient storytelling institution contributing to public understandings of a range of contemporary concerns. Questions concerning the role of television in challenging or supporting established power relations have shaped media psychology research (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2003; Livingstone, 1998). Researchers presenting somewhat pessimistic perspectives have proposed that television functions on behalf of powerful social groups. Conversely, those presenting more optimistic perspectives have proposed that television functions on behalf of the public, holding politicians and members of powerful social groups accountable for their actions. Neither perspective has proven adequate in fully capturing the complex and varied functions of television. Consequently, we explore television as a force for both social domination and change, as both reflecting and restricting the interests of Maori. The idea that television provides an institutionally mediated cultural forum centralizes the notion that coverage reflects, refracts, circulates, and helps create public images of intergroup relations in Aotearoa. It highlights the socially progressive possibilities of coverage while also acknowledging the restrictions often imposed through the concentration of symbolic power within Pakeha institutions.

Documentary provides an appropriate media form for investigating these processes because it has a long history of use among political movements to foreground grievances and to promote social change through the projection of suppressed perspectives into public dialogue (Abrash & Whiteman, 1999). In addition to providing a resource for reinvigorating solidarity and binding a social movement to a shared agenda, documentary is important because it becomes part of 'the public record' as a document that 'reflects' past events and intergroup relationships

(Gaines & Renov, 1999). The extended nature and calm expositional style of documentary also provides a level of credibility regarding the newsworthiness of portrayed events that is not as pronounced for other media forms (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2003).

A text and context narrative approach was used to focus the analysis beyond the description of this specific documentary in order to make broader observations about how social and cultural relationships were being storied (Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004). Generally, the analysis involved moving from repeated interactions with the documentary, to the initial coding of core story elements and the development of an interpretation that represents the overall narrative being promoted by the programme. Each author watched the entire documentary several times and took notes containing issues of interest. We then met to discuss emerging issues and recontextualise core themes in relation to the overall plot of the documentary. A plot synopsis for the story was then constructed to capture the function of various narrative elements and characters in the story's progression. Throughout, our interactions with the documentary were top down, in the sense of being informed by the existing literature on documentary form, symbolic power and media representations of indigenous peoples. The process was also bottom up, in the sense of generating ideas from the documentary and seeking literature to inform an overall interpretation (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2003). This communal process also enabled our group of Maori and Pakeha psychologists to engage in frank conversations about the events and issues depicted.

### **The Hikoi documentary as a site for interracial dialogue**

Our analysis provides an interpretation of the documentary that does not deal with every complexity or contradiction. The focus is on the social significance of this programme's handling of protest action and what this reveals about the potential to challenge historical trends in the domination of a Pakeha perspective in the framing of race relations in Aotearoa. Although this is not the only way to look at this documentary, it does enable us to set the context for wider social processes made prominent in the introduction to this article. Specifically, the analysis begins with a plot synopsis of the major trajectory of the documentary. This serves to orientate the reader and to illustrate the overall framing of the Foreshore and Seabed issue and associated Hikoi. We then examine the significance of basic elements of the story, such as the establishment of an historical context for the Hikoi, framing of relationships between Maori and the Crown, attempts to convince a Pakeha audience of the legitimacy of this grievance, and the image of Maori protesters that is promoted. A focus on these contextual elements sets the stage for an engagement with wider issues surrounding the social significance of the documentary as a challenge to symbolic power.

### *Documentary synopsis*

The documentary emphasizes unity and agency among Maori and understanding and acceptance among Pakeha. When initially addressing the audience the host Simon Dallow states "...many of us are still confused by the legal complexities of the Foreshore and Seabed debate, but what is clear is that it prompted united action by Maori on a scale never seen before". Such direct appeals to the wider public maintain a mode of address through which a Maori perspective is communicated primarily to a Pakeha audience in an effort to educate and inform them regarding catalysts for and the nature of this protest. The documentary then follows the announcement of the Hikoi to protest the government's proposed foreshore and seabed legislation. The audience is told that they will follow two young women (Te Whenua Harawira and Tere Harrison) with the Hikoi from 'the far north to parliament' and explore the reasons for this protest action. The camera then transports the audience from the far north, down 90 Mile Beach, to the north shore of Auckland, through south Auckland and the Waikato, to Taupo and the Hawkes Bay, and subsequently Wanganui, Martinborough and Wellington. The journey is punctuated with inserts from experts, including Iwi representatives, lawyers and crown representatives. These inserts are used to establish and reinforce the legitimacy of Maori concerns as a response to a history of land confiscations by the Crown. The documentary builds momentum through sequences focusing on the experiences of Hikoi participants. Increasingly important are assertions of identity and shared purpose across Iwi, and the need to engage with and educate the public regarding the reasons for this protest. The documentary concludes by illustrating the growing political mobilization of Maori from a few hundred people who started the journey in the far north to around 20,000 to 30,000 people protesting outside the steps of parliament.

