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Anomalies of Collection

A Study of the Validity and Value of Ethnic Data

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A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts in Social Policy at
Massey University, March 1997

Abstract

From the outset the task was to investigate the validity of ethnic mortality data collection and suggest ways it could be improved. This began with a concern about an anomaly between the hospitalisation rates for young Maori involved in road accidents and the reported official road mortality rates for these same young Maori. The hospitalisation figures suggested Maori were over-represented and the mortality rates suggested Maori were under-represented.

Using a sample of those who died on the road in 1990, the ethnic data collected by police was compared with ethnic data collected by funeral directors, the responses of next-of-kin and the ascribed ethnicity taken from a search of death notices. Major differences of ethnic classification were revealed, particularly between next-of-kin and police and funeral directors, raising serious questions about the validity of the two official sets of data.

An assessment of the validity of the two sets of data was made by linking an historical analysis of the concepts and definitions of race and ethnicity with a qualitative study of the ethnic data collection practices of police and funeral directors.

The final ethnic data sets were revealed to be a construction of the 'common-sense' conceptual understandings of race and ethnicity held by police and funeral directors being applied to the practices of collection and classification. These concepts, understandings and practices contained a variable mixture of historical paradigms and discourses. On the basis of validity as it is understood by statisticians, both official collections could reasonably be judged invalid.

However, the deeper issue underlying this finding concerns the value of ethnic statistics. Their value lies in their use for justifying resource allocation and distribution between different ethnic groups. Ethnic data and its collection cannot be viewed outside the politics of resource allocation and the project of improving ethnic data is firmly located in this context.

Acknowledgements

As this thesis has been written, my life has undergone many changes. Being able to bring the writing to a conclusion seems nothing short of a miracle. There are many people to be thanked and acknowledged, and the best place to start is at the beginning.

It was my father, Bob McKegg who started this journey when he suggested I develop a research proposal for a project being funded by the then Ministry of Transport. His support and encouragement have been ongoing and instrumental in the development of my ideas and framework. But more fundamentally, with huge amounts of aroha, he has believed in me and my ability to do this project.

Indeed, all my family have shared a belief in me and this combined with their love and ongoing support has enabled me to bring this thesis to an end. Mummy listened and counselled and embraced me with her strength, intense loyalty and love. I would like to acknowledge and thank both my parents for giving me the values and skills necessary to tackle and complete this task. Alex and Mark consistently cared for my children and my mental health and their children Durham and George provided me with many moments of joy and pleasure. Rob and William, although absent for long periods, were there for me at a particularly needy time. Thank you all.

Those who have shared (and suffered) most intensely in the whole process and to whom I owe enormous gratitude and thanks are my children, Jessica and William and my partner Stephen. Your encouragement, patience, and love provided the daily sustenance to keep going.

Thanks are due to the many friends I made along the way and those I already had who offered advice, critique and support. Support came in many ways, the minding of children, dinners when I was broke, shoulders to cry on etc. Especially consistent support and friendship came from Nick and Margaret Dobson, Moe and Sandy Turoa, Ashleigh Gould, Beth Haas, Eric Assendelft, Judith Morris, Fiona Small, Liz Neale, Nick and Nicky Wilson, Dave and Roselle Beatty, Bev Marshall, Heather Bain, Phil Scott, Robyn Cormack and Angela Swindells-Wallace.

This journey has been a mixed one. There have been highs and lows and in-betweens. The presentation of this thesis brings with it a long awaited high and a new beginning.

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INTRODUCTION

"A valid measure is one which measures what it is intended to measure"
(de Vaus, 1985:55).

This research began with concern raised by Police about the involvement of Maori in fatal road accidents. In their view, the official road death rates as they applied to Maori, particularly young Maori (15-24 year olds), did not seem to be an accurate representation of Maori involvement in fatal road accidents. Two questions were posed. First, how valid are official ethnic road fatality statistics? Secondly, how can ethnic fatality statistics be improved?

The first step to addressing the question about the validity of ethnic mortality data was to examine a sample of official ethnic mortality data. So a quantitative analysis of a sample of road death data collected by police and funeral directors in 1990 was undertaken. This information was then compared with several other sources of information. These included a survey of next-of-kin and newspaper death notices and a final database was collated using all sources of information.

A variable picture emerged. When the ethnic assignment for the same group of people was compared across several information sources, the rates of reporting for Maori, Pakeha, Pacific Islanders and Other ethnic groups were found to be extremely variable. For example, when exactly the same people were compared, funeral directors reported 94.9 percent of them as Pakeha and 5.1 percent as Maori. However next-of-kin reported only 81.4 percent as Pakeha, 13.6 percent as Maori and 5.1 percent as part of the Other ethnic group. Further investigation revealed that not only were the rates of reporting variable, so too were the definitions of race and ethnicity used in each of the collections.

So why is this happening? Which set of ethnic data should be treated as valid or accurate? Were any of them valid? How do we judge the validity of ethnic data? There are two dimensions to this question, one concerns the concepts and definitions of ethnicity and race, and the other pertains to the operational and working procedures by which the concept of race or ethnicity is applied each time a form is completed. (Eglin, 1987:197). Whilst the two dimensions are separate in that they address different issues, they are also inextricably linked. For example, a given administrative definition or understanding of race or ethnicity may prescribe the form the question takes. However, the working procedures or actions which officials and respondents apply in the process of completing forms used in the collection of data may embody many past and present understandings and definitions of ethnicity thereby producing fundamental differences in what is being counted as ethnicity or race.

Definitions are given to certain concepts such as ethnicity and race, and 'rules' by which certain behaviour or people are deemed to fall into one category or another are made. Then an operational procedure followed by officials fits "the definition (or rules) to the cases" (Eglin, 1987: 195). Thus, the official definition or rule for the categorising of 'Maori' for data collection purposes may be "all Maoris of full blood, all European-Maori half-castes, and all European-Maoris of mixed blood who are nearer to Maori in degree than to European" (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:1). The operational procedure would then comprise the way in which the 'facts' of degree are established.

As Eglin (1987:198) so rightly points out, the "issue becomes more critical when it is allowed that historical differences may, in a sense, be present in the variety of meanings any category of behaviour has at any particular point in time". Given this possibility, any reliance on the validity of official rates of behaviour runs the risk of "distinguishing what should be combined, or combining what should be distinguished, thus mistaking the real affinities of things, and accordingly misapprehending their nature" (Durkheim, 1952:41; cited in Eglin, 1987:199).

Concepts are the basic ideas which underlie any statistical classification or categorisation. These concepts influence the definitions which are then used to form the specific rules for the practice of categorisation or operationalisation (Department of Statistics, 1993:13). Definitions of ethnicity and race need to be considered at two levels when thinking about ethnic data collection. The first concerns defining ethnicity and race from a theoretical and conceptual point of view. Although often viewed as an academic exercise, theoretical debates and musings about the concepts of race and ethnicity grapple with the everyday understandings and experiences of race, ethnicity and identity and the ways in which these impact the material practices and processes of ethnic relations. Theoretical and conceptual understandings then influence the way in which ethnicity is considered for the practices of research, policy formation and ethnic data collection.

The second level of definition applies to the way in which theoretical definitions and understandings are then translated into operational definitions which in the case of ethnic statistical collection are the questions and rules which are designed to collect ethnic data. Then, in a cyclical way, data collected using these operational definitions or questions is utilised to inform ongoing theoretical discussion and revision of operational definitions and processes.

Statistical measurement begins with concepts which are to be measured. Paradoxically, given the implicitly held belief about the precision of statistical measurement, concepts by their very nature are imprecise, they "do not have some sort of independent existence 'out there': they do not

have any fixed meaning” (de Vaus,1990:48). But our ability to ‘know’ is dependent on the creation and naming of concepts.

Knowing involves *representational* naming. That is, *concepts* are developed by *abstracting* from experience, then forming a representational currency for organizing and communicating it (Oakley,1992:334).

It is impossible to discuss any aspect of social life without the use of concepts and categories. But the process of naming is a political one. Names are bound up with identity, both collective and individual (Mason,1990:128).

Conceptual understandings of social phenomena are also not timeless. They are sited within particular historical social, economic, political and cultural circumstances. Changes in understanding do not occur universally, nor immediately. Some ideas are particularly obstinate. Many conceptual assumptions and ideas which affect practices of classification evident today are traceable to ideas from several centuries ago.

Statistical knowledge gained credence during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries within a positivist philosophical current of thought which privileged certain ‘ways of knowing’, in particular, the scientific method derived from the physical and mathematical sciences (Kolakowski, 1993:7). Mainstream approaches to knowledge place great store in statistical descriptions of the world around and the concepts and categories of statistical science have dominated the basis of ‘what we know’ and statistical method has determined ‘how we know what we know’ for most of the last 200 years.

What we ‘know’, how we know what we know, and who has knowledge are fundamental ontological and epistemological questions which have been the focus of philosophical debate for many years. More recently, feminist argument has critiqued and unbundled scientific claims about knowledge (Hawkesworth,1989). Despite this, statistical representation continues to wield considerable power in the formation and preservation of identities whether or not the final data or ‘knowledge’ derived from the process of statistical collection is a valid representation of the originally defined concept or of anything approximating ‘real’ life.

In a pragmatic accommodation and acknowledgement of statistical knowledge Oakley(1992,vii) suggests that “[t]he use of statistics is not a substitute for other ways of appreciating social events and processes but it is an aid to understanding the social world and to interpreting the quantitative statements all of us make”.

In the first of two syntheses that guide the structure of this research, I will explore the notion of validity in terms of the original debate set up by

Kitsuse and Cicourel (1963). Central questions in their view concern the definitions and concepts used by organisations, and how classification and recording occurs within organisations (Kitsuse and Cicourel, 1963:139). Having found high levels of variability in ethnic mortality data, the route to explaining these differences lies first in an exploration of the way in which race and ethnicity have been operationally and theoretically defined.

This analysis is guided by a second historical synthesis which provides a context for understanding the development of definitions and concepts about race and ethnicity in terms of New Zealand's colonial past and the development of a society dominated by a world view which came from Europe. "Any social phenomenon must be understood in its historical context...History is more than the passage of events whose sequence can be memorised...the past has continuing relevance in the present" (Tuchman, 1994:306-313).

Drawing from the work of Michael Omi, Howard Winant (1994) and Ruth Frankenburg (1993), the development of the definitions and concepts of race and ethnicity is described as evolving in three phases. The first beginning with the arrival of colonists is rooted in biologicistic and essentialist notions about the nature of race. The second begins in the 1920s and 1930s and in direct challenge to the first, rids itself of a focus on biology. Culture becomes important and the assimilation, amalgamation of difference drives debate, policy and research for more than the next fifty years. A new focus on difference emerges in the 1960s and 1970s from the critique of structural inequality, domination and colonialism by non-white ethnic groups. Whilst these phases are argued to have originated in that order, they should not be envisaged as chronological in any other sense. It is their continuing relevance today in the discourses and practices surrounding race and ethnicity that their analytical power lies - "We all live history... we live out the assumptions of our *epoque* in the most mundane parts of our lives" (Tuchman, 1994:313).

An analysis of the link between *definitions and concepts* of race and ethnicity at a broad macro-level and the routine, everyday *operationalisation* of these concepts by individuals in the process of creating statistical 'knowledge' about race and ethnicity in New Zealand is then attempted. A qualitative study of the processes of collection by police and funeral directors furthered my understanding of how this structural, macro-level history applied to the everyday, routine operationalising process of officials.

The system is produced in part, at least, by its practices, as the practices are produced in part, at least, by the system. Systems and practices both structure each other and are structured by each other: structuration is a two-way process (Fiske, 1994:195).

Fundamentally, an individual is conceived to approach the world with a “stock of knowledge” composed of common-sense constructs and categories that are social in origin. These are applied to aspect of daily experiences making them meaningful (Holstein and Gubrium, 1994:263). The common-sense constructs and categories that are applied in a routine and everyday way by officials in the process of operationalising race and ethnicity are constituted historically, they are made up of the discourses arising out of all the historical periods (Omi and Winant, 1994:60-61; Frankenburg, 1993:140).

Only a thorough exploration of the concepts, definitions and operationalisation of ethnic data provides a sound basis for making decisions about ways in which ethnic statistics might be improved. Any interpretation of the validity of ethnic statistics must take account of the influence of an historical racial structure, and historically located discourses and their representation in both structural and everyday locations. The representation of race or ethnicity as official statistics is a product of the discourses and practices of a racially structured society.

The concepts and definitions used by official administrations are firmly located within the social and political contexts of historical periods and have been subject to constant change, both gradual and quite rapid at different times. Similarly, the ‘common-sense,’ everyday understandings of race and ethnicity which officials bring to the process of operationalising official statistical collection have been subject to constant change, and are always located within particular social, political and historical contexts.

The variability of ethnic data can be explained by the substantial dissonance between the official and academic conceptualisation of race ethnicity and ‘common-sense,’ everyday understandings of the concepts. In many instances the operationalising of concepts in no way reflects official or academic definitions, instead combining a complex array of understandings originating in the discourses and paradigms of years ago.

The task or project of improving ethnic data requires changes to the administrative and everyday practices of officials, *as well as* the administrative definitions to reflect a more current conceptualisation of ethnicity. The focus of any change needs to be on concepts, definitions *and* operationalisation. This approach will help close the gap between official and academic conceptualisations of race ethnicity and ‘common-sense,’ everyday understandings of the concepts because in an everyday way, as officials engage with new procedures, terminology and practices, ‘common-sense’ understandings will gradually shift and change.

Underlying the project of improving and the validity of ethnic data is a much broader issue about the *value* of ethnic statistics. The whole notion of statistical validity can be questioned on the basis that the beginning point is a conceptual one which in the end is subject to the changes of human society. We must surely accept that the statistics we end up with are in fact a reflection of the variety of conceptualisation that occurs in everyday life. This appears on the surface to make a good case for rejecting ethnic statistics on the basis of validity as it is understood by statisticians.

However, the value of ethnic statistics does not rest with their ability to be strictly or rigorously statistically valid. Their value is a political one. Race and ethnicity are fundamental axes of difference around which our society is structured. The changing conceptualisation and collection of ethnic data has reflected and shaped much broader debates over the distribution of resources between ethnic groups.

Ultimately, ethnic data is used to justify resource allocation and distribution. As the nature of the relationship of different ethnic groups within New Zealand society has changed, so too has the distribution of ethnic resources, so too has the process of ethnic data collection. In a colonial context, statistical representation was not merely a mode for understanding and representing populations but was an instrument for regulating, transforming and dominating them. From the early twentieth century, statistical practices of enumeration reflected a drive towards similarity and assimilation. In the last decades of the twentieth century, the power of the dominant culture to monopolise statistical representation for its own ends has been highly contested.

As the resource positioning of different ethnic groups becomes increasingly contestable, ethnic data has become an important tool in the pursuit of political projects for many of the groups who were previously the subjects of collection. The project of improving ethnic data is firmly located within this context. How and why ethnic statistics become improved, and for whom they are useful, is firmly located within the politics of resource allocation between different ethnic groups. And the changing nature of ethnic statistical collection reveals a window to view this process from.

PART ONE

THE CURRENT STUDY - WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH ETHNIC MORTALITY DATA?

Ethnic health statistics are used for: monitoring trends, utilisation of services, planning and evaluation of services and determining the distribution of resources for service provision (Robson et al, 1996:4). There are a wide range of factors which influence population health status. The comparison of health status between ethnic groups over time has illustrated that a persons ethnic affiliation is one aspect of a persons social context that has a real and marked effect on health outcomes. The classification of the population by ethnic group has been a persistent feature of health data collection since last century.

One of the primary ways health status is measured is with mortality information. Although this information stands accused of portraying a negative and uni-dimensional view of health, it remains one of the major sources of information for evaluating health status (Pomare et al, 1995:41;Durie, 1994:129;Durie,1985; Public Health Commission, 1994:273).

Mortality rates are calculated by dividing the number of deaths (numerator) by the size of the population (denominator data). The main denominator used in the calculation of mortality rates is census data, and in the case of mortality, death registration information collected by funeral directors is used for the numerator. From a statistical point of view, in order for these two data sets to be comparable, consistency of classification must exist between the two.

One of the difficulties with collecting and recording ethnic *mortality* data is that this information can no longer be obtained from the subject. Currently, the responsibility for this identification is largely that of the funeral directors. It is common practice to obtain this information by observation. Until September 1995, if no information was recorded, the deceased was coded as European. Research in both New Zealand and the United States indicates that considerable misclassification occurs using this method (Brown,1983:64;Hahn,1992).

Concern about the accuracy of mortality ethnic data has led to several studies in New Zealand which have explored the differences of ethnic reporting between death registration and other data bases. An Auckland study of mortality data from death registers, which employ a biological definition and rely often on the judgement of the funeral director to determine ethnicity, yielded higher rates of Maori death from coronary heart disease when a survey using cultural identity, as stated by a close relative of the deceased was used. On the basis of this study, the

understatement of Maori coronary heart disease mortality was shown to be as high as 82 percent (Graham, et al,1989:124-26).

According to these studies, Maori deaths are underestimated in mortality statistics to greater and lesser extents. This was attributed to two main reasons, (i) the use of estimation or guessing for assigning ethnicity and (ii) missing ethnic data on the death registration form (Pomare et al, 1995; Tipene Leach et al, 1991; Graham et al,1989; Ballance et al,1984 cited in Kilgour and Keefe, 1992:42-44; Brown,1983). These studies serve to illustrate the very strong probability of misclassification given the system of identifying ethnicity at death that has existed in New Zealand.

A review of ethnic statistics in 1988 recommended that “wherever possible, where information will be used in producing official statistics, the method of reporting ethnicity be self-identification”. Despite the use of self identification to define ethnicity in the Census, mortality information collection continued to use a measure of ethnicity based on a biological definition until September 1995 and observer estimation continues to be widely used as a method of collection.

This research began with concerns about the accuracy and validity of ethnic mortality data, particularly the recorded ethnicity of those killed in road accidents. Although statistics indicate that Maori are over-represented in all age groups, in nearly all years since 1930, the Land Transport Safety Authority suspects the incidence of Maori fatalities, particularly in the 15-24 year age group, is even higher than that being officially reported.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in the 15-24 year age group. In 1991, the most common causes of death by unintentional injury were motor vehicle crashes (Public Health Commission,1994:242).

Death rates from motor vehicle crashes are the single most common cause of potential years of working life lost in New Zealand. They account for 18 percent of the total male and 12 percent of the total female potential years of working life lost. The fact that so many of these road deaths occur to young adults accounts for this figure being so high (Public Health Commission,1994:253).

The rates for *hospitalisation* for motor vehicle crashes indicate that for all age groups, Maori are over-represented (Public Health Commission, 1994:256). Yet, age-specific *death rates* indicate that non-Maori death rates were higher than Maori death-rates for the 15-24 year males and time trend data for 15-25 year olds shows no significant change in death rates (Public Health Commission,1994:253).

The Land Transport Safety Authority commissioned this research to investigate the reasons why this discrepancy should be occurring. The two objectives of the study were to:

- i) investigate the validity of existing official ethnic mortality data for those who died on the road in the lower North Island in 1990;
- ii) further current understanding of where errors may be occurring in the recording/ classification of the ethnicity of persons killed in road accidents, and how these errors may be corrected/avoided to attain a measure consistent with current conceptions of ethnicity.

METHOD

Quantitative Data Collection

The process of quantitative data collection involved four distinct stages.

Stage One	Initial gathering of primary data from traffic accident reports
Stage Two	Assembling of comparison databases, funeral directors, (Justice Department, Births, Deaths and Marriages); police; and death notices.
Stage Three	Survey of Next-of-Kin
Stage Four	Construction of Final Research Database

The Sample

The sample included all those who died on the road in 1990 in the lower North Island of New Zealand. This sample represents a complete population, albeit a rather restricted one. The sample was collated from a complete list of those recorded as having died in accidents in the lower North Island in 1990. This list was made up from original accident reports supplied by the then Ministry of Transport. The final sample size was 192.

Stage One Initial gathering of primary data from traffic accident reports.

This process involved the collating of names, districts, and existing demographic information of those who were killed on the roads in the lower North Island in 1990. In total there were 192 people listed as killed in this region during this period; 66 females and 126 males.

This information was transferred to a small database and served as the 'Masterfile' against which all other information and data is compared with.

Stage Two Assembling of Comparison Databases - Funeral Directors (Justice Department, Births, Deaths and Marriages), Police, and Death Notices

The second stage involved the construction of a database from three other sources. These included funeral directors (Justice Department, Births, Deaths and Marriages), police, and newspaper death notices.

(a) Funeral directors, (Justice Department, Births, Deaths and Marriages)

Vital statistics refer to births, deaths and marriages, as well as external migration statistics. All births, deaths and marriages in New Zealand are required to be registered, and this process was until recently administered by the Department of Justice (Brown, 1983:14-15). A central register of entries on all births, deaths and marriages is maintained in Lower Hutt.

Formal death registration is made by funeral directors on a form 'RG 28' which is then forwarded to regional offices of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Statistics New Zealand uses this information to compile population and demographic statistics and the New Zealand Health Information Service combines this data with data from other sources to produce the national mortality system (Public Health Commission, 1994:272). This data forms the basis of official mortality and health statistics.

The race/ethnicity question on the 'RG28' was until recently only required to be completed if the deceased was of Maori or Pacific Island ancestry. There was no provision for the recording of any other ethnic group. The question was in two parts. The first asked for a percentage breakdown of the father of the deceased's blood, and the second asked for the same information about the mother of the deceased.

A search for the original death registration form (RG 28) for each individual was necessary in order to ascertain *what* information had been recorded about each person. Locating the death registration information for each person required an initial archival search in Lower Hutt to identify the local office and entry numbers for each death. Death registration information for 184 people was found. Eight remained untraceable. The reasons for this appeared to be associated mostly with the misspelling or recording of the name of the deceased by the Ministry of Transport. The spelling and recording of some of the names, taken from the original Ministry of Transport accident reports, was found to be incorrect for some and despite several attempts to identify those missing, some remained missing.

Once the local registry office and entry numbers were located, this information was forwarded to the local offices with a request for copies of

each registration form. A second database was set up to run alongside the original police data, so comparison could be made across the two databases.

Justice (Births, Deaths and Marriages) database

Ethnicity	No.	Percentage of returns (n=184)
European/Pakeha	164	89.1
Maori	18	9.8
Pacific Island	2	1.1
Other	0	0.0
Not located	8	
Total	192	
Response rate	95.8%	

(b) Police data - Ethnicity and Location of Next-of-kin

In the case of a fatal vehicle accident, two files are created by Police. One contains the traffic accident report which records accident and vehicle details, the other is a file in which personal and family information is recorded about the deceased. One of the reports contained in this police file is a "Police 47". This report has details of next-of-kin and the 'race' of the deceased. The term 'race' is used on police forms and the categories used are Caucasian, Maori, Pacific Island, Asian, Other.

Local police offices were requested by the Land Transport Safety Authority to locate from the file the following details:

- (i) the deceased's ethnicity
- (ii) the address and name of the deceased's next-of-kin.

This process was extremely protracted, and the information from police took nearly two years to complete. This was compounded by a restructuring of Transport and Police organisations. As this data arrived, a third database was set up so that further comparisons across data sets could be made.

Police data base

Ethnicity	No.	Percentage of returns (n=125)
European/Pakeha	81	64.8
Maori	37	29.6
Pacific Island	6	4.8
Other	1	0.8
Total returns	125	
No response *	67	
Total	192	
Response rate	65.1 %	

* The response rate was largely affected by a change in form. Prior to 1990, the "Police 47", on which ethnicity is recorded, did not include a question on ethnicity or race. Although the new form had been issued to most police districts, some districts were still using the old form and were not familiar with the new one. Police non-response was found to be largely due to no ethnic information having been recorded for some individuals, due to the old form having been used. Some districts were more badly affected than others. Most notable were Palmerston North/Levin/Foxton, Napier, New Plymouth and the Hutt. The non-response is not random and could be expected to affect the distribution of ethnicity found in the Police data. Precisely what affect this non-response had on Police data is difficult to discern however. Further non-response from Police was due to some files not being located. This was more likely where the deceased was not resident in the district in which the accident occurred.

(c) Newspaper death notices

As a final point of comparison, a search for the printed newspaper death notice for each of the deceased was undertaken. This involved searching national, regional and local newspapers. Funeral notices contain references to family members and their relationship to the deceased, poetry, messages of love and loss, as well as details of where the funeral was to be held and where the interment of the body was to take place.

Assigning ethnicity from a death notice involved taking into consideration such things as where the funeral was to take place, the language used in the death notice (English, Maori, Samoan etc), references to relatives and birthplaces, names of the deceased and next-of-kin etc. For example, if the funeral was to take place on Marae, then it was assumed on the whole that the deceased was probably Maori. However, not all people mourned on Marae are Maori and so other evidence such as the deceased's name and his or her parents names were also considered when making this judgement. Similarly the language used in the death notice was used to corroborate other evidence. In many instances when the deceased was being buried on Marae, some messages were in Maori. In several instances, the birth place of the deceased was also used to check details in the death notice. For example, if it was indicated that family from overseas were attending the funeral, then the birthplace of the deceased was checked also before assigning an ethnic identity.

Death notices data base

Ethnicity	No	Percentage of returns (n=170)
European/Pakeha	115	67.6
Maori	44	25.9
Pacific Island	2	1.2
Other	9	5.3
<hr/>		
Total returns	170	
Not found	22	
Total	192	
Response rate	88.5%	

*Stage Three**Survey of Next-of-Kin*

A survey of next-of-kin was also undertaken. Although several other data sources had already been gathered, the others were all considered to be 'proxy' or 'surrogate' measures of ethnicity. That is, the deceased's ethnicity had in the main been classified by people other than next-of-kin, and most predominantly using the method of 'observer estimation'. The assignment of ethnicity by next-of-kin is as close as it is possible to come to a 'self-identification' measure of ethnicity. In the survey, next-of-kin were asked to 'verify' a few of the details that had previously been recorded on death registration forms (RG28), and asked to indicate the ethnicity of the deceased. This data provided comparison with existing official data using a measure of ethnicity which was based on the principle of self-identification.

(i) Ethics

The survey was conducted under the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching involving Human Subjects, Massey University. The ethical issues of the study were assessed by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and approval was given for the research to be carried out.

(ii) The Sample

Using the original sample, the names and addresses of next of kin were requested for each person, from Police files. Police were unable to provide a complete list of contacts. From this list, addresses were checked against phone books, publicly available electoral roll information and death notices. The final sample size for mailing was 138.

When the mailing sample is compared to the final ethnic classification made by the researcher, the mailing sample appears to over-represent the Pakeha ethnic group and under-represent Maori, Pacific Island and Other

ethnic groups. It is likely that this will have the affect of overstating Pakeha and understating the Maori and Pacific Island groups in the database.

Ethnicity (percentages)	Total sample	Mailing sample
European/Pakeha	65.1	73.9
Maori	26.5	22.5
Pacific Island	3.2	0.7
Other	5.3	2.9
	100.0	100.0

(iii) Survey Method

The sensitive nature of the project demanded that the wishes of next-of-kin be paramount. The loss of a relative is always traumatic - in a vehicle accident it is likely to be more so. Any retrospective discussion of this event particularly with an outsider has the potential to cause pain or emotional suffering. For this reason, a short mail survey was considered the most appropriate collection method for details from next-of-kin.

The primary advantage of a mail questionnaire, particularly given the sensitive nature of the information being collected, is that it allows the respondent to complete the questionnaire at a time and a place that best suits them, rather than having an imposed time in the case of a personal or telephone interview.

The main disadvantages of a mail questionnaire for this survey are that it involves a longer response period, and it has a lower response rate. This is particularly so for Maori and Pacific Island groups. Question complexity or ambiguity was not considered to be a disadvantage due to the very short and uncomplicated nature of the questionnaire (Statistics New Zealand, 1995:68).

(iv) Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire asked a total of six questions. These included confirming the spelling of the deceased's name, the age at death, main occupation at death, other work (paid and unpaid) which the deceased was involved in, and ethnicity.

The ethnicity question

This question was modelled on the 1991 census questionnaire and also considered the recommendations of the *1988 Review of Ethnic Statistics* (Statistics New Zealand) and the *1993 Standard Classification of Ethnicity* (Statistics New Zealand).

Ethnic identification was asked for by ethnic group as follows:

To which ethnic group did he/she belong to?

Tick the box or boxes which apply

New Zealand European/Pakeha	[]
New Zealand Maori	[]
Samoan	[]
Cook Island Maori	[]
Tongan	[]
Niuean	[]
Chinese	[]
Indian	[]
Other (Please specify) _____		

A question on Maori ancestry was also included. In addition a question asking for iwi and hapu was also included. The Maori ancestry and iwi and hapu questions were asked in English and Maori.

Introductory letter and information sheet

An introductory letter was sent to each family. This included the researcher's name and position as Masters student. It apologised for the intrusion into the family and explained the long-term objective of the research, i.e., the reduction of road deaths. The letter listed the questions which would be asked in the survey and gave details of what was included with the letter.

An information sheet describing the details of the research was also sent to each family. This included information about:

- who was doing the research
- who was supervising the research
- the aims of the research
- the reasons why the research was being undertaken
- the family's rights concerning participation
- assurances about confidentiality
- an obligation to feedback summary results to the family
- contact details of myself and my supervisor.

(v) Implementation

The first mailing was completed in early December 1994. This was followed by a second mailing in late January 1995. Time between mailings was extended to take account of Christmas and summer holidays in December and January.

(vi) Results

Next of Kin database

Ethnicity	No	Percentage of returns (n=60)
European/Pakeha	49	81.7
Maori	8	13.3
Pacific Island	0	0.0
Other	3	5.0
Total	60	
Declined Participation	8	
Non response	58	
Returned to sender	12	
Total	138	
Response rate *	43.5	

* Those who declined to participate, although they had responded, were not included in the calculation of the response rate.

Stage four Construction of Research database

A final database was constructed by drawing together and linking all the evidence gathered. For each individual, all the sources of information, Justice, Police, death notices, next-of-kin and accident reports were utilised to build a level of certainty about the ethnic identity of the deceased. In all cases, responses from next-of-kin were taken as the primary indicator of ethnicity. Where no response was received from next-of-kin, an overall picture of the deceased's ethnicity was constructed using *all* the data available. This included using things such as: the type of funeral indicated by the death notice, family and friends' messages in death notices, the deceased's names and birthplace, parents' names and birthplaces, police classification etc.

For those for whom ethnicity was assigned using this method, there is still a considerable chance that the data produced is not accurate. Without confirmation by the next-of-kin, validation of the data according to standard definitions is not possible. Although there are no hard and fast rules, the validity of data is improved with the use of multiple sources. "The term most often used in connection with analysis and confirmation issues is *triangulation*...[a] general prescription has been to pick triangulation sources that have different biases, different strengths, so they can complement one another" (Huberman and Miles, 1994:438).

Ethnicity	No	Percentage of returns (189)
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European/Pakeha	123	65.1
Maori	40	26.5
Pacific Island	6	3.2
Other	10	5.3
Total returns	189	
No Response	3	
Total	189	
Response rate	98.4%	

DETAILED QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Table 1: Final Sample Sizes and Response Rates.

	Justice	Police	Next-of-kin	Death Notice	Research Database
Response	184	125	60	170	189
Sample	192	192	192 (138)*	192	192
Response Rate	95.8	65.1	31.3 (43.5)*	88.5	98.4

*The sample numbers in brackets for next-of-kin represent the sample achieved for the mail survey to next-of-kin. The bracketed response rate is calculated using a sample size of 138.

Table 2a: Assignment of Ethnicity by Justice, Police, Next-of-kin and Death Notices - Overall Responses (Raw data).

Ethnicity	Justice	Police	Next-of-kin	Death Notice	Research Database
European/Pakeha	164	81	49	115	124
Maori	18	37	8	44	49
Pacific Island	2	6	0	2	6
Other	0	1	3	89	10
Total (n=)	184	125	60	170	189

Table 2b: Assignment of Ethnicity by Justice, Police, Next-of-kin and Death Notices - Overall Responses (Percentages).

Ethnicity (percentages *)	Justice n = 184	Police n = 125	Next-of-kin n = 60	Death Notice n = 170	Research Database
European/Pakeha	89.1	64.8	81.7	65.1	65.6
Maori	9.8	29.6	13.3	26.5	26.9
Pacific Island	1.1	4.8	0.0	3.2	3.2
Other	0.0	0.8	5.0	5.3	5.3

(*may not add to 100.0 percent due to rounding)

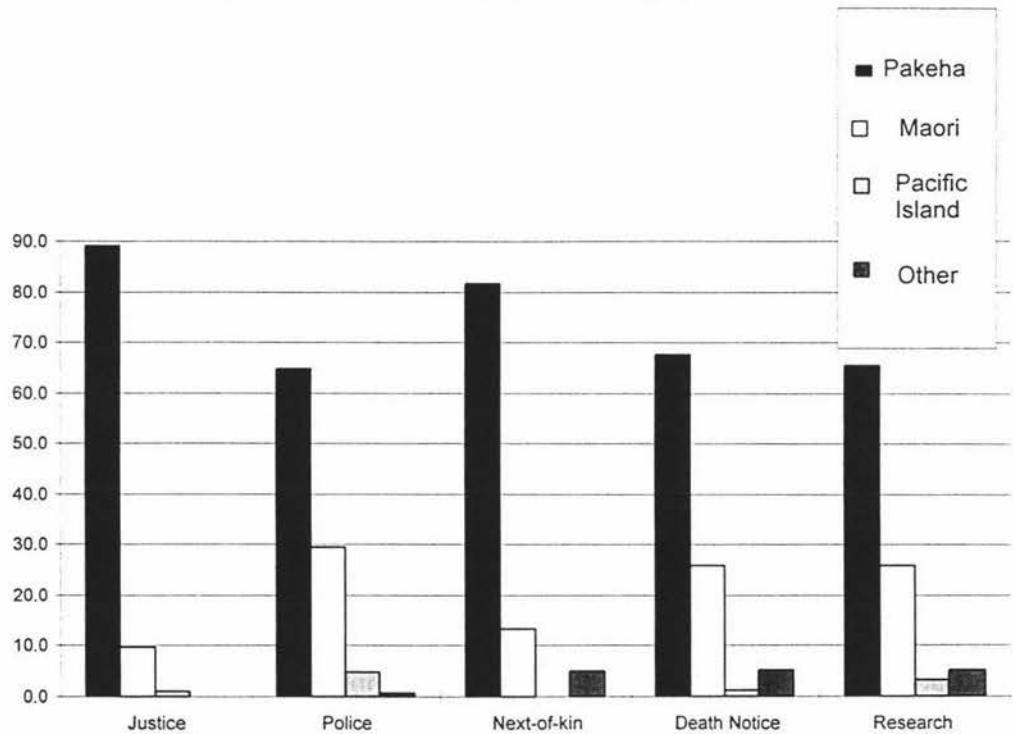
The representation of the European/Pakeha group ranges from 89.1 percent (Justice) to 64.8 percent (Police), a difference of 24.3 percentage points. A similar difference exists between the Justice data which indicates that Maori are represented at only 9.8 percent whilst police represent Maori at a high of 29.6 percent, a difference of 19.8 percentage points or 202 percent.

The difference between the Justice data and next-of-kin data is less pronounced for Maori and European/Pakeha, only 3.5 percentage points

for Maori and 7.4 percentage points for European/Pakeha. There is also a difference, 5 percentage points, between the reporting of the Other ethnic group by Justice and next-of-kin,

Police reporting of European/Pakeha is slightly higher than the death notice or final research data and police reporting of Maori is slightly lower. European/Pakeha are represented by police, death notices and research data at 64.8, 67.6 and 65.6 percent respectively. Maori are represented at 29.6, 25.9 and 26.9 percent. There are larger differences in the reporting of the Other ethnic group between police, newspaper and final research data.

Chart 1: Assignment of Ethnicity (Percentages)



The differences between the reporting of Maori by the Justice ethnic database and the other databases are as follows:

Table 3: Differences Between Justice Data and Other Databases.

	Reported percentage (Maori)	Percentage Difference from Justice data
Justice	9.8	n/a
Police	29.6	200.0
Next-of-kin	13.3	36.0
Death Notice	26.5	170.0
Research	26.9	175.0

These comparisons indicate that Justice data *may* be under-representing Maori by over 200 percent.

The Police reporting of Maori is the highest at 29.6 percent. This is over 200 percent larger than the Justice figure, 100 percent higher than next-of-kin, but only 11.7 and 10.0 percent higher than the death notice and research databases.

Non-response

Had the response rate been higher for the next-of-kin survey, the representation of both the Maori and Pacific Island groups is likely to have been higher. Non-response in the next-of-kin survey is most likely to have resulted in the under-representation of Maori and Pacific Island groups and the over-representation of Pakeha for the following reasons:

- the initial mailing sample for this survey did not include every member of the original sample as the addresses of many next-of-kin could not be traced. This mailing sample over-represented Pakeha and under-represented the Maori and Pacific Island groups;
- one of the main disadvantages of a mail survey is that non-response is likely to be higher and also likely to be concentrated among Maori and Pacific Island groups.

In the case of the Police database, the affect of non-response on the distribution of ethnic groups is less easily deduced.

One of the consequences of low numbers is that any percentage analysis is reasonably volatile. For example, at this broad level if the number of next-of-kin returns indicating Maori ethnic identity dropped to six from eight, the percentages of Maori in the Justice and next-of-kin databases would be almost identical. The Police database is less volatile at this broad level, although when the basis of comparison is next-of-kin returns only, the numbers for comparison become very small and more volatile.

The data from next-of-kin was considered the most appropriated to compare all other sources with, so a comparison was done of only those individuals for whom information was available from next-of-kin.

Table 4a: Comparison of Ethnicity, Next-of-kin Returns Only (Raw Data)

Ethnicity	Justice	Police	Next-of-kin	Death Notice	Research Data
European/Pakeha	56	31	49	46	49
Maori	3	7	8	7	8
Pacific Island	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	3	2	3
Total	59	38	60	55	60

Table 4b: Comparison of Ethnicity, Next-of-kin Returns Only (Percentages)

Ethnicity (percentages)	Justice n = 59	Police n = 38	Next-of-kin n = 60	Death Notice n = 54	Research Data n = 60
European/Pakeha	94.9	81.6	81.7	83.6	81.7
Maori	5.1	18.4	13.3	12.7	13.3
Pacific Island	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	5.0	3.6	5.0

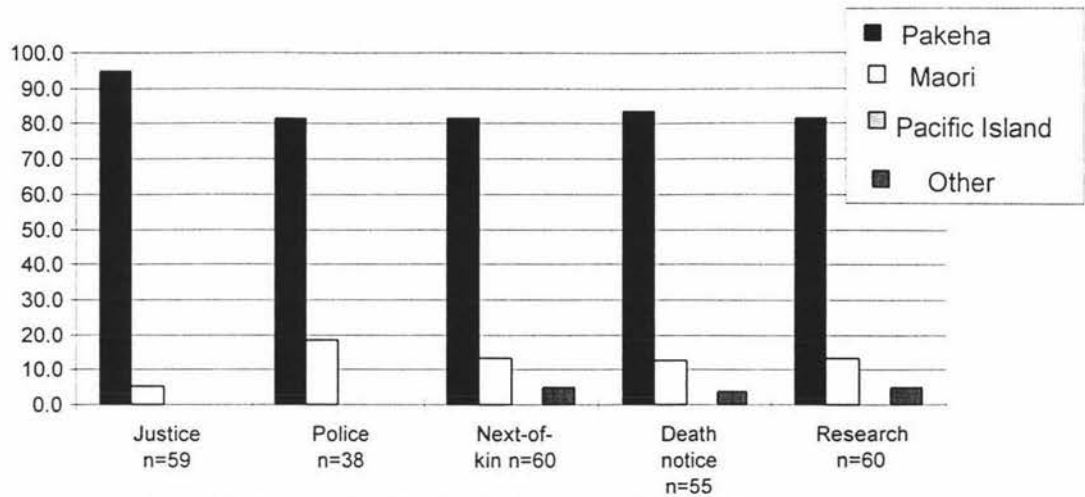
Using only next-of-kin data for the basis of analysis revealed that large differences still existed between Justice reporting and next-of-kin reporting. For Maori, the difference between Justice and next-of-kin data is now 8.2 percentage points or more than 160 percent, and the gap between next-of-kin, death notice and research databases has narrowed. A large difference is still evident between the representation of Maori in Justice and police data, 13.3 percentage points or 261 percent, however the very small numbers for comparison (Justice = 59 and Police = 38) mean that there is large volatility in these percentage differences.