### *Establishing an historical context for the Hikoi*

In the past, rather than being depicted as positive, unifying and empowering acts, Maori protests have been portrayed by mainstream media as rebellious disruptions to presumed social harmony (Barclay & Liu, 2003; McCreanor, 1993; Walker, 2002). For example, although raising awareness about the existence of grievances and leading to the establishment of bodies such as the Waitangi Tribunal, many of the noisy but peaceful mobilizations of the last three decades have been depicted in the media as 'full-scale riots' and as bad news for the Pakeha majority. The Hikoi documentary makes reference to such historical protest movements, in order to present a different interpretation of such protests as reasoned responses to ongoing injustices that express Maori identity and unity. The need to consciously reframe such protests in this way testifies to the taken for granted or hegemonic status of Pakeha perspectives and Maori understandings of the importance of promoting alternative

representations. In short, when constructing alternative representations the symbolic power of Pakeha to represent and reframe Maori assertions of agency is overtly evident (*cf.*, Barclay & Lui, 2003; Hodgetts, Bolam & Stephens, 2005).

An effective strategy for resisting the dismissal of the Hikoi is to position it as part of a larger pattern of resistance to colonization and associated injustices. Perhaps the most overt reference to past protests is the use of film footage of the 1975 land march; the steps of which the Hikoi is tracing. The use of such film footage and protest songs establishes a context for the present protest action based on similarities between the past and the present. The sequence begins with sun rise over the coastline and a graphic insert stating “22<sup>nd</sup> April 2004 – Cape Reinga”. Te Whenua then introduces herself as the audiences’ guide and explains a scene at a car park where protesters are gathering for a *karakia* to begin the march. The beginning of the journey is signalled by the lyrics “*there is a movement, movement on your feet, shuffle to the beat.... maranga ake ai*”. Such background music played an integral part in the documentary by underlying the kaupapa of the hikoi. Waiata were repeatedly used to suggest positive aspects of being Maori and the need for uniting and to advocate for collective rights and the retention of Taonga, including the foreshore and seabed.

The camera then shifts to the beginning of the march and captures images of Kuia, Koroua, Tamariki, and Rangatahi, Tane beginning the journey to Wellington. Walking beside Te Whenua is a man holding a Taonga in the form of a large carved pole with a flag on it. The camera then cuts back to footage of the 1975 Land march depicting another young man carrying the same Taonga. The interweaving of images depicting the use of this same Taonga today with images of Dame Whina Cooper walking to Wellington in 1975 traverses the time between events. Emphasizing the link, Te Whenua explains that this Taonga is the very one that Whina Cooper took with her. History is repeating itself and symbolically the people from 1975 are depicted walking alongside those on the 2004 Hikoi.

The framing of the Hikoi as a continuation of historical acts of resistance motivates a discussion of the proposed foreshore and seabed legislation as yet another confiscation of ‘things Maori’. Against the backdrop of historical grievances the documentary sets up an exploration of Crown and Maori relationships from a Maori perspective. As Simon Dallow’s voiceover states, “Although attention has been drawn to the foreshore and seabed in recent times, debate regarding the ownership of our coastline has a very long history”. Maori claims to the foreshore and seabed date back to 1860s and 70s. An example of an early objection to crown confiscation is subsequently introduced through a graphic insert depicting an historical parchment; *The 1869 petition of Tanameha Te Moananui*. The words of the petition read: “The



word has come to us that you are about taking our places from high water mark outwards. Great is the grief, great is the sorrow, great is the objection. That is not the work of chiefs, nor is it just work.” Simon Dallow then provides further historical background regarding early crown efforts to confiscate the foreshore and seabed:

In 1868 due to gold-mining in the region, the government made moves to put areas of Thames foreshore into Crown domain. Local Iwi wrote many letters of protest including the petition of Tanameha Te Moananui, from all of Ngatimaru, Ngatitamatera, and Ngati Whanaunga Pukerahui 5<sup>th</sup> August 1869.