Table 5: Differences between Justice Data and Other Databases.

	Reported percentage (Maori)	Percentage Difference from Justice data
Justice	5.1	n/a
Police	18.4	260.7
Next-of-kin	13.3	160.8
Death Notice	12.7	149.0
Research	13.3	160.8

Police continue to report Maori at the highest level at 18.4 percent, 260 percent larger than the Justice figure, but only 38 percent and 45 percent larger than the next-of-kin and death notice figures.

Chart 2: Assignment of Ethnicity, Next-of-Kin Returns Only (Percentages)



A comparison of *identical individuals* in next-of-kin, police, research and Justice data further confirms earlier impressions that police representation of Maori is the highest of the databases, and that Justice data remains much lower than next-of-kin, research and police data.

Table 6a: Comparison of Ethnicity for Identical Individuals, Next-of-kin and Justice Only (Raw Data)

Ethnic Group	Justice	Next-of-kin
European/ Pakeha	56	48
Maori	3	8
Pacific Island	0	0
Other	0	3
	59	59

Table 6b: Comparison of Ethnicity for Identical Individuals, Next-of-kin and Justice Only (Percentages)

Ethnic Group (percentages)	Justice n = 59	Next-of-kin n =59	Percentage Difference from Justice data
European/Pakeha	94.9	81.4	14.2
Maori	5.1	13.6	166.7
Pacific Island	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	5.1	510.0

The tables and graph above indicate that the Justice data continues to overstate the European/Pakeha ethnic group and also understate Maori and Other ethnic groups. For Maori, the difference between the Justice and the next-of-kin databases is still large at 8.5 percentage points (over 165 percent).

Chart 3: Assignment of Ethnicity: A Comparison of Identical Individuals in Justice and Next-of-kin Data (Percentages)

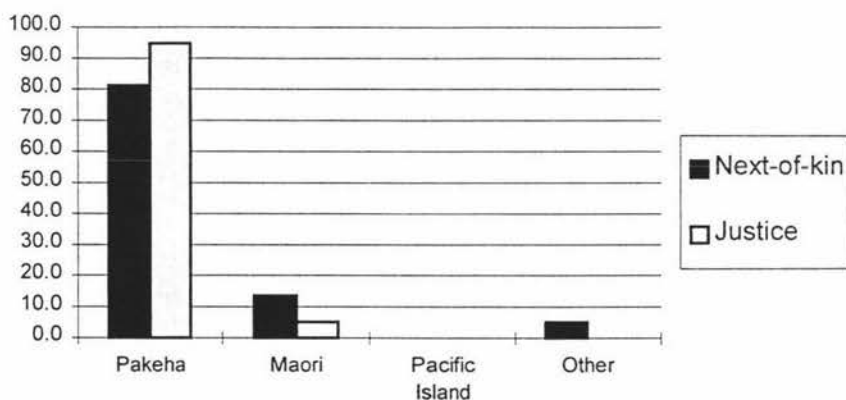


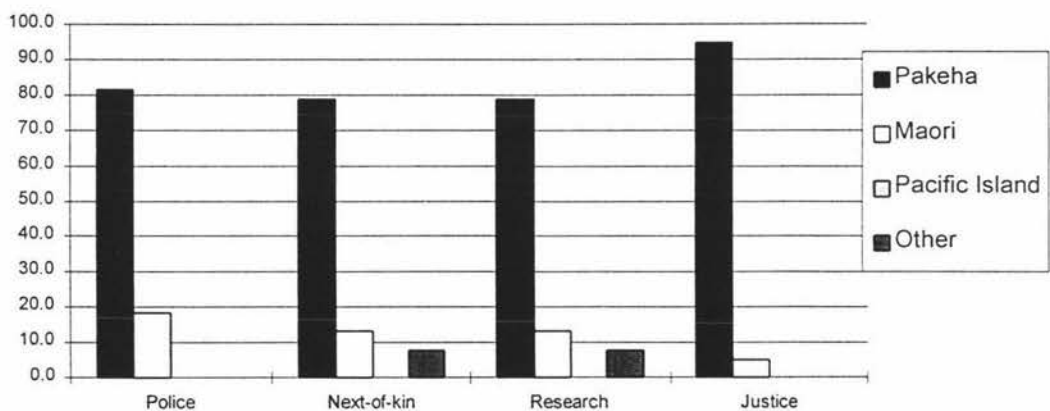
Table 7a: Assignment of Ethnicity: Comparison of Identical Individuals in Next-of-kin, Police, Justice and Research Data (Raw Data)

Ethnic Group	Next-of-kin	Police	Research	Justice
European/Pakeha	30	31	30	36
Maori	5	7	5	2
Pacific Island	0	0	0	0
Other	3	0	3	0
Total	38	38	38	38

Table 7b: Assignment of Ethnicity: Comparison of Identical Individuals in Next-of-kin, Police, Justice and Research Data (percentages)

Ethnic Group (percentages)	Next-of-kin n = 38	Police n = 38	Research n = 38	Justice n = 38
European/Pakeha	76.9	82.1	76.9	94.7
Maori	12.8	17.9	12.8	5.3
Pacific Island	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	10.3	0.0	10.3	0.0

Chart 4: Assignment of Ethnicity: A Comparison of Identical Individuals in Next-of-kin, Police, Justice and Research Data (Percentages)



15-24 year olds

Of special interest to this research is the age-group 15-24 year olds. In this group, despite rates of hospitalisation indicating that Maori are over-represented in motor vehicle crashes, the official death rates indicate that non-Maori death rates are higher than Maori for this age group (PHC,1994:253).

In 1990, 15-24 year olds represented 41.7 percent of those killed on the roads. Seventy seven percent were male and 23 percent were female. In the sample for this research, the 15-24 year olds represent 43.8 percent (84) of the sample. Seventy percent of this group were male and 30 percent were female.

A comparison of the assignment of ethnicity of the 15-24 year olds between the research and Justice databases indicates that Justice have

under-represented Maori for this age group by 12.8 percentage points or more than 120 percent.

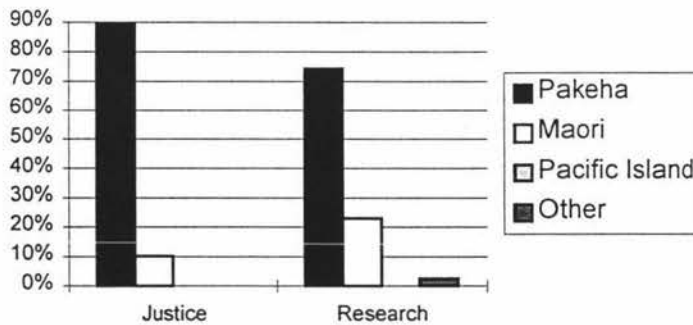
Table 8a: Assignment of Ethnicity: 15-24 year olds (Raw Data)

Ethnicity	Justice	Research
European/Pakeha	70	58
Maori	8	18
Pacific Island	0	0
Other	0	2
Total	78	78

Table 8b: Assignment of Ethnicity: Comparison of Identical Individuals in Next-of-kin, Police, Justice and Research Data (Percentages)

Ethnicity (percentages)	Justice n=78	Research n=78	Percentage Difference from Justice data
European/Pakeha	89.7	74.4	17.1
Maori	10.3	23.1	124.3
Pacific Island	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	2.6	260.0

Chart 5: Assignment of Ethnicity: 15-24 Years (Percentages)



Discussion

The data reveals that there is considerable variability of result in terms of the assignment of ethnicity across different data sets, even when exactly the same people are being compared. When the official ethnic data collected by funeral directors (Justice) is compared with several other sources of data, it appears that funeral directors are seriously under-reporting the incidence of Maori road fatalities. Although there is some volatility in the percentage analysis, the level of under-reporting by funeral directors could be as high as 250 percent although it is more likely to be between 160 and 180 percent.

Police data was used as a primary source of comparison because it too is an official data collection. The findings suggest that the greatest differences are between police and funeral directors reporting of Maori fatality. The difference between the reporting of Maori deaths by police and funeral directors could be over 200 percent.

However, when police data is compared with other sources of data, the findings suggest that police are consistently over-reporting the incidence of Maori deaths, in the vicinity of forty percent. The combination of under-reporting by funeral directors and over-reporting by police contributes to the large differences between the two sets of official data.

These comparisons have raised questions about the accuracy of ethnic data collected by funeral directors and police. How should we interpret this variability? Just how can a decision be made about whether a set of data is more valid or accurate than one of the others?

From a purely statistical point of view the validity of data, particularly for comparison, rests most assuredly with consistency of classification and definition. In this study no consistency of definition was apparent in the two sets of official data. Police and funeral directors use very different operational definitions of ethnicity. Police forms refer to 'race' and funeral directors forms measure the 'percentage-of-blood' of the mother and father of the deceased. This lack of consistency certainly means that even the process of comparison is called into question.

However, comparison with other sources was attempted for the following reasons. First, the survey of next-of-kin was considered to be the most appropriate way of 'validating' the data because ethnicity would be assigned according to the principle of self-identification. With the move to operational definitions which encourage self-identification in the collection of ethnic data for the Census, and the development of standard definitions which support this, the information supplied by next-of-kin was always treated as the primary data against which other data was compared.

Secondly, information from newspaper death notices was sought because the response rates from police and next-of-kin were low in comparison to Justice data, meaning that direct comparisons of next-of-kin data were restricted to very small numbers. In order to make reasonably sound judgements about the validity of Justice and police data, a larger response was needed. So to properly triangulate the final research database, another data source was considered necessary.

When the two official data sets were compared with next-of-kin and a final research database, it was clear that one was over-reporting Maori fatality and the other was under-reporting Maori fatality. So what are the explanations for the differences in the two official data sets? Does the lack of consistency of definition on its own explain the substantial differences in results between the different data sets?

What about the way in which this data is collected by the two official agencies? The operationalisation of data collection concerns the way in which statistics are collected, the methods and processes involved. In what way does the operationalisation of data collection by official agencies affect the validity of the data? How important are the collection processes used by police and funeral directors to an understanding and explanation of the differences in the data?

In order to address these questions about the variability of the quantitative data, the concepts, definitions *and* operational working procedures as they relate to ethnic data collection need to be fully explored and analysed. In the chapters that follow, I begin by exploring historical concepts and understanding of race and ethnicity in the New Zealand census and then in academic debate. Then, in a qualitative study of the processes of collection by police and funeral directors, I explore the impact operational working procedures have on ethnic data collection.

PART TWO

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS OF ETHNICITY- AN UNEVENLY EVOLVING HISTORY.

The difficulties of measurement and classification of ethnicity are due to the many divergent concepts, definitions, understandings and practices associated with racial and ethnic identification. (Brown,1983:10). At any point in time ethnic divisions within a society may appear fixed and clear, however a quick look through census volumes reveals that the variety of criteria used to differentiate ethnic groups have been subject to change over time. Shaped and constructed within historical, social and political contexts, changing understandings and perceptions of race, difference and ethnicity have had a significant impact on the way official ethnic statistics have been collected and classified in New Zealand (Papps,1994:15). The selection of particular categories and not others, the changes that occur to official ethnic classification tell us something about the nature of ethnic relations in a society from an 'official' point of view (Hirshman,1987: 557).

The way in which ethnic groups are defined also depends greatly on the relative economic and political positions and structures which influence the relationships of different groups. The processes of definition responds as much to the inner workings of governments as they do to the political and social environment outside (Weaver,1984:196).

Three broad phases or paradigms can be identified in the history of discourses on race and ethnicity in New Zealand. The phases are best described as "unevenly evolving" as they are not strictly chronological, with elements of all three found in today's literature and discourse on race and ethnicity (Frankenburg, 1993:13-15). By far the most influential and long lasting was the first 'biologicistic' or 'essentialist' one which began with the arrival of Europeans in the late 18th and early 19th century. This phase influenced government definitions and concepts until the 1990s and continues to strongly influence 'common sense' ideas about race and ethnicity.

Phase One: Paradigm of Biologicistic Essentialism

Europeans had developed classificatory schemas of people according to physical characteristics by the eighteenth century. These became firmly entwined with the development of science (Pearson,1990:8;Banton,1988: 17;Omi and Winant,1994:63). Race was associated with lineage or descent and was distinguishable along several dimensions, of which physical appearance and genetic or biological origin were considered

primary (Banton,1988:17-18). Genetic inheritance was considered the essential transmitter of a person's vital substance. People of the same 'stock' were deemed to share the same inherited and essential genetic material (Howard,1990: 264-5). Racial typologies emerged which presented humans as distinct, unchanging and as permanent species or types. By the mid 1800s, theories asserting the permanently superior nature of Europeans were being advanced. The concept of race as biological type was popularly understood to account for observable differences (Banton,1988:18-21).

Darwin's theories of constant and gradual evolution, and the process of natural selection due to competition challenged these earlier essentialist views (Banton,1988:68-70). However after the mid-nineteenth century, Darwinian theories (misapplied) provided so-called scientific explanations which confirmed the superiority of European 'races' and civilisation as the workings of immutable natural laws, that of survival of the fittest (Howe,1984:349). This evolutionary perspective ranked people from superior to inferior, and allowed racist assumptions to be made with regard to the connections between race, behaviour and moral character (Pearson,1990:8, Howard,1990:264;Spoonley,1988:2). Modern racism is:

...not a prehistorical residue; it was a "new" theory that accompanied the rise of European technological superiority and expansion (Hirschman,1987:568).

Phase two: Paradigm of Assimilation and Sameness

Biologistic and essentialist discourses about race and ethnicity were explicitly challenged in the 1920s and 1930s and a new 'assimilationist' paradigm began to emerge. Although the influence of biologistic notions and concepts did not disappear, previous conceptual understandings were losing coherence by this time. More important however than the efforts of academics and intellectuals, this change was spurred by the political and demographic struggles of racially defined groups. The new paradigm interpreted race as but one of the determinants of ethnic identity or ethnicity. "Ethnicity itself was understood as the result of a group formation process based on culture and descent. 'Culture' in this formulation included such diverse factors as religion, language, customs, nationality, and political identification" (Omi and Winant,1994:15). As a way of differentiating human beings, race became accepted as socially constructed, not as a biological given (Omi and Winant,1994:65). The shift was associated with a new assimilationist analysis that had as its focus the incorporation or blending of minority cultures into mainstream society. In practice, assimilation meant sameness in European terms, conformity of lifestyle, social and economic behaviour (Ballara,1986: 113).

In direct contrast to the previous paradigm of biological difference, an essential human sameness “under the skin” formed the basis of this perspective and vitally important was the belief that racial inequality was incompatible within society (Frankenburg, 1993:13). This paradigm asserts that “we are all the same under the skin; that, culturally, we are converging; that, materially, we have the same chances in ...society; and that - the sting in the tail - any failure to achieve is therefore the fault of people of colour themselves” (Frankenburg, 1993:14). The concepts of difference consolidated in this period continue to exert the strongest influence on everyday discourse and practices associated with race and ethnicity.

Phase Three: Difference Re-defined - Ethnicity, Race and Culture

The radical politics of the late 1960s and 1970s signify the beginning of the third phase or paradigm of understandings about race and ethnicity. The analysis and critique of racial inequality by non-whites brought about a re-evaluation of notions of difference by white administrations. Ethnicity has become theorised as dynamic, historically located, multi dimensional and not necessarily linked to biological inheritance. Race has re-appeared as a meaningful sociological category of difference. However, although academic debate and most government administrative collections have endorsed the conceptual changes associated with this phase, common sense everyday discourse remains dominated by the first and second phases.

Frankenburg (1993:14) describes these shifts as moving from ‘difference’ to ‘sameness’ and then back to ‘difference’ radically redefined. The first paradigm or discourse perceived difference in essential, hierarchical and biological terms. The second movement, in a rejection of the first, “asserts that we are all the same under the skin; that, culturally, we are converging” and is dominated by the drive to assimilation. The ‘difference’ asserted in the present is formulated not by the dominant culture but as a challenge to it by non-white ethnic groups, asserting difference not as biologically determined but in terms of autonomy of culture and socially constructed inequalities.

Two approaches have been taken to exploring these three phases. The first is a detailed historical look at ethnic data collection in the New Zealand census.

How one is categorized is far from a merely academic or even personal matter. Such matters as access to employment, housing, or other publically or privately valued goods; social program design and the disbursement of local, state, and federal funds; or the organization of elections (among many other issues) are directly affected by racial classification and the

recognition of “legitimate” groups. The determination of racial categories is thus an intensely political process. Viewed as a whole, the census’s racial classification reflects prevailing conceptions of race, establishes boundaries by which one’s racial “identity” can be understood, determines the allocation of resources, and frames diverse political issues and conflicts (Omi and Winant, 1994:3).

The second reviews the changing nature of academic debates about race and ethnicity.

Racial and Ethnic Classification in the New Zealand Census

In the New Zealand context, one impact of European expansion and colonisation was to introduce to Maori notions of identity, difference, race and ethnicity as they were understood by Europeans. Salmond (1991:39) reminds us that our knowledge of pre-European ideas about the world has been influenced by European ideas and this has made identifying authentic pre-European conceptions difficult. She writes however that “Whakapapa (genealogy) was the central principle that ordered the universe” (Salmond, 1991:42). For pre-European Maori, identity and difference were conceptualised in a quite different way from the European view. Linnekin (1990:7-9) argues that pre-contact identity was defined through social placement as nodes of relationships.

Belich (1996:85) writes that from the perspective of a pre-contact Maori individual, humanity was conceivably viewed as a spectrum of groups graduated from innermost Us to outermost Them in concentric circles or zones, looking from the inside out. He suggests that,

The vast array of Maori groups, nuclear and extended families, hapu and hapu groups, tribes and kin zones, were the stuff of social prehistory, calibrating relationships from stranger to close kin, and constituting the babushka doll of social environments within which individuals lived out their lives (Belich, 1996:85).

Contact with Europeans began a process of reformulation of identity for Maori. An identity as Maori vis-a-vis Pakeha was constructed. The term Pakeha was used to refer to Europeans. Maori also differentiated between Pakeha, for example, Ingarihi for the English and Kotimana for the Scots (Durie, 1994:125).

Although Europeans viewed the individual as discrete, physically bounded, genetically determined and self-actuating (Linnekin, 1990:7), the European view of the European self and identity was influenced by colonial expansion and the way that groups of others were conceptualised.

The European self was re-constructed in relation to other societies and cultures. Racial 'Others' were formulated as distinctly different from the European self. Frankenburg(1993:17) suggests that the European self was produced as *an effect* of the Western formulation of Others. For the most part, the European self remained culturally unnamed, an apparently stable identity which served as a point of reference for measuring Others.

The road to European expansion and empire was considered to be via conversion, conquest and/or fatal impact for inferior natives and all contributed to the way in which Maori were viewed during early contact and settlement. "As early as the 1820s, well before it was reinforced, from 1859, by Social Darwinism, fatal impact pervaded the thinking of many European visitors to New Zealand" (Belich,1996:126).

For a new administration, the route to explanations of racial difference was considered to be found through the scientific examination of the qualities of discrete individual entities. The recording, measuring and categorisation of races was integral to this scientific endeavour. The administrative definitions of race and ethnicity were formed on the basis of dominant European understandings of ethnicity, and the historical socio-political context influenced the statistical categories into which people were assigned (Shannon,1991:29; Metge,1967:42).

From 1769 to about 1830, there were a few "counts" or estimates made of the Maori population in New Zealand. They were based on personal knowledge of an area or hearsay and the correct sources of the surviving estimates is unclear. Dixon(1989:21) cites examples found in Reports from Select Committees on New Zealand in British Parliamentary Papers 1837-40:

J.L. Nicholas who visited New Zealand for ten weeks, from December 1814 to February 1815 suggests under questioning:

Earl of Devon: Had you an opportunity of judging whether the Island was thinly or thickly peopled at that Time?