The camera depicts John Mc Enteer who states that for his Iwi, “our sentiments are the same today as those of the earlier petition. Nothing much has changed.” Illustrating this point, Simon Dallow’s voiceover states “The Iwi in Huarache won a test case in 1870 when the Native Land Court guaranteed limited titles to areas of their foreshore and seabed”. John Mc Enteer is depicted in his office reading ‘The Hauraki Tribal Lands’ document and maps of land titles in Thames. He states:

The government did not like this at all and so tried to buy out titles (44 titles covering nearly 1000 acres between Thames and Tararu), all foreshore. Also in 1870, there was a proclamation issued under the Native Land Act that stated the government would take away jurisdiction of the Native Land Court’s ability to be able to consider any cases relating to foreshore and seabed, which is basically the same approach being used today in the Marlborough case. To my mind I just see history repeating itself.

These sequences serve to correct historical omissions in public discourse regarding the contemporary foreshore and seabed controversy. The emphasis on historical cases illustrates how documentaries can be used to enrich public deliberation and contextualize current tensions. The documentary contextualises this protest in order to enhance public understanding of why Maori have reacted in the way that they have. The use of historical footage positions the documentary as part of a legacy of responses to colonization, rather than an isolated disruptive act. Highlighting historical catalysts for today’s Hikoī also adds credibility to and warrants this protest action.

#### *Key relationships between stakeholders in the legitimization of Maori grievances*

The usual framing of political activism and resistance to subjugation relies on experts to identify and give meaning to the core issues that are then exemplified by those affected (Couldry & Curran, 2002; Glasgow Media Group, 1980; Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004). Coverage of protests and industrial disputes typically moves from the hectic picket lines to the calm reasoned offices of the powerful elites. In the case of the Hikoī documentary testimony from experts is primarily used to support the views and actions of people ‘outside’ on the front lines

of the protest. It is the protestors who identify the core issues to be deliberated upon in legal and political circles. The documentary's stated aim is to explore two young women's experiences of the Hikoi. These experiences are contextualised in relation to the political debate surrounding the governments' proposed legislation. The focus on such experiences is used to establish the implications for 'real people' of ongoing tensions between Maori and the Crown. It also serves to link local protest action to wider political processes and thus further situate the Hikoi as a legitimate demonstration of opposition to oppression. The changing status of Maori in this documentary is also reflected in the spaces and roles Maori occupy. Maori voices are not only presented on the street as protesters. These voices are also presented in institutional settings as legal experts. In the remainder of this section we will focus on the expert and institutional level of Maori resistance and advocacy. In the following section we will focus on the reframing of protestors as active citizens seeking to be heard from the street and through the media at a national level.

The expert inserts are revealing in terms of the portrayal of tensions between Maori and the Crown. There were 7 expert insert sequences which outline the legislation, history of foreshore and seabed grievances, the Marlborough sounds case, ownership of this Toanga, customary rights, the role of the Waitangi Tribunal, and due process. Testimony in the inserts was weighted in favour of a Maori perspective through the rhetorical positioning of speakers. For instance, the first insert provided an outline of the proposed legislation. This insert begins with Moana Jackson who proposes that the proposed legislation is unfair and unjust. He notes that it simply confiscates things which the Treaty of Waitangi, common law, and the Human Rights Act recognize as belonging to Maori. Moana's testimony is then juxtaposed with testimony from Dr. Michael Cullen [deputy PM] who refutes Mr. Jackson's claims by stating that the proposed legislation actually serves as a protection of Maori customary rights by recognizing ancestral connection and reaffirming Crown ownership so as to protect public rights and access. Testimony from Ms Annette Sykes is then presented as a response to Dr Cullen. Ms Sykes states that this legislation is unjust, is out of step with international law, and is simply a 'racially motivated' policy that subordinates the interests of Maori and elevates those of Pakeha. The sequence of these inserts is important because Dr Cullen's comments are 'sandwiched' between two Maori legal experts. The rhetorical promotion of a Maori perspective is reflected in how Moana Jackson's view is given the primacy position and Ms Sykes testimony, which dismisses Dr Cullen's stance, is given the recency position in the exchange. Revealing the promotion of a Maori perspective and the creative use of editing techniques by Maori producers, the framing of this exchange is the opposite to the findings of Barclay and Lui (2003) who found that media coverage of protests matched Maori commentators with Pakeha commentators.

Such inserts also promote the idea that Maori have done their research, have the historical facts, and are aware of their legal rights. The 'Marlborough Sounds Case' insert is used to reinforce the proposition that the Crown has a history of denying Maori rights to appease uninformed Pakeha interests. The audience is introduced to the Pakeha lawyer, Grant Powell who represents eight Iwi from the Marlborough Sounds who in 1997 lodged a case with the Maori Land Court to assert their customary rights to the foreshore and seabed. The audience is told that after years of legal battles with the Crown, the claim reached the Court of Appeal and a decision was reached in June 2003. The decision of the Court of Appeal did not say that Maori owned the foreshore. It said that the Maori Land Court had the jurisdiction to determine whether or not the foreshore and seabed of the Marlborough Sounds was Maori Customary Land. The foreshore and seabed legislation is presented as a subsequent attempt to change the rules of engagement by removing this legal right. What becomes clear at this point of the documentary is the positioning of the proposed legislation as a document that has been drafted on behalf of Pakeha to deny Maori rights. To highlight the racially motivated nature of the legislation Dr. Cullen is depicted asserting that the legislation has been formulated 'in the interest of the public'. And that Maori ownership "...would not be accepted by the great majority of New Zealanders". This statement is presented as being socially divisive because it asserts that Maori are separate from the public and centralizes Pakeha interests as distinct from Maori interests. Dr Cullen attempts to justify the legislation as preventing racial conflict and in doing so highlights the role of misinformed media coverage in race relations:

This hit the media and caused a frenzy among the public. The government made a clear statement that it wasn't going to allow new private ownership of the foreshore and seabed and so the government was crucial in calming down what could have been a 'nasty outbreak of racial antipathy'.

In response Moana Jackson asserts that the proposed legislation simply reflects how:

If a Government has a choice between pacifying the majority will when that will is based on misinformation, and being just then it has two obligations – to correct that misinformation, which it has failed to do, and to act justly. If a Government fails to act justly, then it has no right to govern.

Through the construction of these exchanges and their location in the narrative after the presentation of historical evidence pointing to the ongoing nature of Maori claims to governance over the foreshore and seabed, the documentary highlights that this is not a 'new' claim to 'private ownership'. Maori never relinquished guardianship of this Taonga.

Briefly, the combination of commentary from Grant Powell, Moana Jackson and Annette Sykes is revealing. For example, Mr. Powell's status as Pakeha serves to introduce a notion of

impartiality where even a Pakeha lawyer is convinced of the legitimacy of Maori claims. Because the other two lawyers are Maori the documentary is able to also maintain a level of reasoned empathy that invokes the consequences of government legislation for Maori participating in the Hikoi. This functions to link both levels of protest action into a united effort at obtaining social justice.

Subsequently, testimony from Moana Jackson is used to reinforce the suggestion that the Crown is being unreasonable and overly dismissive of Maori rights. Moana adds that at the very least the crown should conduct longer conversations with Maori and actually consider Maori concerns. This reasonable request is denied by Dr Cullen who, despite being aware of the historical evidence presented to viewers, again emphasizes 'the public interest' over 'Maori interests'. Mr. Jackson is the last expert to speak, so the audience is left with his comment in mind. He proposes that "the greatest tragedy of all is that this could have all been avoided. Now a legacy is left for the grandchildren where they will have to revisit it and they will have to resolve it, when it could have been resolved now. If politicians think this will go away, they are mistaken". The framing of the relationship between Maori and the crown promotes a sense of history of ongoing abuses of the relationship and confiscations.

#### *Challenging symbolic power through an emphasis on education*

Media power is challenged when marginalized groups are able to frame issues they face and speak for themselves more or less on their own terms (Couldry & Curran, 2002). An effective strategy for enhancing the potential of such challenges is to show dimensions of an issue that are usually omitted. This documentary differs from standard coverage of Maori grievances (McCreanor, 1993; Rankin & McCreanor, 2004; Spoonley & Hirsh, 1990; Walker, 2002) because it focuses on the historical rationale for and unifying aspects of such protests. Maori involved in the Hikoi and claims to the foreshore and seabed are also presented as being informed, organized and reasonable people. Such framing supports the legitimacy of Maori grievances and the need for public education, debate and redress. To this end the documentary appeals to the educative and nonviolent nature of the Hikoi and protesters status as reasonable and informed citizens exercising their democratic rights.