J.L.Nicholas: I should say it was very thinly Peopled, considering the Extent of the Island. The Villages we came to were small and contained but a scanty Population. It is impossible to give any correct Account of what the Population might be. I think Foster, who accompanied Captain Cook, supposed the Population of the Northern Island to be 100,000; in the Book I wrote when I came back I put it down at 150,000; it is of course all Guess-work, but the Population is well ascertained to be very inadequate to the immense Extent of the Country (cited in Dixon, 1989:248).

From about 1830 to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, rudimentary estimates were made by missionaries, traders and officers of passing ships. From 1840 to 1857 “further small-scale estimates of small areas were made as well as a number of estimates of the total Maori population” (Dixon, 1989:23). The first attempt to present statistics for the entire colony in one compilation was in 1858 (*Statistics of New Zealand*, 1858, 3)

From 1840, the undertaking of some sort of Population Census of the population was considered an integral part of colonial policy. From 1841 to 1851, resident magistrates undertook population counts and the data was carefully written up in the “Blue Books” with the following particulars:

Description of the country, district or parish
 Area in square miles
 Number of “Whites” and “Coloured” (excluding Maoris) by sex
 Number of “Aliens and Resident Strangers”
 Population to the square mile
 Occupation status of the population
 Number of births, deaths and marriages in that year (Dixon, 1989:12-13).

Dixon(1989:16) notes that the most unsatisfactory returns were those for “aliens and resident strangers” and suggests that a lack of definition of these terms caused them on different occasions to be included with the British population or listed separately. Evidence from later Census reports indicate that aliens referred to anyone who was neither European nor Maori.

Until 1857-8, estimates of the Maori population were small scaled, largely confined to small areas and made almost entirely by Europeans (Dixon,1989:23). With reference to his own estimate made in 1840, Dieffenbach(1843:81-82, cited in Pool,1991:50) writes, “ In this census I do not pretend anything like accuracy;... I was inclined to place the population at a much lower rate than that which I have given here...”.

The first systematic print recording of the Maori population in New Zealand was initiated by Fenton in 1857, and took over twelve months to complete, finishing in 1858. Pool(1991:54) argues that Fenton’s 1857-8 Census was an under-enumeration and this seems likely given reports that there was suspicion and hostility by Maori and that unsystematic enumeration and the use of “mere estimates” occurred in many areas (Dixon,1989:23).

From 1860, war prevented any full Census being taken of the Maori population until it was conducted in 1874 and then in 1878 (Pool, 1991:64;Dixon, 1989:24). Centralised, national, regular Census taking for

non-Maori did not really begin until after 1877 and from that time, Maori enumerations were taken in the same years as non-Maori Censuses. In 1891(A.J.H.R., G-2:1) W.J. Morpeth reports,

It is considered that the Maori Census cannot be taken in the same manner as the European Census, on one particular night, but it is desirable that it should be taken within as short a period of time as possible...

From 1886, enumeration of the Maori population was the responsibility of the Native Departments in each district. Census schedules were completed by sub-enumerators appointed by enumerators who were duly appointed by the Native Department (A.J.H.R.,1891, G-2:1). Sub-enumerators often reported difficulty in gaining information from Maori, resulting in estimates and undercounts of the population.

the work of taking the Maori census through parts of my district [Otorohanga] has again been a difficult one, principally caused, as usual, by the King Natives or supporters of Tawhiao...refusing to give any particulars or information whatsoever...(G.T. Wilkinson, A.J.H.R.,G-2,1891:2).

W.H. Grace of Kihikihi(A.J.H.R., H-13b,1896:3) reported difficulty during the enumeration of the 1896 Census,

especially in those parts of the district where the Maori King has influence. It appears that quite lately he caused a census to be taken of the Maoris in all those localities where he presumes to rule, and the sub-enumerators in those parts found great difficulty...and were invariably told that Mahuta, "The Maori King," had already taken a census of the people, and therefore no other was required.

Maori reticence, resistance and suspicion was attributed to many things by the enumerators, but most recurrent of the explanations given by enumerators was a fear that the information would be used for taxation purposes.

Race was deemed to be discernable by 'blood' quantum. Considered to be discernable by degrees, it was thought to be an accurate indicator of physical and genetic difference or race. This involved using a question which ascertained the fractions of racial 'blood' respondents considered themselves to have or were considered to have by an observer. In order to be classified with a particular racial group, a person needed to have half or more of a particular racial 'blood'. If a person recorded one half or more non-European 'blood' then they were considered to belong to that particular non-European racial group or category. Any less than one half

and an individual would generally have been assigned to the European category, although this was not the case for all races.

Maori with European blood or those considered to be not of full Maori blood were referred to as 'half-castes' and until 1926, classification of 'half-caste' Maori was made according to their living conditions. Those 'half-castes' living as European were officially categorised as European and therefore not counted in the Maori Census (Brown,1983:27)¹. This allocation was arbitrarily done according to the "whim of each enumerator" (Dixon,1989:25).

The significance accorded to 'mode of living' is indicative of the importance of the Darwinian evolutionary perspective which accorded superiority of race to the selection and survival of those stronger, purer races. It was assumed that weaker races would eventually die out, or as assumed in later years of the century, be assimilated or absorbed into the European. Early Census reports refer to the inevitability of the absorption of Maori into the European race (Brown,1983:27). "[M]any European and some Maori observers were prophesying the 'Passing of the Maori'" (Pool,1991:59-61).

Some early settlers considered amalgamation abhorrent as this quote from Baron de Thierry illustrates (cited in Ballara, 1986:52);

To keep each race in its proper sphere is by far the most certain way to raise the character of the New Zealander, for ...I am convinced it can never be done by amalgamation. Indeed amalgamation is but a one-sided question at best, for surely no white man would wish for the retrogradation of his colour, or to see his daughter, or sister, or female relative in any degree, married to a Maori man.

For other nineteenth century immigrants, the desirability or possibility of extermination, either by depopulation or by force was commonly advanced (Ballara,1986:82). Some Maori contributed to this myth also,

As the clover killed the fern, and the European dog the Maori dog; as the Maori rat was destroyed by the Pakeha rat, so our people also will be gradually supplanted and exterminated by

¹ Half caste Maori were classified according to their 'mode of living' until 1926. Exactly how this distinction was made is unclear, however, Pool(1991:18) and Brown(1983:27) suggest that in most probability 'living as European' referred to those Maori living in 'European' households and 'living as Maori' referred to those Maori living with tribes and hapus. In the 1906 census both types of Maori were enumerated as Maori, although they were enumerated separately supporting this suggestion (Dixon,1989:25).

the Europeans (Made by unamed Maori to Hochstetter, *New Zealand*:222;cited in Belich, 1996:147).

Maori were seen as 'degenerating' due to idleness, drunkenness and their 'indulging' in warfare. The causes of Maori depopulation were most popularly attributed to Maori themselves (Ballara,1986:84).

For many others, extinction was not about dying out, merely amalgamating, losing all characteristics distinctive of the Maori race and acquiring the "polish of civilisation" (Ballara,1986:88). The increase of the half-caste population living as European was regarded as signalling this inevitability.

It is an idea of many people that the ultimate fate of the Maori race is to become absorbed in the European. Whether any tendency is shown in this direction must be gathered from the increase or decrease in the number of half-castes (H.F. Edger, Under Secretary, A.J.H.R.,H-26a,1906:2).

As late as the turn of the nineteenth century, it was "confidently expected that the Maori would soon become extinct" (Ballara,1986:86).

Lange(1972:149) suggests that this theory of "imminent and inevitable extinction" was well-known by some educated young Maori,

the future was dark...nobody argued with the idea that the race was a dying one; racial decline was a subject of intense interest and apparently universal agreement among the ordinary villagers (Lange,1972:105-106).

As Ballara(1986:86) suggests, "what was strange about all this was that it [this theory] continued even after it had become abundantly obvious that the Maori were no longer decreasing in numbers".

In practice, the application of the official 'half-caste' classification was not without its problems. Enumerators increasingly reported more Maori who were living "to all intents and purposes" like Europeans. Officially, these 'half-castes' were not supposed to be counted as Maori, although by the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, there are reports of enumerators counting 'half-caste Maori living as Europeans' as "half-castes living as Maori' in order that they be counted as Maori (A.J.H.R.,H-13b, 1896;A.J.H.R.,H-26a,1906).

It is not insignificant that even at a time when many Maori were not being classified as Maori and undercounting was common due to the difficulty of enumeration, the Maori population should record an increase after many years of decline (Pool, 1991).

The first recording of the Chinese population was undertaken in 1874. At the time, the Chinese were the only “alien race present in numbers” (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI,: 1), having arrived in high numbers during the gold rushes of the 1860s. Their ‘free’ immigration was of concern to the New Zealand legislature and in 1881 the Chinese Immigrants Act was passed. The act placed a poll-tax of £10 per head on each Chinese immigrant and also limited the number of immigrants that might be carried by one vessel to one for every 10 tons of burthen (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI,:2). The effectiveness of this legislation in restricting immigration would be monitored by the Census counts of Chinese in New Zealand.

A special “inquiry into the matter of race aliens” was considered an innovation in the 1916 Census (Population Census, 1916, Introduction, Section XII:138). A broad racial classification “based upon expediency” divided the population into three classes, (1) European, (2) Maori, and (3) Race Alien (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:1). The inquiry was based on “popular conceptions of race and not upon scientific definitions” (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:1). Of note in this Census is that those Maori who were considered to be ‘half-caste’ living “after the European fashion” were enumerated as race aliens (Population Census, 1916, Introduction, Section XII:139). Details of these Maori were excluded from the presented tables however for the following reasons:

- (1.) The term “alien” as applied to them is, for historical reasons, a misnomer, though convenient for certain purposes.
- (2.) The fact that the main source from which Maori half-castes are recruited is “natural increase,” or the excess of births over deaths, distinguishes them rather sharply from race aliens proper, whose main source of recruiting is migration.

The characteristics of the Maori half-caste population differ on this account from those of other half-castes in several important respects.

By 1926 however, Maori were not considered to comprise part of the race alien category for “historical reasons and also as a matter of convenience”. The term Maori was considered to include all those Maori of full blood, all European half-castes and all European/Maoris of mixed blood who were nearer to Maori in degree than to Europeans (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:1).

The term European covered all those of European origin and was considered “equivalent to the ‘white’ population”. European/Maori quarter-castes or those considered to be three quarters European were also included with the Europeans (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:1).

The term ‘race alien’ referred to all those not of European or Maori descent. Those of mixed European/race alien blood and mixed Maori/race alien blood were considered for statistical purposes as race aliens. In

contrast to the Maori classification, this was extended in this instance to those where the European blood was predominant in degree (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:1). The reasons for this are not clear although the following passage from the Census of 1926 indicates the feelings of the day:

The importance of racial purity has long been a consideration of immigration legislation. The view has been taken that the coalescence of the white and the so-called coloured races is not conducive to improvement in racial types (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:2).

'Racial purity' was a relative term. Despite an admission about the lack of 'purity' of the European population, descended as they were predominantly from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, the mixing of different European bloods in New Zealand was considered to be leading to the emergence of a New Zealander of distinctive type (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:1). In contrast, the mixing of European and race alien blood was conceived as threatening the long-term wellbeing of the white races.

The dilution of the so-called higher races [European] by that of the so-called lower races [non-European] will either set the species on the highway to extinction or cause a relapse to barbarism (Earle Winch of Wilberforce University, cited in Ballara, 1986:108).

Much European opinion viewed Maori as inferior also, somewhat like children who needed a firm paternalistic guidance. Butterworth (1988: 41-42) cites the example of R.H. Makgill, District Health Officer for Auckland in 1911 (known for his unsympathetic attitude to Maori) as implementing strong supervisory measures on Maori community activity and movements in a bid to control an epidemic of small pox. He considered Maori to be a liability to Pakeha and stronger controlled doses of Europeanisation would speed the process of blending.

The grossly insanitary condition of the Native race is a very serious matter, since it is a menace to the whole of the white population (Makgill, A.J.H.R., H-31, 1911:50)

A new paradigm for thinking about race and difference began emerging in the 1920s as Pakeha assumptions and understandings of race and difference were challenged. It was clear that Maori were not being absorbed, nor were they dying out. The effects of Maori population increase, Maori participation in European life, and their active enhancement of a separate political and cultural identity meant that previous assumptions were increasingly difficult to apply (Brown, 1983: 28).

the present generation refuses to comply with the picturesque but illogical simile of following the way of the vanished Maori rat and the extinct Maori dog. They do not appear to belong to the same class of mammal. The native fern does not seem to be tamely giving way to the European clover. In this respect the Maori has more in common with the flora than with the fauna (Hiroa, 1924:363).

For Maori, the development of a politicised separate cultural identity to Pakeha had been occurring since contact. Certainly by the early 1800s, the term 'Pakeha' was in use and by the 1830s the term 'Maori' "was common in Maori mouths" (Belich, 1996:233). A strengthening of a collective Maori identity, of un-Europeaness, was to rise from the 1850s as land sale eroded Maori independence and opposition to land selling to Pakeha grew (Belich, 1996: 234).

The Maori cultural revival or renaissance in the early twentieth century cast the Maori past in new terms. For example, Ngata promoted the meeting house as a symbol of Maori identity, mana and tribal traditions (Walker, 1990:188) while the re-establishment of traditional art forms such as the carving of meeting houses and Te Puea's programme of teaching action songs in 1922 (combining traditional art forms with European music), also formed part of the process of revival and redefinition (Sinclair, 1990: 223; Walker, 1990:190).

This revival process was undertaken in conjunction with an accommodation of existing Pakeha structures. Sorenson (1956:198) contends that:

...the survival of the Maori as a distinctive group in New Zealand was due to the gradual elimination of disease and the main social disturbances resulting from European contact. This survival was stimulated wherever Maoris retained distinctive elements of their own culture while gradually adjusting themselves to the material aspects of European life. The Maori people have rejected rapid assimilation with its accompanying destruction of their own culture.

Reflecting the shift in European thinking on race difference, the Population Census of 1926 heralded several significant changes. A change in the 1910 Census and Statistics Act altered the definition of Maori to include all persons of half or more Maori blood, *regardless of mode of living*, and in 1926 this change of definition was implemented (Brown, 1983:28). 'Mode of living' as a form of classification was only useful so long as the assumptions regarding the absorption or extinction of Maori were perceived as valid.

The terminology 'half-caste' was altered to mixed-blood and the first enumeration of the Maori population on a specific night was undertaken. The Maori Census schedule was more detailed than before, although still not as comprehensive as the standard European schedule. For the first time detailed dwelling information was collected for Maori. All questions and guide notes were given in Maori and English (Dixon,1989:25-26) and special arrangements were made to employ special sub-enumerators "acquainted with Maori conditions and speaking the Maori language or with interpreters" (Population Census,1951, Volume VIII:51).

The shift in thinking about race was associated with a new assimilationist analysis of what would happen to Maori and Pakeha in New Zealand. Maori and Pakeha would become One. In direct contrast to the previous paradigm of biological theories difference, an essential human sameness "under the skin" formed the basis of this perspective. Assimilation meant sameness in European terms, conformity of lifestyle, social and economic behaviour (Ballara,1986:113).

Ongoing official concern and attention paid to miscegenation or intermarriage and the resultant blending of 'blood' in census reports illustrates this belief in the eventual assimilation or blending of New Zealanders. The challenges being brought to bear by Maori renaissance on the European view influenced the way the blend of Maori 'blood' was viewed. By some, Maori were considered to have some positive features to contribute to the blend such as good posture and dental health.

The Maori child shows superiority to the white in some characteristics which are almost certainly racial in origin. Posture among Maori children is superior to that of the white, thought it is to be noted that the Maori foot like that of other Native races is flat in comparison with that of the white. The severest types of malnutrition are not met with as frequently in Maoris as in white children. The number of Maori children with perfect teeth is much greater than the number of white (A.J.H.R.,H-31,1931:19).

Miscegenation or intermarriage between members of the different races of New Zealand was considered to be "one of the most important features of the race inquiry" (Population Census,1926, Volume VI:3). The "widespread effects which may be traced to the racial elements of the population" were considered as presenting "administrative difficulties in no mean degree",

The alien races are naturally accustomed to other conditions of living, to different standards of ethics, to strange customs, to a social fabric wholly foreign to that of the land of their adoption. Amongst the people of that country they are yet not of them - separated by the barrier of colour, of language, of thought. And again, race aliens are

rarely a community balanced in sexes, and this abnormality is fruitful of its own peculiar difficulties (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:2).

In the collection of 'race alien' data, in 1916 and 1921, only half-castes were distinguished. From 1926 quarter castes and three quarter castes were also distinguished and carefully analysed by the Census. At the time, this was considered a significant improvement to understanding the 'ethnic stock' of New Zealand. On the evidence presented, Polynesians who reported 70 percent mixed blood appeared to be assimilating well. Resistance to assimilation appeared most strongly among Chinese with only 9 percent of the population being reported as mixed blood (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:3).

However, questions were raised concerning the quality of data for investigating intermarriage. It was noted that the distinction between quarter, half and three quarter-castes was "nominal rather than practical" and most probably some understating of the numbers of those with mixed blood was occurring. Incompletely supplied information by individuals is described as contributing to this understatement (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:3).

From 1926 until 1951 the collection of Maori and 'race alien' data continued unchanged. Analysis of intermarriage remained an important aspect of the "race inquiry" throughout these years. It was noted that "there can be little doubt that the number of those of mixed blood is understated" (Population Census, 1951: Volume VIII:iv). In 1951, the term 'race alien' was dropped in favour of the terminology 'Other Races'. For the first time, Maori/Polynesians were included in the Maori population whereas previously all Maori/Other Races had been counted with Other Races, regardless of degree of Maori blood. This practice was justified as one of "convenience rather than consistency" (Population Census, 1951, Volume VIII:52).

The term 'race' was clarified as "dividing the population roughly on the basis of colour, geographical distribution, and certain common social characteristics". Justification for continued use of the term and the associated divisions was described as being based on its "usefulness for practical purposes" (Population Census, 1951, Volume VIII:116). For the purposes of administration, many of the ethnic classifications treated diverse cultural groups as single entities. For example, Polynesians or Pacific Islanders have been and continue to be for many administrative purposes classified and considered a single ethnic entity (Macpherson, 1996:128).

For the first time, no special arrangements were made for the enumeration of the Maori population. The same Census schedule was used for Europeans and Maori and only a limited number were printed in Maori for use in the North Island.

Fascination with miscegenation of the non-European population of New Zealand went unabated in 1951. A special survey was conducted to show the effect of miscegenation on the Maori population. The investigation was carried out in the Auckland Provincial District, and the sample was limited to children under 15 years of age, who resided with parents or close relatives so that degrees of Maori blood could be assessed. Most of the tables presented are tabulated according to the fractions of race of Father and race of Mother. The following finding is worth noting:

although only 18.3 per cent of children of Maori or part-Maori blood live in urban districts, the proportion of such urban residents increases as the degree of Maori blood decreases, while in the rural districts, the opposite effect is shown, thus pointing to the fact that miscegenation is more apparent in town areas (Population Census, 1951, Volume VI:7).

In 1956 a further change was made to the way Maori/Other Races were classified. Previously all had been classified with Other Races, regardless of degree of Maori 'blood'. Following from the 1953 Maori Affairs Act which defined a Maori as "a person belonging to the aboriginal race of New Zealand, including a half-caste and a person intermediate between half-caste and a person of pure descent from that race" (Durie, 1994:126), all Maori/Other races with half or more Maori 'blood' were classified as Maori. Despite the 1953 statutory definition, the 1951 practice of classifying all Maori/Other Polynesian mixtures as Maori, regardless of degree of blood, was continued (Population Census, 1956, Volume VII:4).

The survey of inter-marriage in the Auckland Provincial District was repeated in 1956. A key finding being that "the proportion of children of full blood to total children of Maori descent has fallen from 61 per cent in 1951 to 54 per cent in 1956" (Population Census, 1956, Volume VIII:33). Despite this finding the overall increase in the proportion of half-caste Maori is described as gradual but steady (Population Census, 1956, Volume VIII:11).