For instance, the importance of education as a basis for this challenge to symbolic power is evident at three interwoven levels. First, expert inserts are used to provide contextual evidence to inform audience interpretations of the Hikoi. Second, Hikoi participants are depicted taking part in educational workshops where speakers from various Iwi provide information on the proposed legislation and its implications. Third, the need for balance in coverage of Maori protests is evident in sequences highlighting how when media report on events these are often

framed to promote negative interpretations of protesters as aggressive and threatening. All three levels are overtly evident in the portrayal of the Hikoi crossing the Auckland harbour bridge and the convergence on Wellington.

The bridge sequence begins with the Hikoi arriving at Hato Petera College the night before the crossing. Te Whenua's voiceover accompanies the passing of the Taonga from the young man who has carried it from Cape Reinga to a local man to carry over the bridge. These men Hunga and Te Whenua states "As we traveled down the Motu our Pouwhenua was handed over to the manawhenua to carry through their tribal area. Leading us over the harbour bridge was an old boy of Hato Petera College and an uncle of mine, Germane Harawera". The camera then cuts between a series of shots emphasizing community and united action where people are depicted speaking to the group while Hikoi participants prepare banners for the mornings march over the harbour bridge. Te Whenua continues, "Educating ourselves about the foreshore & Seabed legislation was an important part of our Hikoi. And time was allocated each day for different speakers". This statement reflects the promotion of an image of protestors as informed citizens. Part of the speech of a young woman with a facial Moko is depicted to support the unitary nature of this protest action, which follows in the footsteps of previous generations. "We are all descended from Rangatira and we are following in their footsteps. They have never stopped fighting for us from the beginning to protect what is ours. Our Taonga and our future". At this point an historical insert was used to introduce the Historical objections for Hauraki and the need for public understanding.

The camera cuts to the harbour bridge as the Hikoi assembles and then crosses the bridge. A series of shots depict the marshals for the Hikoi working with journalists to ensure more balance in coverage and to prevent images that perpetuate negative stereotypes associated with Maori protest action. One particular sequence presents journalist filming from in front of the Hikoi as the protestors approach. Standing in front of the Hikoi Mr. Harawira addresses the journalists

You'll get plenty of time for your shots, but then I'm going to be asking you to move back. And when I do ask I expect all you cameramen to move your colleagues back, ok. Don't put it on us so that we're looking like tough guys when in fact you guys aren't playing by the game.

Evident in this sequence is the need for Maori to manage such media events that attract attention and have the potential to be framed as adversarial acts. Media management techniques based on an understanding of media production processes are used to promote a more balanced representation. Te Whenua is depicted continuing this marshaling work by guiding a camera crew back. She states, "...It's actually rude what uses are doing cos you's

are making people stop for your photos. So either you capture the moment or get away". A voiceover from Tere then provides a verbal link to a sequence where she is watching the footage of the bridge crossing. She comments that the protest "...looks like a party hey. You know, no hassles, no problems. I haven't seen any police. Everyone is in a good mood". This passage makes sense in the context of the framing of such protests as disruptive and aggressive events requiring police intervention. It is important to note that in order to challenge mainstream media stereotypes the makers of the documentary do not have to comment on them directly. The documentary makers simply assert that what they are seeing is different and in doing so, can justify an alternative representation and interpretation of Maori protest action.