As in 1951, no Maori schedule was used in 1956. No schedules were printed in Maori, although Maori interpreters accompanied sub-enumerators where necessary (Population Census, 1956, Volume VIII:5).

In the 1961 and 1966 Censuses, the racial classifications are described as being "based rather on geographical origin, descent, common social, cultural, and ethnic characteristics, and a generalised concept of race" and the definition is described as having "very limited ethnological validity" (Population Census, 1961, Volume 10:52; 1966, Volume 7:7). Inter-marriage and the mixing of Maori blood was still considered worthy of a complete analytical section, the main finding being that "Inter-marriage is rapidly

spreading the Maori blood through a larger section of the total population” (Population Census, 1961, Volume 10:23). In both Censuses the survey of children of Maori origin and intermarriage was also repeated. The preface to the 1966 Race volume (Population Census, 1966, Volume 7) reads, “Information on Race has been collected at each Population Census from 1916, since which period the emphasis on racial separation has diminished”.

Ideals of assimilation, becoming ‘one people’ and the formation of one nation from the perceived partnership of two races were celebrated by Pakeha in this period. Pakeha conceptions of racial difference and cultural identity were largely undisturbed, mainly due to the degree of geographic and social separation of Maori and Pakeha. Race politics were of minor concern to most Pakeha, and the mythology of ‘the best race relations in the world’ flourished (Nairn, 1989:75). Governments took little notice of Maori Affairs with policy tending to be “business as before” (Butterworth, 1988, Chapter 9:2).

Kelsey(1990:18-19) suggests that this sort of policy was in fact “active assimilation”. Government legislation and reporting confirmed the strong “assimilative urge” of Pakeha, one clear example being the 1960 Hunn report in which Hunn argued that the future of New Zealand lay in the integration of all New Zealanders to become one people, all Pakeha, some more brown than others (Orange, 1987:242-3).

In his commentary on race relations in New Zealand during this time, David Ausubel(1965:155-6) suggested:

The distinctively negative feature of race relations in New Zealand - as well as the principal reason for pessimism about the future - is not the actual seriousness of the situation but the national self-delusion which blocks recognition of the existence of a problem and thereby renders impossible the adoption of appropriate preventive and remedial measures.

For Maori, it was a time of relative political inaction due to an emphasis on survival and recovery (Kelsey, 1990:18-19). Butterworth(1988, Chapter 9:3) describes the 1950s as heralding a hiatus in Maori political life. However, for Maori a transition occurred in every demographic variable: mortality declined, fertility began to fall, population growth rates reached very high levels and then fell again, urbanisation occurred at an extremely accelerated rate and the workforce went through an almost total industrial transformation. The demographic future of Maori was assured in this period (Pool, 1991:133).

A high demand for labour, particularly in the secondary sector was met by the increasing migration of Maori workers from rural to urban areas (Ongley, 1996:17). The coming together of Maori and Pakeha in an urban

setting highlighted the inequalities between the two cultural groups. In housing, health and education, an awareness of the disparity between Maori and Pakeha became increasingly obvious. The consequences of Maori urbanisation, such as that of social dislocation and loss of traditional constraints, seemed to be reflected in increasing juvenile offending rates, delinquency, and educational failure (Walker,1989:197-209). The problems associated with Maori urbanisation could no longer be evaded (Butterworth,1988:15).

Ausubel's late 1950s prediction is worth noting:

Primarily because of the increased inter-racial contact under unfavourable urban conditions, compounded by stubborn refusal frankly to face up to the problem of growing racial tensions, Maori-pakeha relations will gradually deteriorate until a series of minor explosions will compel the adoption of preventive and remedial measures....The situation will intensify Maori racial nationalism and eventually compel Maori leaders to dig their heads out of the sand and organise a self-protective movement...(Ausubel,1965:229-230)"

During the 1960s the issue of race and ethnicity gained a new importance for Pakeha as their view of peaceful race relations was disrupted. The third phase and paradigm of understanding and conceptualising about race and ethnicity was to begin during this time. Difference was re-evaluated along with an "analysis and critique of racial inequality as a fundamentally structuring feature of ... society" (Frankenburg,1993:14).

International events in the 1960s and 1970s highlighted the political nature of ethnicity. For example, in 1960 the United Nations passed the Declaration on Colonialism and admitted 16 new African States. McDonald(1986:116) argues this Declaration has been:

the basis of much of its [United Nations] policy on decolonisation and racism since that time.

In the Pacific, between 1962 and 1980, eight South Pacific island territories became independent (Larmour,1983: 1). Many of these newly independent nations and island states were highly critical of their former colonial rulers and powerful anti-racist and anti-colonialist literature was generated (Spoonley,1988:40).

Social movements of the 1960s such as the United States civil rights and Black Power movements also served to create turbulence within Western nations. Ethnic revivals occurred in practically every western country in the 1960s (Spoonley,1988:41). The writing and ideas of Black Americans such as Angela Davis, Malcolm X, and

Charles Hamilton were influential in providing analytic frameworks within which racism could be understood (Nairn,1989:81).

For Maori, their cultural identity had always been at issue, but a new phase of politicisation began. A heightened consciousness of Maori identity vis-a-vis Pakeha cultural identity led to political activism and an increasing assertion of a positive Maori identity. The process of politicisation highlighted the inadequacies of Pakeha conceptions of difference and identity and forced a recognition of the political nature of Maori ethnicity.

Maori political activism was to gain momentum through the 1960s into the 1970s. The land march of 1975 and the Bastion Point protest focused media attention on calls by Maori for recognition of Maoritanga, sovereignty as promised in the Treaty of Waitangi, and for recognition of the significance and centrality of land to Maori cultural identity. The symbols associated with land and the struggle for sovereignty became central to a modern cultural identity as tangata whenua. The replacement of negative images and associations previously accorded by the dominant European culture, with an assertive, positive identity through the promotion of Maori language and values, facilitated for many a choice of Maori self-identification (Spoonley,1988:50; Pool,1991:163).

The 1970s were also characterised by record levels of immigration, particularly from the Pacific in combination with the collapse of the long boom in global economy (Ongley,1996:22). The growth of immigrant minorities who are culturally distinct and racialised as is the case for Pacific Island and Asian immigrants, particularly during a period of economic contraction contributed to and advanced the process of identity renegotiation and politicisation.

Government agencies re-examined their statistical definitions of 'Maori' and other ethnic groups. In the 1971 Census, the use of the word 'race' was dropped in favour of 'ethnic group'. The statutory 'blood' definition specified in the 1953 Maori Affairs Act was amended in 1974, and in 1975 the Electoral Act was also amended. Persons with any degree of Maori descent were subsequently defined as Maori.

Maori means a person of the Maori race of New Zealand:
and includes any descendent of such person
(Brown,1983:29).

Brown(1983:29) describes the spirit of this change as reflecting a desire to allow any person (conditional upon descent) to self-identify as Maori.

Despite the changes to official definitions, official statistical collection continued to utilise practices which reflected the first and second phases of European understandings of race and difference. The practical application of race continued to reflect a notion of identity, contingent upon biological origin and distinguishable by degrees of 'blood' (Population Census, 1971, Volume 7, 13; Brown, 1983:29-30; Pool, 1991:19). For example, the 1971, 1976 and 1981 Censuses insisted that respondents spell out in fractions their exact biological ethnic make-up (Population Census 1971, Volume 8; 1976, Volume 7; Pool, 1991:19). "Eurocentrism was still flourishing in New Zealand in 1980" (Ballara, 1986, 140) as this 1980 opinion illustrates:

The white man will not go back to the grass skirt, it is the Maori that has to put on the suit (cited in Ballara, 1986:140).

There have been successive changes to the design of Census ethnicity questions since the 1970s. Differing procedures for coding ethnic data, changes in legal and constitutional requirements for ethnic statistics, and revisions to standard ethnic classifications (Papps, 1994:15-16). These changes have occurred within a national and international context characterised by periods of major social, political and economic change. Ongoing debate concerning the meanings and definitions associated with race and ethnicity are driven by continually changing ethnic relations located within this context of change.

The previous monopoly over definition held by the state suffered in this period. Counter definitions of ethnicity to the ones used by the state emerged from the demands made by Maori and this was reflected to some degree in the definitions and collection procedures used for ethnic statistical information (Weaver, 1984:183). For example, respondents were asked which ethnic groups they identified with and could specify more than one in 1986. The 1986 Census also dropped the fractions of origin, but retained the two categorical divisions, "Persons of Solely New Zealand Maori Origin" and "Persons of New Zealand Maori Origin or Descent" (Department of Statistics, 1986: Series C, Report 9:10). This change was seen to reflect a change in the way ethnicity was perceived, from "biological type to a wider cultural affiliation perception" (Papps, 1994:18).

Significant changes were made to the questions, definitions and coding procedures in 1991 and 1996 although both Censuses continued to use a question based on a cultural affiliation concept of ethnicity. Since 1991 a question on Maori ancestry separate to the ethnic group question has also been included. This has produced more than one 'count' of the Maori population. In 1991, 323,493

New Zealand residents ticked only the 'NZ Maori' box on their questionnaires. A further 111,357 persons ticked 'NZ Maori' as well as one or more other ethnic boxes giving a total of 434,850 persons classified in the NZ Maori ethnic group. Furthermore, a total of 511,278 persons claimed Maori ancestry (Khawaja and Chan,1993:130-131).

A further change in the 1991 and 1996 censuses was the option to record tribal or iwi affiliation. Salmond(1991:42) described whakapapa as being central to Maori life in pre-European history, and the official acknowledgement of iwi in official census classification illustrates the historical continuity of Maori identity. Salmond(1991:432) writes:

In New Zealand, as elsewhere in the world ... cultural diversity has proved to be irrepresible. Maori ancestry traditions and language have not been submerged by global culture: on the contrary, a sense of continuity with an ancestral Polynesian past is vigorous and resurgent.

Brown(1983:50) has argued that with the replacement of an ideology of integration with multi-culturalism, the notion of ethnicity takes a politico-cultural dimension in addition to a biological or racial origin aspect and that it becomes dynamic reflecting subjective outcomes of political consciousness and choice. I would argue that ethnicity has not 'become' dynamic nor political, but that European understandings of ethnic identity have changed in the context of historical social and political processes to view ethnicity as dynamic and political.

For Pakeha, the politicisation of ethnic identity involves an exploration of a locally derived identity with its attendant historical and cultural connections including the acknowledgement of the politics of Maori sovereignty (Larner and Spoonley,1995). This includes understanding the historical legacy and continuity of previous centuries of eurocentrism as a common feature in New Zealand and its impact on understandings and practices associated with race and ethnicity.

Although "It has...begun to dawn on New Zealanders of European ancestry that their country is in fact a Pacific archipelago, located in a sea of predominantly non-European societies" (Salmond,1991:432), the dawning is emergent one only.

The changing nature of ethnic relations has highlighted for Pakeha the very political nature of their own ethnicity. Recent and ongoing debates over the use and meanings associated with the terms 'Pakeha' and 'New Zealanders' are characteristic of this process. The labels which New Zealanders use to describe their identity are seen to matter

and are seen to be imply an inherently political statement about cultural politics in New Zealand (Bell,1996:145).

Whether or not certain concepts or definitions are adopted or dropped by official administrative ethnic data collections has been influenced strongly by academic and theoretical debates. The following analysis of the changing nature of these debates further contextualises issues of conceptualisation and definition.

Race, Ethnicity and Identity - *Academic Debates*

The emergence of a modern conception of difference as race did not begin until European explorers reached the Western Hemisphere as the “advance guard” of capitalism seeking new opportunities for trade (Omi and Winant, 1994:61). The discovery of new people, of “natives,” initiated debate about the origins and possibilities of the human species. The moot point is made:

Given the dimensions and the ineluctability of the European onslaught, given the conquerors’ determination to appropriate both labor and goods, and given the presence of an axiomatic and unquestioned Christianity among them, the ferocious division of society into Europeans and “Others” soon coalesced. This was true despite the famous 16th-century theological and philosophical debates about the identity of indigenous peoples (Omi and Winant, 1994:62).

With the expansion of European powers a new racialised social structure of exploitation, appropriation and domination began. Its representation in religious, scientific and political terms created modern racial awareness (Omi and Winant, 1994:62). The term race “derives from a period of colonial expansion when classifying people according to their appearance, or ‘race’, helped Europeans to make sense of human diversity” (Spooney, 1993:2).

Colonial European conceptions of identity viewed the individual as discrete, physically bounded, genetically determined and self-actuating. Identity was understood within this conception as natural, universal, essential and objectively identifiable by a set of attributes and characteristics. Identity was conceived as independent of one’s external social and political situation. This view of identity influenced the way that groups of people different to themselves were conceptualised. Membership of groups was considered determined by descent and background and genetic inheritance the main transmitter of a person’s vital substance. Knowledge of ‘other races’ was generated from a colonial European standpoint and as an effect of the process of classifying and categorising a range of ‘others’, the European, white self also became produced, as stable, unmarked and autonomous in contradiction to the other marked racial categories (Frankenburg, 1993:16-17).

A scheme classifying human species into four varieties was devised by Linnaeus and listed in his *Systema Naturae* (1758). Race was associated with lineage or descent and was distinguishable along several dimensions, of which physical appearance and genetic or biological origin were considered primary. Races were commonly classified according to colour

originating in Linnaeus's typology: *Europaeus*- white, *Afer*- black, *Americanus*- red, *Asiaticus*-yellow (Oommen,1994:83).

By the eighteenth century, classificatory schemas of people - races - according to physical characteristics were firmly entwined with the development of science (Pearson, 1990:8;Banton,1988:17). Nineteenth century scientists reified the concept and endowed it with explanatory powers beyond its initial taxonomic purpose [and] physical differences were correlated with cultural and social status through biological justification (Barkan,1992:15-16, cited in Muir,1993:344).

By the mid 19th century, Darwinian theories misapplied to races and societies provided so-called scientific explanations which confirmed the superiority of European races and civilisation as the working of immutable natural laws (Howe,1984:349). The recording, measuring and categorisation of races was integral to this scientific endeavour.

Throughout the 19th century, research that viewed racial differences in health as primarily biological in origin diverted attention from the social origins and determinants of disease, reinforced societal norms of racial inferiority, and provided as so-called scientific rationale for ... exploitation ...(Williams et al,1994:27).

The idea of race, the use of racial categories, with rights and privileges attached, became popularly accepted and the practice of classifying people by physical difference became embedded into processes of statistical collection.

During the nineteenth century, there were abundant works which confirmed the superiority of the white European races and the inferiority of non-white races. One which would influence racial thinking of the period and be echoed for the next hundred years was Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's four volume *Essay on the Inequality of the Races* (1853-1855). He argued that "superior races produced superior cultures and that racial intermixtures resulted in the degradation of the superior racial stock" (Omi and Winant,1994:64).

The expression of these ideas would be most notable in the ideas of Francis Galton and the eugenics movement. With strong intellectual aristocratic roots, and a view which corresponded to the social interests and experiences of the professional middle class, eugenics had an enormous impact on scientific, statistical, political thought and social policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in most Western countries. Galton defined eugenics as "the study...of agencies under social control that may improve the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally" (cited in MacKenzie, 1981:15).

The first premise of eugenics was that individuals are born with and possess a measurable and relatively fixed quantity of inherited characteristics that go to make up 'civil worth'. Galton mapped social categories developed by Charles Booth onto natural ones so that the lowest social strata corresponded to the smallest quantities of 'civic worth' and vice versa. "So the eugenic theory of society...is a way of reading the structure of social classes onto nature" (MacKenzie, 1981:18).

Eugenic theory was intended to be used as the basis for practice. The aim of eugenic policy proposals was "to promote the fertility of the better types which the nation contains, whilst diminishing the birth rate amongst those which are inferior" (Leonard Darwin, 1926:138 cited in MacKenzie, 1981:18). Policy was indeed proposed which included segregation and detention of the sexes of the lower classes (the gas chamber was ruled out as a means of eliminating 'inferior types'), sterilisation, institutionalisation, regulation of fertility on the basis of IQ testing, attaching state assistance to "conditions as regards parenthood," and state encouragement to increase the fertility of the well-to-do in the form of tax relief targeted at the middle classes (MacKenzie, 1981:19-21).

There were critics of this essentialist and biologicistic view of race and from the 1920s until the 1960s, the salience of biologically determined race difference was challenged. Amongst those who rejected biological arguments which linked racial identity with cultural traits were Max Weber, W.E.B. Du Bois, Franz Boas, Robert Park and Alain Leroy Locke (Omi and Winant, 1994:65).

These early theorists were the first to suggest that race was a social category. Led by Park, the paradigm of assimilationism was to gain theoretical currency and the notion of 'ethnicity' was to gradually displace 'race' as a descriptor of difference (Frankenburg, 1993:13; Omi and Winant, 1994:15). The achievement of similarity and sameness and the evasion of difference was perceived as necessary for equality. The achievement of democratic citizenry was considered contingent upon the equalisation of difference. The articulation of difference was perceived as antithetical to equality. In New Zealand, this was expressed in the familiar notion expressed by Sir Peter Buck in 1949 "We are all New Zealanders" (cited in Ballara, 1986:115).

The discourse of assimilation asserted the equality of opportunity argument, that in an equal society, everyone has the same chances and any failure to achieve was the fault of the individual (Frankenburg, 1993:14). In this way, the power dynamics of socially constructed racism were evaded also within this discourse.

In this period 'scientific' notions of race and racial superiority (on biological or cultural grounds) were largely discredited. Previously held assumptions regarding the use of the term race for arranging groups in

terms of social, cultural and political characteristics were largely debunked. Race became understood as a socially constructed term, with no scientific conceptual validity or use (Spoonley, 1982:265-290). This scientific point of view is articulated by Appiah(1985:21-22; cited in Fuss,1989:76).

Every reputable biologist will agree that human genetic variability between the populations of Africa or Europe or Asia is not much greater than that within those populations...Apart from the visible morphological characteristics of skin, hair, and bone, by which we are inclined to assign people to the broadest racial categories - black, white, yellow - there are few genetic characteristics to be found in the population of England that are not found in similar proportions in Zaire but not in similar proportions in China or in England.

The emergence of oppositional world views to dominant and largely European structures provoked new understandings of identity, and new ways of articulating the processes involved in the negotiation and contestation of boundaries of identity. The forces of new social movements and decolonisation during the 1960s and 1970s stimulated a fundamental shift in the way race and race relations were analysed and understood (Spoonley,1993:36). Difference came to be understood in historical, political, social and cultural terms (Frankenburg,1993:157).

The concept of ethnicity came to encompass an articulation of the construction of difference as relational and involving processes of boundary formation. The works of Fredrik Barth and Frantz Fanon were major influences on studies of ethnicity (Brah,1994:810;Spoonley, 1993:36).

At its most general level, ethnicity involves belonging to a particular group and sharing its conditions of existence (Anthias,1992). This belonging involves using a diverse range of ethnic phenomena to construct collectivity, most often in terms of common origin or destiny. This origin, mythical or real, can be based on territory, culture, or physical traits. It can be internally constructed by the group or externally imposed or both. The boundaries are set up so as to include and exclude individuals on the basis of some categorisation of belonging or not belonging.

Ethnic phenomena are relational; that is the construction of differences and similarities is always in relation to others. They are political; this political character is due to the relation of an ethnic division with the distribution of resources. It is defensive, offensive and also exclusionary. This characteristic challenges the notion of some static, passive, taken for granted sense of belonging. They are also exclusionary; the boundaries of ethnic phenomena are based on practice of inclusion and exclusion and the

categorisation of people into a sense of belongingness or otherwise (Anthias,1992:425).

It is not simply an expression of individual identity, although it can be. Ethnicity is for the purposes of ethnic data collection most often defined in terms of cultural affiliation and this is based on an understanding that individuals define themselves according to the group to which they feel most closely related (Kilgour and Keefe,1992:12). Ethnicity involves social positioning in collective positions where ethnicity is understood in terms of difference from other groups as well as the similarities and differences within the group.

Ethnicity can be conceptualised as the basis for the pursuit of political projects. Ethnic groups can be formulated from inside or outside to pursue projects which may include nation or class building. Although the ethnic boundaries may have some historical basis, many of them are reformulated to pursue political ends (Anthias,1992:428). Ethnicity is not always conscious. It can be constructed outside the group. Legislation which identifies certain groups, particularly migrant groups can be responsible for the ethnicisation of a population.

Ethnicity is not the same as culture, race or identity. It often involves these processes but not necessarily. The ethnicisation of particular groups from the outside along racial lines has little to do with culture or individual personal identity. Ethnicity always involves a political dimension also. It involves the partaking of the social conditions of a groups in terms of resources as it is positioned in relation to others.

In addition, Anthias and Yuva-Davis(1992:2) argue that race remains a relevant sociological variable because colour and/or physical characteristics continue to mould human attitudes and practice. They suggest that race is used as one way of constructing boundaries of inclusiveness and exclusiveness to certain collectivities and that in order to understand and explain the discourses and practices of racism, race cannot be “erased from the analytical map.”

Some writers totally reject the term race and its use. Miles(1982), for example argues that race is an ideological construct and its continued use serves to reinforce its legitimacy. Spoonley(1993:2) rejects the use of race as oppressive and scientifically invalid “Because of its history and assumptions” and argues that race “assumes that the phenotype, or group of physical characteristics, is an appropriate way of classifying people into social groupings, and that differences in the phenotype are synonymous with variations in intellect and abilities.”

Miles and Spoonley reject the use of the term race because it is conceived as either an essence or an ideology that reinforces and is connected to racism. I would argue that it is precisely because of its connection to

racism, race should be retained as a sociological concept and that race is much more complex than simply an essence *or* an ideology.

[R]ace is a concept which signifies and symbolises social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race invokes biologically based human characteristics (so-called “phenotypes”), selection of these particular human features for the purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process (Omi and Winant,1994:55).

Racism is more than an ideological belief, it is not simply an image or attitude, opinion or description, that with the right training or education can be eliminated or fixed. It is a system of knowledge and a system of values used for the organisation of reality (Essed,1991:54). The most ‘natural’ classifications of racial difference are based on characteristics that are often not in the slightest bit ‘natural’, although they are perceived to be. Official classifications are the product of a system of knowledge and values that has had the power to define and delineate boundaries of identity and meaning.

Mason(1994:847) argues that it is the link between race and racism which clearly establishes the *social* character of race and that retaining the concept of race “entails recognising that race and racism are mutually constitutive”. Understanding the many dimensions of racism cannot be achieved without retaining the concept of race (Oommen,1994:88).

The everyday use of race and the practices of racism are “inextricably intertwined with the very social fabric of multi-racial societies” and the influence of racial ideas and ideologies continues, often somewhat publicly abashed, but largely unabated particularly in an ‘everyday way’ (Essed,1991). As Frankenburg (1993:239) so aptly argues, an individual’s sense of self, others, identity and worldview are racialised and a repository of elements of the history of the idea of race.

Bourdieu(1992:220) suggests that the notions of ethnicity and ethnic group are “scientific euphemisms that have been substituted for the notion of ‘race’, which is none the less still present in practice”. In some respects the implication of euphemistic substitution is probably a little strong as the way in which ethnicity has come to be theorised is quite different to race although in practice there is plenty of evidence to suggest substitution. In the New Zealand Census of 1976 for example, the term race was simply replaced with the term ethnic origin, although the practice of measurement continued to be discerned by degrees of origin, rather than ‘blood’ (Papps,26-27).

Just because a racist system of knowledge and values, based as it is on erroneous scientific logic, may have been used as the justification for exploitation and oppression of many groups, it should not be considered as reason to cleanse hearts, minds and language of the term race. hooks (1990:51-52) writes that the new buzz words of difference are now stylish ways of talking about race that separate it from historical and political contexts. She suggests ethnicity is being reconstituted as the new frontier,

accessible to all, no passes or permits necessary, where attention can now be focused on the production of a privileged, commodifiable discourse in which race becomes synonymous with culture. There would be no need, however, for any unruly radical black folks to raise critical objections to the phenomenon if all this passionate focus on race were not so neatly divorced from a recognition of racism, of the continuing domination of blacks by whites, and (to use some of those out-of-date, uncool terms) of the continued suffering and pain in black life.

Race continues to mould understandings of difference and practices of inclusion and exclusion and so its importance lies not so much in whether race is 'untrue' in the scientific sense but in the way in which it is used. Fundamentally, the central issue is not so much whether scientifically speaking biologically distinct races exist, it is rather the way in which difference is signified. What is important is not whether there are ultimate 'truths', but how truth claims are constituted, legitimised or contested; what power regimes they codify and what policies and practices they inscribe (Brah,1994:808).

In the current historical moment, as challenges to the relative resource positioning of ethnic groups are played out and dominant paradigms are contested, the issues and controversy raised surrounding statistical representation illustrate and reflect many of the contemporary dilemmas of identity formation.

For Maori, the contest for resources reveals considerable issues. Whilst whakapapa, links to iwi and hapu remain central to most articulations of Maori identity, for some urban based Maori, without links to whakapapa, the necessity of whakapapa for legitimate ethnic identity is being challenged.

Recent dispute over a 1992 Fisheries settlement inspired these comments by Urban Maori Authorities spokesperson John Tamihere (Sunday Star-Times, 1997:January 5):

The Urban Maori Authorities truly represent the people of a place every bit as much as those represented by iwi...Urban Maori Authorities represent a group of people with varying

degrees of access, involvement and even interest in things Maori... Urban Maori Authorities are a focus for people whose experience of 'Maoriness' is shaped more by abuse and poverty than whakapapa, and by the streets and television rather than the history class and the marae. We are asking fundamental questions about the reality of Maori society, and basic inequities in the delivery of support. At the end of the day it is what works that really matters

Pearson and Sissons(1996) have recently argued that we know very little about the processes of Pakeha identity formation in New Zealand, that the processes of being, becoming or rejecting are not neat. In a recent survey, 83.4% of respondents answered that they never or only sometimes described themselves as Pakeha. Respondents attitudes to such things as nationalism, self-determination, bi-cultural acceptance and closeness to ethnic group were significant by their similarity rather than their differences. But for white New Zealanders "what one calls oneself is seen to matter" (Bell, 1996:145).

Describing and naming Pakeha ethnicity has been attempted by a few, mostly male academics (Bell,1996:146). The examination of white or Pakeha ethnic identity is a newly emerging phenomenon, and one of great discomfort for the majority. For the dominant cultural group, an examination of identity has largely been done by constructing 'others', with the resulting understanding that white is everything others are not (Frankenburg, 1993:193). Deconstructing this construction of white ethnicity and identity is fraught with difficulty.

The resistance of many New Zealanders to the use of any ethnic labels is noted in the *New Zealand Standard Classification of Ethnicity 1993* and Bell(1996:148) describes the way in which white people perceive themselves to be somehow 'outside' ethnicity as "a discursive sleight of hand which operates to maintain the position of white people at the top of the racial hierarchy constructed in nineteenth-century European thought". Claiming the category "New Zealander" is a space that represents the normative from the standpoint of the dominant culture and eclipses the differences between groups (Frankenburg,1993:198).

The shift to conceptions of difference as relational and socially constructed and called 'ethnicity' by academics and many administrative data collections is not so obvious in everyday public discourse. Particularly for many white New Zealanders, the everyday conceptualisation of difference remains strongly and stubbornly influenced by mixtures of essentialist and assimilationist paradigms of race.

These quotes taken from the late 1970s and early 1980s aptly illustrate this:

the Maori has not yet left the seventeenth century. No wonder he is in trouble. He is trying to match seventeenth century concepts with twentieth century technology...We will not change to suit the Maori. He has to change if he wants to enter the twentieth century (cited in Ballara,1986:164).

being a Maori is often a state of mind, there being so little Maori blood involved...we should *all* be called New Zealanders...I believe that by far the majority of Maoris consider themselves as New Zealanders and are quite happy to live as the rest of us (cited in Ballara,1986:164).

The project of exploring and naming whiteness is a very tricky one, with huge discord attached. And yet not to do it, to ignore it, is to “redouble its hegemony by naturalising it” (Coco Fusco, cited in Roedigger,1994:12).

The stirring of debate about white identity in New Zealand is as much about identity as it is about resources and therein lies the sting for many white New Zealanders. This possibly explains some of the stubbornness with which many white New Zealanders hang on to the label ‘New Zealander’ and resist being called ‘Pakeha’.

Dominance for all its critics is a powerful position and not one given up without a fight. As more resources are shifted in the New Zealand context to those identified and who identify as Maori, white New Zealanders can be expected to complain. But as Maori re-define their identity as part of their resource positioning *vis-a-vis* white New Zealand, so too will white New Zealanders.

Just what it will take to shift the dominant paradigm of most white New Zealanders is hard to tell. But the links between assertions of identity and political and material projects are bound to be very telling.

Definitions of race and ethnicity used for the collection of census ethnic statistics and in academic debate have to a great deal prescribed the resulting statistical picture of racial and ethnic difference in New Zealand. The value of an historical examination of race and ethnic classification in the census and in academic debate is that it provides a good overview of changing official and dominant paradigms and discourses on race and ethnicity. The danger of relying on this analysis alone is that the impression we are left with is that we have moved beyond the understandings of the past and have reached a point where we all share in the understandings and conceptualisation of race and ethnicity associated with the third phase and paradigm.

But the production of ethnic statistics is not restricted to concepts and definitions alone. The *practices* of collection and coding, the operational or working procedures, which are influenced by the attitudes and understandings of those involved in the processes hugely affect the resulting statistics that are produced. If practices of collection reflect a biological, racial or assimilationist view which is not consistent with the official definitions of ethnicity then it is questionable whether the resulting statistics could be called 'ethnic statistics' at all or used as such. For instance, if difference has been assigned according to racial criteria such as physical difference, then it should not be possible to proffer analytical explanations based on cultural understandings of ethnicity (Mckenzie and Crowcroft, 1996:1054). This 'lack of fit' between definitions and collection processes has serious implications for the quality and validity of ethnic statistical data and therefore for its usefulness.

PART THREE

UNDERSTANDING OPERATIONALISATION

The way in which ethnic data is actually collected, the operational or working procedures, has a major impact on the resulting picture of ethnic difference produced by statistics. Statistical rates are produced by the actions of those who classify and record the information being collected (Kitsuse and Cicourel, 1963:135). Who determines the ethnic identity of individuals or groups and how ethnic identity is assigned affects the quality and validity of ethnic data.

The way in which this occurs depends on two processes. One is the specific organisational rules and procedures used in the organisation in which officials work, in this case police and funeral directors. The other is the 'common-sense' knowledge and understandings of the concepts of race and ethnicity of those involved in actually collecting the statistics.

The organisational rules and procedures include: the way in which a question about race or ethnicity is designed on the form used by an organisation (the operational definition), the accepted or standard method or practice of assigning race or ethnicity that is used by officials, and the rules which determine the importance or relevance of a question. These rules and procedures determine *how* race or ethnicity is defined in the everyday environments of officials' daily working lives. They also prescribe a method of collection which determines *who* is responsible for determining the ethnic identity of an individual. Organisational rules about collection influence whether or not information being collected by officials is considered important or relevant. These rules and procedures have a large impact on the commitment of officials to 'getting it right' and therefore the completeness and quality of the information collected.

The 'common-sense,' everyday knowledge and understanding of the concepts of race and ethnicity that officials have is like all other knowledge and understanding. It is contextual and located socially, politically, historically and culturally. Our 'common-sense' is shaped by our structured positions in society and our daily interactions and application of our 'common-sense' knowledge shapes our relationships with the structures and institutions in which we are embedded. Depending on the method or practices of collection used by particular organisations, officials are often in positions where their own 'common-sense' understandings are highly influential on the final outcome of ethnic data.

This part of the research is divided into three. It begins by describing the methods or practices used to collect data about race and ethnicity in research and official ethnic data collection. These practices are also the product of the historically located paradigms and discourses that have been explored in the previous chapters.

The notion of ‘common-sense,’ everyday understandings of race and ethnicity is explored more fully and its influence on operationalisation will then provide a useful and important background to understanding the specific operational procedures and processes used by police and funeral directors in the collection of ethnic data.

Finally, the qualitative study undertaken as part of this research is presented. This study explores both the methods and practices of collection of ethnic data by police and funeral directors as well as their ‘common-sense’ everyday understandings of race and ethnicity.

(i) Practices of Collection

Three basic divisions can be identified in the way in which ethnicity is assigned during the process of data collection. Ethnicity can be assigned by an observer or outsider such as a researcher. It can be assigned using a proxy or surrogate measure of ethnicity, for example, from information collected about a range of other attributes such as place of birth, parents place of birth, country of origin, surname, language, religion and physical characteristics, ethnicity is inferred. And it can be assigned by self-identification using a question which asks an individual or group to choose from a range of options the ethnic group they identify with.

Visual Assessment of Physical Characteristics

The use of visual assessment by an interviewer or observer as a method of assigning ethnicity has been (and continues to be) used extensively for ethnic data collection and for research purposes and Brown(1983) describes the use of visual assessment as “observer estimation”.

The first observer estimates of the Maori population were made by Europeans and in the main can be considered “unsystematic enumeration or mere estimates in many areas” (Dixon, 1989:23). Until at least 1916, census classification was done by the district officers of the Native Department and was in essence a “mere headcount” (Dixon, 1989:24-5). From 1926, the census determined ethnicity based on the self-enumeration of respondents (Pool,1991:23).

In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s “observer estimation” is still being used in research and the collection of many official statistics. McDonald

(1976:37) found that the most popular method of identifying Maori children in educational research in the 1970s was to get the teachers to do the classifying according to appearance. In the collection of crime, justice, hospital, education, social welfare and mortality statistics “observer estimation” has also been noted (Brown,1983). A more recent example includes a major study of ethnicity, drinking and driving, published in the early 1990s, where the assignment of ethnicity for some of the data was done according to the opinion of the interviewers (Bailey,1991:6).

In Britain, Bagley(1988:230) claims that government researchers use techniques which infer ethnicity from personal observations without any formal questioning of race. Booth(1985:257-258) documents studies dating from the early 1970s which have employed a measure of ethnicity based on a personal assessment of colour. More recently, in a study of young pedestrian fatalities, the ethnicity of the subjects was gained by a visual assessment of the body (Lawson et al,1991:13).

This method of assigning or operationalising ethnicity has its origins in a time when race was conceived as essential, biological, a matter of species (Omi and Winant,1994:63). ‘Observer estimation’ uses the physical appearance of an individual to make a judgement about ethnicity and creates a record of *racial* information which does not necessarily have anything to do with ethnicity or ethnic identity. Furthermore the classification is imposed and imbued with the worldview of the person doing the recording and our ability to interpret racial meanings based on physical appearance depends on preconceived notions of race within the social structure we inhabit (Omi and Winant,1994:59).

Considerable criticism has been made of the method on technical and political/ethical grounds. Booth(1985:268) suggests this form of measurement suffers politically and technically from the subjectivity of those who do the assessing. She also refers to the often clandestine use of the method, a practice which poses serious ethical problems. Durie(1994:126) suggests that it “contains overtones of colonial assumptions about superiority”.

Whilst there is clear criticism on political and ethical grounds, there is also good reason and evidence to indicate that this form of operationalisation produces statistical pictures of ethnicity that are inconsistent and therefore questionable in terms of validity. In criminal statistics, Brown(1983:44) suggests that the effect of using “observer estimation” is likely to be the over-representation of Maori and Pacific Islanders. However, in the collection of mortality statistics, evidence indicates that Maori deaths are being understated using this method of enumerating ethnicity (Brown,1983:51;Graham et al,1989:124). Hahn(1992:269-270) supports this finding when he suggests that in the United States, the independent

assessment of ethnicity by funeral directors has led to the under-registration of mortality amongst non-whites.

Hahn (1992:269) provides further evidence concerning the questionable validity of visual assessment as a measure of ethnicity when he notes a United States study that compared “respondent-reported race” with “interviewer-observed” race and found that 5.8% of persons who reported themselves as ‘black’ were classified as ‘white’ by the interviewers. Furthermore, 32.3% of self-reported Asians and 70% of self-reported American Indians were classified as ‘white’ or ‘black’.

In a study at Waikato Hospital where observer reporting of ethnicity at admission and discharge was compared with a 1988 census of patients using self-reporting, twenty eight percent of those who identified themselves in the census data as Maori or of Maori descent were recorded as European, or no information had been obtained at all. Twelve percent of those identified as Maori by staff identified themselves as belonging to another ethnic group (Pool,1991:21).

In this study, the same inconsistency was found where observer estimation was used. In the collection of both police and funeral directors ethnic data, ‘observer estimation’ was used. Police data reported high levels of Maori road fatality, whereas funeral directors reported the lowest levels of Maori road fatality and the discrepancy between the two sets of data was the largest of all the data compared.

Surrogate or Proxy Measures

Ethnicity has been commonly operationalised by the assignment of certain attributes. Birthplace, country of origin, language, surname, religion, have all been and continue to be used as ways of determining the allocation of subjects into certain ethnic categories (Obidinski,1978;Laroche,1991: 156). The use of proxy or surrogate measures for the operationalisation of ethnicity is associated with the assimilationist paradigm and discourses which began emerging in the 1920s and 1930s. Immigration of non-white ethnic groups to Western, European countries stimulated considerable debate concerning the ability of immigrants to assimilate into “mainstream” society or maintain a separate cultural identity. As a political goal, assimilation was unquestioned during most of this time. Variables such as language, religion, customs, birthplace etc. were used to assess levels of ethnic identity and attachment (Omi and Winant, 1994:14-23).

A very good New Zealand example of the use of a proxy measures is the scale of ‘Maoriness’ used by Ritchie and Metge in the late 1950s and 1960s. Strict criteria were developed to determine ‘real’ Maori. The criteria included such things as membership of a Maori religious faith, full

speaking knowledge of te reo Maori, the eating of Maori food, the use of tohunga etc. (Bellet, 1996:37).

One proxy measure which has been used extensively in census collection is birthplace. Collections of birthplace data also have their origins in responses to concerns regarding the impact of immigration. Most countries have at some time asked about birthplace in Census collection. For example, since the British Census of 1841 a question about place of birth has been included in many official statistics and has been relied upon for identifying ethnic minority groups even though birthplace data was unable to identify different ethnic groups long settled in Britain and was unable to satisfy the main purposes for which the data was wanted (Sillitoe and White, 1992:143). As an indicator of ethnicity, birthplace and a much later question on parents' birthplace were increasingly considered unreliable and lacking in relevance to the purposes for which the data was required. (Booth,1985:255; Sillitoe and White,1992:142).

In other research, birthplace is also used to assign ethnicity, one example being a study of children's accidents in the home. Ethnicity was assigned according to the father's country of birth when parents were cohabitating, otherwise the mother's country of birth was used (Alwash et al,1988:1451).

Country of origin has been used in a similar fashion to birthplace as an indicator of ethnicity in official data collection. The Canadian census, until 1981, determined ethnicity according to the country of origin derived from the father's side of the family (Boxhill,1985:vii). Then in 1981, Canadians were asked:

to which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent? (Bagley,1988:230).

Obidinski(1978) has argued that whilst each of these aspects appeared to capture some aspects of ethnicity no single dimension was representative and could only be treated as inferring ethnicity not evidence of it. Laroche's (1991:156) study found that several of the measures had highly varying degrees of validity in capturing aspects of ethnicity and that an assumption regarding cross-cultural equivalence was not substantiated.

This type of operationalisation has been described as 'objective' in the sense that researchers decide which characteristics or criteria are most relevant (Laroche, 1991:150). However determining which criteria are 'objective' and interpreting meaning from these 'objective' criteria involves value judgements on the part of the researcher and therefore exposes the research to the potential for bias or invalid interpretation (Obidinski, 1978:225;Laroche,1991:150).

The strongest criticism regarding this form of operationalisation is that it has been associated with the imposition of external definitions and

assumptions (Mason,1990:125). Race or ethnicity have historically been measured using a process of categorisation which entailed the location of self in a world of meaning not of one's own making (Jordan,1985:28). This form of operationalisation is certainly guilty of doing this.