We have traced this bridge scene from education sessions, the use of historical inserts, the crossing of the harbour bridge, and a media production sequence within which such events are edited in order to highlight how Maori are actually challenging the adversarial tendency of mainstream media to represent Maori news events as bad news (Rankin & McCreanor, 2004; Stanley, 2002; Walker, 2002). Today's marchers who are retracing the steps of the past have learnt the lessons of the past. They are now consciously managing the media to promote a new and more balanced portrayal of Maori protestors. This challenge to conventional representations of Maori protestors is continued throughout the documentary and is overtly evident in the closing sequences in Wellington, where the two young women reflect on the depicted events. For instance, accompanying shots of the crowd making the final walk to Parliament are voiceovers from Tere and Te Whenua. Tere begins "Nobody can agree how many marched that day. What was clear was there unity". Then Te Whenua continues "every person that was there represented another give who couldn't make it". Accompanying this statement was an image of a protester carrying the photograph and therefore spirit of Whina Cooper. Tere continues, "For many of them it was the first time they'd ever done anything like this. This wasn't a bunch of haters and wreckers, but a tidal wave of proud people". Te Whenua continues, "And I think everyone came with the understanding that even if we couldn't stop the legislation our objections would go down in history". These sequences are revealing in terms of emphasizing alternative and positive representations of Maori protest, community unity and the need to participate in democratic processes and create an historical record of Maori objections to the new legislation. Such statements as 'we are not wreckers' reflect the rejection of existing media framing of community activists as 'radicals and disrupters'. These commentaries highlight that protestors are not simply a radical minority of Maori, but have the support of the wider community who could not make the event (*cf.*, Barclay & Lui, 2003).

## **Discussion**

Media coverage of race relations continues to provide a collective space within which the public can commune and construct a sense of similarity, difference, and nationhood (*cf.*, Barclay & Liu, 2003; Stuart, 2003). Coverage provides a site for the revision of shared myths central to our understandings of each other and communal expectations (*cf.*, Mato, 2000; Pietikaninen, 2003). There are signs that the terms of reference for such deliberations may be expanding to include Maori perspectives. The advent of Maori television, renewed Maori media production, and attempts to produce more balanced portrayals of protests within mainstream coverage attest to a broadening of dialogue between Maori and Pakeha (Curnow et al., 2002; Fox, 1990; Stuart, 2003; Walkers 1990). Documentaries such as *Hikoi* exemplify efforts to foster mutual respect and positive intergroup relations in Aotearoa that are essential if Maori and Pakeha are to live together and to negotiate psychologically healthy communities.

We have explored how documentary can be used to provide an account of Maori concerns regarding guardianship of the foreshore and seabed that is contextualized through historical references to ongoing tensions between the Crown and Maori. The documentary questions why Maori are still recipients of, rather than participants in decision-making processes that affect the use of such Toanga. Maori are presented as social agents and citizens rather than as uninformed and antagonistic agitators (Curnow et al., 2002). When seen in the context of wider representational patterns within mainstream media, the emphasis on such dimensions in this documentary can be understood as an expression of collective agency that challenges society to consider Maori perspectives when deliberating upon grievances (Couldry & Curran, 2002). The seeds for such unity and cooperation have been developed and fostered through Maori media for some time (Fox, 1992; Stuart, 2003; Walker, 2002). What we see in the *Hikoi* documentary is an attempt to extend this dialogue and consciousness to the wider Pakeha public. The long-term goal is to reposition Maori concerns as part of 'our' or societies collective concerns, rather than as 'their' concerns. In the process, this documentary offers the public a more positive glimpse into protest action and Maori assertions of agency and identity that have been denied in the media framing of such events in the past (Barclay & Liu, 2003). Audiences witness unity, co-operation and the emergence of a community narrative that communicates historical efforts to obtain social justice (Rappaport, 2000). This framing presents a direct challenge to conventional portrayals of Maori as initiators of problems (Stanley, 2002). Maori are portrayed in this documentary as responding to problems caused by colonization and as seeking constructive and equitable solutions. This is part of a wider effort of Maori media producers to promote positive images of tangata whenua and Maori perspectives on news events (Stuart, 2003).

The analysis presented in this paper contributes to a growing body of literature in psychology regarding the role of social institutions in the subjugation of social groups (Aron & Corne, 1996; Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004; Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2003; Rappaport, 2000). In exploring how media coverage preserves social structures that are harmful to people such work often focuses on abuses of symbolic power. We have focused on a positive intervention by Maori media professionals that challenges traditional representations of tangata whenua. Such interventions need to be considered as efforts at *conscientization*, which story grievances differently and foster public understanding and support for communally focused practices (Rankine & McCreanor, 2004; Rappaport, 2000; Walker, 2002). As psychologists engaged in community research and activism we can assist such processes with research based engagements with media organizations regarding the positive and negative social and health impacts of different representational practices surrounding Maori communities and concerns. Such a project is presently being conducted by the Maori and Psychology Research Unit at the University of Waikato (HRC no: 04/274). Ultimately, in order to respond to the media saturated nature of everyday life and intergroup relations psychology programmes need to include training in media analysis and advocacy techniques.

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