Self-Identification Of Ethnicity

In the mid 1970s, McDonald(1976:47) argued that:

research workers should free themselves from the categorization appropriate to their own ethnic group ...that they accept self-report of identity without further restriction

Bagley(1988:230) also argues that:

Ideally ethnicity should be self-defined, rather [than] being a category imposed by government definition or community standards.

Similarly, Pool(1991:23) expresses the view that:

ethnicity is primarily a self-expression based on a feeling of cultural identity.

Many official documents and literature now endorse self identification as the optimal method of ethnic identification. In 1986, the New Zealand Population Census for the first time asked a question in which respondents were asked which ethnic group they identified with. This was repeated in 1991 and 1996. A review of ethnic statistics in New Zealand in 1988 reported that in their view self identification of ethnicity provided responses most relevant to the needs of users of ethnic statistics. The review recommended that:

Wherever possible, where information will be used in producing official statistics, the method of reporting ethnicity be self-identification (Department of Statistics,1988: 9).

Expression of this ideal is evident in recent moves to standardise the classification of ethnicity across official data collections in New Zealand. The *New Zealand Standard Classification of Ethnicity* in 1993 provides a standard which all collections of ethnic data can refer.

The use of a measure of enumeration which reflects an individual's own cultural self-identification allows for the diversity of understandings regarding ethnicity, identity and personhood. Durie et al(1994:7) express

the view that "People and groups are best able to articulate their own positions, values and beliefs". Given the criticisms and problems associated with other methods of operationalisation and collection, self-identification seems the most appropriate tool of analysis given the diverse socio-cultural reality we inhabit.

Self-identification as an operational process is not flawless. Statistical concerns about the feasibility of a self-identification measure of ethnicity and the usefulness of the data obtained, are associated with such problems as category jumping and inter-ethnic mobility (Pool,1991:24; Brown,1983:61). Category jumping may however be a function of the narrowness of categories offered, rather than of incorrect identification (Jordan,1985:35). Also of concern is the increasing possibility of people identifying with more than one ethnic group (Brown,1983:60-61;Pool,1991:14-15; McDonald, 1976:42). This concern is probably justified, considering that in the 1991 New Zealand census over 152,000 people identified themselves as belonging to more than one ethnic group, and that between 1986 and 1991, the proportion of those identifying with more than one group rose from 4.3% to 4.5% (Department of Statistics, 1991a:Table 3).

Undoubtedly, this situation creates dilemmas for the statistician. Pool(1991:13) suggests that attempts to formulate definitions which accommodate the complex and fluid social reality will be untidy from an administrative point of view. However, if it is accepted that understandings about cultural identity are dynamic, contingent upon historical circumstances, as is the construction and production of statistical information, then the concerns and dilemmas probably have more to do with trying to 'fit' current socio-political realities into structured categories which are becoming redundant with historical change. McDonald(1976:44) has argued that parents who reported being 'half and half' do not:

represent a strict arithmetical measure of genetic material, nor a precise description of descent, but are, instead, ...[claiming] affiliation in two cultures. It is a claim, resting on a certain basis of Maori and Pakeha descent, to being bi-cultural.

The reporting of multiple ethnicities is something that does occur and will obviously continue occurring with the use of a self-identification measure of ethnicity. Addressing multiple identity reporting in statistical analysis is part of the ongoing need to assess and critique, on a continual basis, the assumptions and procedures of statistical ethnic measurement.

Self-identification in official ethnic collection, based as it is on a finite and small number of categories, cannot give expression to the many ways in which individuals conceive of their own ethnic identity (Durie et al,1994;Weaver,1984,184-5). Aggregate statistics can give a misleading

view of homogeneity amongst an ethnic group (Durie et al,1994:7). Importantly however, a working or operational process which uses self-identification does enable individual expression of ethnic identity without judgement or imposition.

Self-identification as an operational process is most closely associated with the third paradigm and discourses about race and ethnicity. Difference can be chosen by the individual or group and acknowledged in a non-hierarchical way, without the imposition of an observer's judgement. And the use of self-identification has come about in response to criticism by non-white groups in society about previous practices for collecting statistics.

(ii) *'Common-sense,' Everyday
Understandings of Ethnicity*

Amongst the micro-level daily experiences and events which begin in childhood and shape our lives are those that are about race and ethnicity. Our understandings and conceptions of race and ethnicity are routinely created as part of the socialisation of our attitudes and behaviour (Essed,1991). As a consequence of cumulative, daily, routine experiences, we become part of a racialised social structure, and we then contribute to its maintenance and ongoing creation (Frankenburg, 1993:1;Essed,1991:2;Omi and Winant,1994:60). Knowing about race becomes 'common-sense' for all of us.

One of the first things we notice about people when we meet them (along with their sex) is their race Everybody learns some combination, some version, of the rules of racial classification, and of her own racial identity, often without obvious teaching or conscious inculcation ... Race becomes "common-sense" - a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world (Omi and Winant,1994:59-60).

The routine, 'common-sense' understandings and practices seem 'normal' and are then often not recognised, not acknowledged and certainly not problematised (Essed, 1991:10).

Race and racism need to be understood as more than just structure and ideology. It is the everyday, 'common-sense' racialised understandings and practices which routinely create and reinforce the process of racial structuring and representation (Essed,1991:2; Omi and Winant,1994:60). Race shapes everyone's lives "any system of differentiation shapes those on whom it bestows privilege as well as those it oppresses" (Frankenburg,1993:1-3). It is the interconnectedness of the material and discursive dimensions of race that shapes and generates the "experience"

of racial understanding and practice - an experience that is historically located and constantly being transformed. It is at the everyday level that individuals engage with macro processes and structures and in their own way shape, maintain and change those structures.

One of the best examples of the ability of historical discourses to persistently inform everyday, 'common-sense' concepts is the notion of 'blood' quantum. Most people 'know' what we mean when we say we have $\frac{3}{4}$ Irish and $\frac{1}{4}$ British 'blood'. In use since the beginning of race and ethnic data collection in New Zealand and overseas, race was deemed to be discernible by 'blood' quantum. Considered to be discernible by degrees, it was thought to be an accurate indicator of physical and genetic difference.

First applied to the collection of data about Maori and then later to other non-European groups, this involved using a question which ascertained the fractions of racial 'blood' respondents considered themselves to have or were considered to have by an observer. In order to be classified with a particular racial group, a person needed to have half or more of a particular racial 'blood'. If a person recorded one half or more non-European 'blood' then they were considered to belong to that particular non-European racial group or category. Any less than one half and an individual would generally have been assigned to the European category.

This blood quantum definition of race and ethnicity persisted in most official agencies in New Zealand as the basis of ethnic data collection until the 1980s. It was considered that biological measurement based on racial 'blood' fraction was in essence comparable across a range of official collections and more accurate than any other method. As a residue of eighteenth century European thinking, racial 'blood' type as an indicator has really only ever been applicable to the explanation of blood *group* differences, of which there are few discernible differences along racial or ethnic lines (Kaufman and Cooper, 1995:664).

'Common-sense' knowledge and understanding informs all three processes of data collection about race and ethnicity but in important and subtle ways. When 'observer estimation' or visual assessment is made, the world view of a person most often not connected to the individual or group being assessed is responsible for contextualising and assigning identity. If a proxy or surrogate measure of race or ethnicity is used, again the choice of measure is the domain of someone not associated with the individual or group being assigned identity. Both these processes have been associated with a relationship of dominance, and in particular, of white dominance over non-white. In many instances of official data collection, additional relations of dominance also exist, for example, police to victim, doctor or hospital administrator to patient etc.

Self-identification is also informed by ‘common-sense’ understandings of race and ethnicity. The choice to describe one-self according to a particular category or categories, or not to, is a process firmly located within a discursive historical context. The difference between self-identification and the other two measures is that self-identification is not imposed. Of course the often pre-determined categories create imposed boundaries on choice, and are guilty of being a part of the historical discourses and practices of race and ethnicity. But, the power to define and classify no longer rests entirely with an outsider, who most commonly has a relationship of dominance with those who are classified in the process of collection.

(iii) The Current Study: Operationalisation Of Ethnic Data Collection By Police And Funeral Directors

The quantitative stages of the research clearly identified that there were differences between the police and funeral directors’ ethnicity data. But it did not address **why** these problems may have been occurring. The intent of this qualitative study is to discover in-depth meanings and understandings about police and funeral directors’ processes of collection of ethnic data rather than to obtain measurable outcomes (Leininger, 1994:97). Qualitative research provides complimentary information which will help interpret and understand the quantitative findings (Heyink and Tymstra, 1993:302). The process of information collection will be better understood with information gained from the experience of police and funeral directors.

a) Research questions

Exploring the validity of ethnic statistics entailed an exploration of both concepts, definitions and operationalisation. The overarching question which initiated this phase of the research was to find out how police and funeral directors operationalise race and ethnicity. As previously discussed, operationalisation depends on two processes. One is the specific practices or organisational rules and procedures of the organisation in which officials work, in this case police and funeral directors. The other is the way in which the ‘common-sense’ knowledge and understandings of the concepts of race and ethnicity of those involved in actually collecting the statistics impact these practices. Specific research questions which address these issues included:

- How is race or ethnicity actually defined on the forms used by police and funeral directors?
- What do the police and funeral directors think of their forms?

- How do police and funeral directors determine ethnicity?
- Do they have to ask or do they use 'observer estimation'?
- What is standard practice in their organisation?
- Who actually completes the question?
- What are their feelings about the race and ethnicity questions?
- What are their experiences of completing the race and ethnicity questions?
- How do families deal with the ethnicity question?
- Do they have to fill in the race and ethnicity question everytime?

(b) Sample

The Police districts visited included; Hastings, Levin, Palmerston North, Wellington, Porirua, Upper Hutt, Wanganui, Hawera, New Plymouth and Auckland. Police were interviewed at each site. Availability of personnel was the major criterion by which the sample was chosen and this was organised by key senior police. Unfortunately, this affected the gender distribution of the sample which resulted in all the officers being male.

Six funeral directors were interviewed in the Auckland region. In all cases, the funeral director was interviewed, and in two cases, staff in the office were also interviewed.

(c) Method

Police

With all the police officers a face-to-face interview was carried out. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between half an hour and an hour and a half. Some interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and others involved more than one officer. Police were given the option of having the interview taped or having notes taken throughout the interview. Each participant was offered a summary of the research objectives and procedures and confidentiality was assured. Questions about the research were encouraged and Police were free to be able to generate their own discussion on topics the conversation led us to. In the main however, most of the interview was directed by the researcher.

Each interview followed a similar format. Although it is not the goal of qualitative research to be able to produce generalisations, it was considered important to focus on general continuities and similarities under similar circumstances and contexts (Leininger, 1994, 107). A 'looser' approach to the interview material was adopted as the research was essentially exploratory and this sort of design has been shown to work best for this purpose (Huberman and Miles, 1994:431).

I treated the first interview as a way of gaining some 'acquaintance with the setting' of police work, terminology, culture etc., and a testing of my

interview procedure. The interview also began the process of thinking about the data, early, emergent inductive analysis of a sort. I was able to isolate from this interview some themes and categories that I considered would need confirmation, re-interpretation in another context, to give them robustness or analytic validity (Huberman and Miles, 1994).

The approach I adopted was to ask that the officers lead me through a fatal accident from the time they are first notified of the accident. This 'story telling' enabled extensive 'talk' to occur before the questions about the process of form filling and processing happened. It also provided a context to locate the process of data collection into. Nothing we do occurs in a vacuum, and in the case of traffic death, the context is tragic and very stressful for all involved.

Research is not a one-way process. "Interviews possess a dual, and double-edged, status: as a research tool - a way of collecting data - and as a *social* relationship" (Oakley, 1992:15-16). Creating rapport is considered vital to the process of interviewing. In no way was gaining rapport understood to be in terms of the 'objective neutral researcher' perspective of much survey research interviewing. The main reason for engaging in any sort of qualitative research is to search for meaning. This meaning is greatly enhanced if the research participants are relaxed and feel free to give information in a non-threatening environment. For many of the police officers the opportunity to talk about fatal road accidents and their role in them was a unique experience. Some had never talked about the detail of their role in an accident and the feelings they had about it.

Using the story approach meant that by the time I started asking questions about the collection of ethnic information and issues arising around this, the officers were at ease and comfortable with the interview process. The earlier discussion also provided important additional information for the research.

Funeral Directors

The constraints of time and money meant that the interviews with funeral directors were undertaken in a very different manner. I was able to visit the offices of two funeral directors, and I spoke to both funeral directors and staff in the office. The interviews were *very* loosely structured around the busy daily routines of the office.

Four interviews were conducted by telephone. Telephone interviewing is a very different experience to face-to-face, and certainly the shorter interviews were those conducted over the phone. The information seemed more superficial, although all four funeral directors were happy to be interviewed and appeared interested and gave insightful and helpful responses to my questions. There was less opportunity to engage in a meaningful two-way dialogue over the phone, although I encouraged the

funeral directors to ask questions of me. The interviews were loosely structured, based around directors' experiences of completing the death registration form (RG 28) and lasted between 15 minutes and half an hour.

(d) Analysis

The content of the interviews was summarised using a three step process. This involved organising, shaping and summarising the data (Hawe et al,1994:182).

i) Organising the data.

The data was organised and shaped into a workable order. This involved the transcription of the taped interviews and the written notes taken. An overall picture of the data was then available. The responses relating to form filling and ethnicity were later separated from the rest of the interview data.

ii) Shaping the data.

Themes, patterns and categories were developed from the data. A large number of coding categories were established to begin with allowing for the broadest ranges of responses and these were later refined into fewer final categories.

iii) Summarising the data.

At this stage of the analysis the range of responses was explored. Similarities and differences were sought as well as extremes. Every point of view was accounted for in this stage of the research.

(e) Results

The results of the interviews with police and funeral directors are summarised under six major headings. These include; dealing with families, forms and organisational procedures, the ethnicity question, assigning/determining ethnicity, and a different question - what if you had to ask?.

Dealing With Families

For many police the worst part of their job is having to inform families about the death of a loved one.

"...That's got to be the worst thing in the whole job is telling someone that their kids just died, I don't mind dealing with them or doing anything else, you know, but that part is the worst thing you can tell them..."

A theme that was common to both police and funeral directors was that in many instances, close family members are too distressed to deal with the administrative procedures of police and funeral directors. In these cases, another family member or close friend is interviewed.

"...just can't generalise about how someone will deal with being confronted with this...if there is a problem, there are usually ways to deal with it, other family members or friends can be asked instead..."

"...you'll always find there's a tower of strength somewhere in somebody's family..."

Several police described neighbours being useful, particularly when an elderly person was involved.

Despite this distress, families were described as generally co-operative with regard to the process of answering questions.

"...most people are quite good to deal with."

"...people are pretty acceptable to answering those types of questions... not usually a problem."

"...Haven't had any problems getting information."

One of the most persistent themes that arose during the discussion was that although the procedure was clearly an uncomfortable one for everyone, form filling was perceived by most people as something that just had to be done. It was significant that on more than one occasion, family co-operation was considered more straightforward if people knew why information was being collected.

"... if individuals are aware of why information is required and what it is used for, there will be no problem."

This was so particularly for police, where it was expressed that their presence is not always appreciated by families.

Forms and Organisational Procedures

The forms used by police were called 'Police 47s.' This form had multiple copies for other government agencies such as ACC and the Coroner. Race is the terminology used on the form and the categories used were Caucasian, Maori, Pacific Island, Asian and Other.

Funeral directors complete an official death registration in most cases having transcribed the information from an 'arrangement form' which is designed by the individual director or the organisation. The race/ethnicity question is based on 'blood quantum' and is in two parts. The first asks for the 'percentage of blood' of the father of the deceased with a fractional breakdown, and the second part asks similarly about the mother of the deceased.

These forms clearly have their origins in the first essentialist, biologicistic paradigm. Descriptors such as Caucasian are deeply rooted in earlier centuries and the continuing use of the term race reflects an organisational adherence to conceptions of difference based in biology. The use of 'blood quantum' has its origins in the earliest days of racial description, when racial biological make-up was strongly correlated with intelligence, ability and moral character.

Most police expressed the view that all the items on the form were required to be completed and that this procedure was followed as completely as possible because should they miss any detail, this would be brought to their attention and it would require another trip to next-of-kin to find out. Despite some difficulties in approaching next-of-kin over some of the items, it was acknowledged that this was an administrative procedure that just had to be done. There were no guidelines for asking the questions on the form, some expressed the view that they just like to get it over and done with, others indicated they took more time.

In 1990, new 'Police 47' forms were introduced. Following any sudden death, these forms are used by police to record many of details about the death and the deceased. It became clear that in several districts the new form introduced in 1990 was still not being used as some officers were not familiar with it. The reasons for this appeared to be that stockpiles of the old forms still existed in some districts and until these ran out the old ones would continue to be used. The old form did not include a question about race and therefore information about race was not being collected by those police still using the old form. This affected the completeness of the ethnicity database that was collected for this research. However, once the new form is fully implemented into police districts, race will be collected for all sudden deaths attended by police.

The procedures used by funeral directors varied from one director to another. Of the funeral directors interviewed, none knew of any standard procedures or guidelines for completing the death registration form. Some directors claimed to be directly responsible for completing the death registration form (RG28) whilst others suggested that office staff generally completed the actual registration form. Funeral directors all claimed to use an 'arrangement form' when dealing with next-of-kin. This form is designed to collect information for official purposes as well as detail about the funeral.

Information from the arrangement form is later transferred to the death registration form in the office, very often by an assistant or other office staff.

If the deceased was considered by the funeral director to be non-Maori or non-Pacific Island by the funeral director then no ethnic information was required to be collected. Justifiably, funeral directors indicated that for many of the families they deal with, the ethnicity question was not applicable. Funeral directors were also aware that ethnic information is not recorded on the death certificate that is issued to the family of the deceased. As a result, this information is accorded a low priority.

"...we almost never concern next-of-kin or ourselves with them [items 22 and 23]..."

The most striking difference that emerged between police and funeral directors forms and procedures is that for Police, recording racial or ethnic information is mandatory for all sudden deaths whereas for funeral directors, the requirement to record ethnicity is based entirely on the judgement of the funeral director.

Two other related issues which emerged were first, the lack of guidelines for completing the ethnicity question, or for that matter, many of the other questions and secondly, a lack of understanding about the reasons why ethnicity was asked. This is consistent with other research carried out in New Zealand (Kilgour and Keefe, 1992).

"...why do they [administrators] need that information?...little bit irrelevant..."

The latter issue was a recurring theme in many of the interviews. Neither police nor funeral directors seemed aware of what happens to the data after they collect it, and what use it is put to. It seems somewhat ironic that police should suggest that the process of data collection is improved if families understand why the information is being collected, yet the same cannot be said about their own understanding of why they must collect race/ethnic information.

The Ethnicity Question

During many of the police interviews sensitivity about the ethnicity question was expressed. This sensitivity related to two phenomena. First, a personal dislike of the question itself. This personal dislike was not related to asking the ethnicity question, rather a statement of unease with the concept and its meaning.

"...I find it offensive personally, so I never ask."

"...don't like to be identified with a race...just say New Zealanders..."

There was an expressed desire not to be identified with any ethnic group, a resistance to the use of an ethnic ascription by some (Bell,1996:145). Ethnic or racial labels were seen as being upsetting or offensive and some were clearly uncomfortable with the acknowledgment of difference associated with ethnic identification. These statements are interesting in that they reveal aspects of the second paradigm of assimilationist race discourse. In both statements, the acknowledgment of difference is seen as offensive or discomfoting. As part of the assimilationist paradigm's rejection of biological difference and the notions of hierarchy, maintaining a 'colour-blindness' or 'race-blindness' was perceived as 'polite' and endorsing notions of equality, regardless of colour or race. Noticing race or colour was not a good thing to do, even offensive, although of course by not noticing or finding colour (non-white) offensive, the suggestion is that colour is bad (Frankenburg, 1993:142-144).

A sensitivity to the possible consequences of asking the question was also expressed. It was thought that the question *could* be a sensitive issue for some people. Certainly instances of offense or difficulty with asking the question were related although many of these were second hand stories. On the whole it was a perceived sensitivity about the *possibility* of a reaction to the question which was expressed.

"...it could be sensitive."

"...it could upset people."

The wariness expressed by police about the possibility of upsetting people by acknowledging racial difference is entirely consistent with the assimilationist race discourse. If the acknowledgement of racial difference which comes with asking about race or ethnicity does cause upset, then it clearly contradicts the discourse which argues that race doesn't matter, that we are all the same. For most police, this contradiction is one that is clearly discomfoting and can be avoided by evading difference, rationalising this within the context of upset that has already been caused by the tragedy.

"...we do have to try to maintain the co-operation of people...where possible I go out of my way not to create problems."

Both police and funeral directors expressed discomfort with the process of administrative data collection procedures they were responsible for so soon after an event such as a fatal road accident. There was an expressed desire particularly when dealing with distressed people not to upset or create problems.

Sensitivity was not expressed by funeral directors, although they expressed the view that the ethnicity question was irrelevant for many of the families they were involved with.

"...questions past item number 21 [ethnic questions are items 22 and 23]....almost never concern them [next-of-kin] or ourselves with..."

"...do not seem relevant for most of the families we deal with..."

The very clear assumption is made by funeral directors that for non-Maori, and non-Pacific Islanders, race or ethnicity was irrelevant. The practice and expression of seeing race or ethnicity as irrelevant for white people is imbued with the first and second discourses of essentialism and assimilationism. Race was a term and a notion that was applied to non-white 'others' and the practice of naming was a solely dominant white one. In this way, the dominant culture comes to view itself as somehow 'outside' race or ethnicity and defines itself only as that which racial 'others' are not (Bell,1996:148; Frankenburg,1993). An acknowledgement of the universality and application of race for all has only formed part of the critique and debate in recent years.

Whether ethnic questions are perceived as sensitive or offensive or assumed to be irrelevant, in both cases, these perceptions and understandings affect the practices which police and funeral directors use to assign ethnicity. The combination of family tragedy and the perceived nature of the ethnicity question influences the amount of inclination police and funeral directors feel about asking the question directly of family or close friends because first, they perceive the ethnicity question as sensitive, difficult or irrelevant, and secondly, they do not wish to make a difficult situation more difficult.

Assigning/Determining Ethnicity

"...I almost never ask..."

This comment typifies the majority of responses from police and funeral directors when referring to assigning ethnicity. There were very few instances related where the ethnicity question is asked of next-of-kin. Overall, both police and funeral directors appear to determine ethnicity most commonly by observation. One of the funeral directors who suggested that he does ask said of the families he deals with that they *"...always fill it in.....with no problems ..."* which interestingly contradicts the fears and discomfort expressed by police and funeral directors about the ethnicity question.

Many police expressed the view that only where they might be unsure would they actually ask about someone's ethnicity. This was considered by most to happen rarely as it was felt that over time, they learned to distinguish races more easily.

"...often know or by looking at a person."

"...generally it is obvious and easy to establish."

"...a quick look at the deceased will generally tell you."

"...probably only ask if it is not obvious."

The second most common method of identifying ethnicity or at least helping in the identification was such things as what people say and how they speak.

"...often make a value judgement, by how they speak, what they say, I don't ever ask."

"...nine times out of ten you wouldn't ask, you learn to pick up the different races in the way they speak and their features."

The practice of assigning ethnicity by observation is a legacy of the first, essentialist racial discourse when race was conceived as essential, biological, a matter of species (Omi and Winant, 1994; 63). A record of *racial* information is collected because physical appearance is used as the marker of difference and this does not necessarily have anything to do with ethnicity or ethnic identity. Furthermore the classification is imbued with the worldview of the person doing the recording. Our ability to interpret racial meanings based on physical appearance depends on preconceived notions of race within the social structure we inhabit (Omi and Winant, 1994: 59).

The pre-conceived notions of police and funeral directors appear to be located strongly in the second discourse of assimilation. The following comments are interesting because they give substance to that view and compliment the earlier discussion about the way in which the funeral director's forms institute a practice of regarding race and ethnicity as irrelevant to whites. The 'common-sense' views expressed by police and funeral directors were that race and ethnicity are something that applies only to non-whites.

For most police, asking people was considered to be only necessary when there was some doubt.

"...If you have any doubts, like you know what a European looks like, a Maori person looks like, whenever an Island person is the same colour as a Maori person then sometimes you have to ask to differentiate between the two and sometimes you get answers 'oh look I'm not an Islander, I'm a Maori' because obviously they are pretty proud of their own but you only ask just to verify, a lot of times you can see..."

Checking or asking applied to non-Caucasians exclusively. It was expressed on several occasions that if a person was Caucasian then there was no reason to ask.

"...I would probably not ask a Caucasian."

Broadly speaking, races were divided fairly simply between Caucasians(whites) and Others. Further racial differences were mostly conceived to be found within the Other category only. If a person was thought to be Caucasian, then neither police or funeral directors pursued the ethnic identity of the person. If a person did not look Caucasian, an assumption about ethnic identity was made and only if they were unsure, would police or funeral directors ask the family.

Furthermore, it was assumed by many police and funeral directors that when we were discussing race and ethnicity that we were talking about non-white, non-European groups. Race or ethnicity was considered to apply only to those non-white, non-European groups. As I argued previously, a person was considered to be somehow 'outside' race if they were perceived as white or Caucasian (Roediger,1994:12).

It also became clear that for many police and funeral directors, as a term ethnicity was not really understood, and anyway, it really meant race. Race, rather than ethnicity, was the preferred term used to classify different groups of people. Physical characteristics were the primary indicator and therefore the process of classification was a racial one.

A Different Ethnicity Question, What If You Had To Ask?

Many police and funeral directors expressed the view that if it became a mandatory requirement that they ask all next-of-kin the ethnicity of the deceased, then this would not be problem. Some police did suggest however that if asking ethnicity became mandatory then this would increase the difficulty of the situation with next-of-kin;

"...this would be difficult...the less questions asked the better..."

but for most, this did not present a difficulty;

"...I would have no problem with a requirement for recording any information on ethnicity..."

For funeral directors, the death registration ethnicity question in its 1990 form caused problems with many families. For some it was offensive, for others...

"...some families treat it as a bit of a joke..."

"...some just pluck anything out of the air..."

Most directors felt that the form of the ethnicity question contributed to their lack of willingness to ask the question of many families. It was agreed by all funeral directors that a more general ethnic question would improve the situation;

"...most [families] would feel much less confronted by it...more inclined to give their ethnicity..."

It was also suggested that a more general ethnic question would give first generation European families somewhere to record their ethnic background. The indignation of some families when there was nowhere for them to record their ethnic identity was described.

Summary

The two most important aspects of operationalisation are the specific organisational rules and procedures used in an organisation and the 'common-sense' knowledge and understandings of the concepts being operationalised that are held by officials involved in the process of collection. The rules and procedures determine how data is collected, in what form and who is responsible for collecting it. And the influence of officials' 'common-sense' understandings on data collection and outcome is very much prescribed by these organisational rules and procedures.

Forms and Organisational Procedures

There were three significant findings which inform our understanding about the final outcome of ethnic data collection; organisational ways of defining race and ethnicity, the method of assignment used by police and funeral directors and the procedural requirements for completing the data collection. An unexpected but not unimportant finding concerned the lack of understanding or knowledge police and funeral directors had about what happens to much of the data they collect.

It is with the terminology of race and blood quantum that ethnicity is defined on the forms police and funeral directors collect ethnic information with. The use of these words is rooted in early essentialist and biologicistic discourses about race not ethnicity, and reflects an ongoing commitment to a nineteenth century understanding of difference based in biology.

The most commonly used method of assigning ethnicity by police and funeral directors is 'observer estimation'. This involves making a judgement based on the physical characteristics of the deceased. There are no guidelines or set procedures for asking next-of-kin about ethnicity and most police and funeral

directors are comfortable using this method as it means they do not have to draw attention to difference which for most was associated with unease and possible unpleasantness.

This method of assignment creates a record of racial data, with its origins in the first paradigm, but in the everyday context of police and funeral directors it also works well for the maintenance of the discourses of the second paradigm. Police and funeral directors do not have to draw attention to their act of 'noticing' race or colour by using 'observer estimation' and this helps maintain 'common-sense' assumptions grounded in the second assimilationist paradigm about the need to be 'colour blind' as part of the endorsement of equality (Frankenburg, 1993:142-144).

Using this method of assignment, police and funeral directors are responsible for doing the classifying and recording of race. Their world views influence the interpretations about race that are made in an everyday way and they are ultimately responsible for shaping the resulting data.

Police procedure ensures that the ethnic question is completed for all sudden deaths, whereas the ethnic question on the death registration form is only required to be completed if the funeral director considers the deceased to be of Maori or Pacific Island descent.

It was expressed by many police and funeral directors, that if asking next-of-kin about the deceased's ethnicity was made mandatory, this would pose no further difficulties to their current tasks. For funeral directors it was perceived that a change to a more general ethnicity question would improve response from families and ease their own discomfort about asking the question. There is interesting follow-up work to be done given the change in late 1995 to the ethnicity question on death registration forms.

Finally, there is a general lack of understanding amongst police and funeral directors about the reasons why ethnic information is collected and the uses that are made of the data. Whilst this may not seem of immediate concern to the questions about the validity of ethnic data, it has some relevance. Without knowledge about the uses the data will be put to, officials can not be expected to feel a commitment to maintaining and ensuring its final quality.

The 'common-sense' of police and funeral directors about race and ethnicity

The main finding from the interviews with police and funeral directors is that their 'common-sense,' everyday understandings about race and ethnicity are firmly grounded in the discourses of race, biology and assimilation. *They are not familiar at any level with the discourses associated with ethnicity and the third paradigm of difference.* Everyone

just 'knew' what was being discussed when the term race was used, and ethnicity was assumed to mean race.

The discourses of assimilation and sameness produce their sensitivity about questions on race or ethnicity because they are about difference and power. Acknowledging difference, 'noticing' race, colour or difference goes completely against the grain of the discourse of 'colour-blindness' which serves to disguise the racially structured nature of society and comes out of the assimilationist paradigm.

With its origins in the first paradigm of race and biology, the broad racial division between Caucasians or whites and Others made by police and funeral directors when classifying race perpetuates the notion of ethnicity or race as somehow irrelevant for whites who are 'outside' race and defined only by that which racial 'others' are not (Bell, 1996:148).

Alongside organisational rules and procedures which reinforce these understandings, and make them responsible for classifying and recording, police and funeral directors' 'common-sense,' everyday understandings are a major determinant of the resulting data.

PART FOUR

THE PROJECT OF IMPROVING ETHNIC DATA

The concepts and definitions which have dominated ethnic statistical collection are those which originate in the essentialist, biologicistic and assimilationist paradigms and discourses of race. In official census collection, the biologically based 'degree-of-blood' operational definitions continued well into the 1980s and 1990s and it was not until the 1970s that the terminology of race was dispensed with.

The discourses of these two paradigms have also dominated the history of academic debate. Biologicistic notions of race as biology dominated nineteenth century academic debate, most avidly endorsed by the eugenics movement. By the early twentieth century, a strongly assimilationist perspective emerged to challenge biologicistic notions and ethnicity gradually eclipsed race as the terminology of choice, in many ways serving only to disguise the very racial nature of society. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that academic thought was propelled by the political upheavals of the period towards an understanding of ethnicity as an articulation of difference in historical, social, political and cultural terms. During this period some official definitions of race and ethnicity were changed to reflect this paradigm of understanding. Not all official definitions however followed this trend. Many data collections, including those of police and funeral directors have continued to use racially based definitions originating in the biologicistic discourses of the nineteenth century.

As this research also demonstrates, the practices and methods of collecting ethnic mortality data, or operationalisation, are strongly informed by the first two paradigms and discourses of race and *not* ethnicity. The procedural use of 'observer estimation' as the main method for assigning difference results in the collection of *racial* data, based as it is on a judgement of physical characteristics.

More importantly, the world views of police and funeral directors who are responsible for the classification or assignment of race and ethnicity are important determinants of the resulting data. The 'common-sense,' everyday stock of knowledge of police and funeral directors about race and ethnicity seems firmly located in the first and second discourses of biology and assimilation. Everyone just 'knew' what was being discussed when the term race was used, and ethnicity was assumed to mean race.

From the first paradigm came the assumption that the data being collected related to the physical appearance of people and when we referred to race, it meant observable differences between non-white, or non-caucasian and

white people. Also with roots in the first paradigm came the perception that race or ethnicity was largely of no consequence or irrelevant for white people. From the assimilationist paradigm came the discomfort with the acknowledgement of racial difference that is associated with collecting ethnic data and a desire for us all to just be the same 'New Zealanders'. The everyday engagement of officials in a process of racial labelling appeared to help maintain and reinforce existing understandings, practices and structures.

Further affecting the way in which police and funeral directors applied their 'common sense' world views were the differing procedural rules for collecting ethnic data. The requirement for police to complete their forms meant that any indication that a person was not 'caucasian' results in the assignment of one of the non-white categories. The high level of assignment to the Maori category suggests that a discomfort with raising the issue of difference and therefore of asking results in most non-whites being assigned to the Maori category. For funeral directors, their ambivalence with drawing attention to the issue of racial difference, and their belief in the irrelevancy of race for many leads to the under-reporting of Maori and Pacific Islanders because the requirement to complete a form was based on their judgement about race.

What has been clearly revealed is that although academic and official concepts and understandings and some official practices about race and ethnicity reflect the third paradigm of difference, the practices of collection and the conceptual 'common-sense', everyday understandings of police and funeral directors about race and ethnicity do not.

The power to define, name and classify is not something that rests solely with officials in a macro structure called 'the state' or with dominant elite's, it also lies in the everyday, 'common-sense' actions of those who are responsible for collecting the data. The practices or methods of collection and the procedural rules used by police and funeral directors enable the 'common-sense' understandings of these officials to constitute the resulting data. And what is clear is that the construction of mortality ethnic data does not produce knowledge about ethnicity, but about race.

The issues facing the project of improving ethnic statistics are about more than just creating consistency between conceptual and definitional classifications. They must also carefully consider the operationalisation of ethnic data.

The recommendations that have been made to this end are as follows:

- The disparities between the different data sets highlights the need for the ongoing monitoring and comparison of official death registration ethnic data with the data collected by police so that any improvements or changes can be monitored and evaluated.
- The ongoing use of the term 'race' in police terminology is inconsistent with other official collections and serves to perpetuate a conception of ethnicity as racially based. Successful collection of *ethnic* data relies upon concepts and definitions which reflect a cultural perspective, not a biological one. The use of the term 'ethnicity' would encourage this cultural view. There is a need therefore for a change in the operational definitions and terminology used for police ethnic data collection to match other official practices and conceptions of ethnicity.
- Development and implementation of clear procedures which encourage police and funeral directors to collect ethnic information directly from next-of-kin. The quality and accuracy of ethnic statistics would be greatly improved using a method of collection which reflects a commitment to a cultural affiliation concept of ethnicity. In the case of sudden death, asking next-of-kin is the most appropriate method to achieve this.
- A need to improve the understanding of police and funeral directors of the uses and importance of ethnic data. This would contribute to an improvement in the commitment of police and funeral directors to collection and therefore to the quality of the data.

PART FIVE

CONCLUSION- STATISTICS AND POWER, WHERE IS THE VALUE IN COUNTING?

Investigating the validity of ethnic mortality data involved investigating the way in which ethnicity and race has been conceptualised, defined and operationalised. The ethnic data collections of police and funeral directors were found to be lacking in conceptual consistency and the operationalisation of ethnic data collection was found to be underpinned by 'common-sense' understandings derived from an unevenly evolving history of discourses on race and ethnicity. The argument was made that creating consistency between concepts, definitions *and* the operational procedures or methods of classification is crucial if the project of improving ethnic data is to go any way to improving the validity of ethnic data.

However, whilst the current study has focused on questions about the validity of ethnic data, underlying this entire project are the much broader issues of the value of counting and the uses that are made of ethnic data. The uses that have been and continue to be made of official statistical counting and representation are multitudinous and far-reaching. Official statistics particularly carry immense weight in any policy debate and most particularly those involving resource allocation. As Waring (1988:2) points out, although statistics do not indicate which policies should be implemented, they are certainly used selectively to inform and justify policy decisions.

Statistics are not neutral or objective and they should not be considered separate from the political aspects of their representation and presentation. Examining the changing nature of statistical ethnic classification and categorisation reveals a complex array of debates and relationships between groups over resource allocation which exist at any one time. The way in which ethnicity is classified constructs and reflects the nature of these relationships and the way resources are allocated between groups.

This dual process of both reflecting and shaping has been described as part of the tension and relationship between what constitutes knowledge and the organisation and categorisation of information (Scott, 1986:338). The social world is not only reflected in statistical reports, but is also given meaning by them. Most often, information is collected by those in power and organised according to established models, although it is often perceived as independent of them. Statistical reports exemplify this

tension and the process by which visions of reality and the social structure were and are elaborated.

The statistical representation of groups was an essential part of capitalist expansion and development. The importance accorded to statistical information has been a feature of policy and politics since the early nineteenth century and the development of the modern welfare state could not have occurred without the simultaneous development of methods of counting and classifying.

In the colonial context, ethnic statistical representation was used by colonial European administrations as a tool of control, manipulation and exploitation to justify the transfer of resources from indigenous people. In nineteenth century New Zealand, statistical representation of Maori as a dying race excused the transfer of land and resources to Pakeha settlers. For most of the twentieth century the representation of Maori as gradually achieving assimilation with Pakeha helped excuse Pakeha indifference and maintain continual erosion of Maori resources in what Butterworth (1969:171) describes as the "subtlest form of discrimination". In the current day, the ability of the dominant culture to monopolise statistical representation for its own ends has been highly contested within the context of late twentieth century negotiations surrounding Treaty of Waitangi claims and grievances. The continual and ongoing challenge by different minority ethnic groups to the process of imposed identity formation and resource allocation have been reflected in a changing ethnic classification process for many official collections.

Ethnic statistics are used as the basis of resource allocation, and as such, current debates regarding ethnic classification, the value of counting, and the uses or usefulness of ethnic data continue to reflect and shape the relationships of groups to the state and the process of resource allocation.

The primary value of ethnic statistics lies in the way in which they are used in the pursuit of political projects. From the viewpoint of those groups using ethnic data, they must perceive the data as relevant to this process. The project of improving ethnic statistics cannot therefore be perceived as outside this process. How and why ethnic statistics become improved, and for whom they are more useful, is firmly located within the politics of resource allocation between different ethnic groups.

Early methods of statistical collection were developed during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Associated with Enlightenment ideas, the power of science and claims to value free objectivity, "The discourse of social reform in [the] early nineteenth-century ...was organized around the collection, presentation, and interpretation of supposedly incontrovertible statistical facts" (Scott,1986:336).

Attributable to European upper and middle-class interests and concerns with the negative effects of urbanisation and industrialisation, statistics became “weapons in the debate on the ‘social question’” (Scott,1986:335). Desrosieres (1991:227) argues that much statistical development during the nineteenth century was not concerned with direct social and political action, although as Bulmer et al(1991:12) suggest, statistical enquiry was to assume a distinctly moral and individualistic tone. However, by the end of the nineteenth century social inquiry was to move closer to the process of policy making as the Welfare State began to appear and the economic and political tools for dealing with problems of poverty were extended and transformed. Key debates around which statistical theory, social inquiry and social intervention was to focus were those of class, race and intelligence (McKenzie,1981:39).

With the rise of the Welfare State and the needs of national administration, populations became identified, represented and addressed in statistical terms. The emergence of social security legislation, markets for consumer goods and following from this market research and finally national election campaigns and polling stimulated the need for social knowledge that was “continuously and profoundly interventionist” (Asad, 1994:74;Desrosieres,1991:228). Today, as Asad(1994:74) argues, the pervasiveness of statistical calculation, representation and intervention is such that capitalist economies and politics would be “inconceivable without them”.

Probability and statistics crowd in upon us. The statistics of our pleasures and our vices are relentlessly tabulated. Sports, sex, drink, drugs, travel, sleep, friends - nothing escapes. There are more explicit statements of probabilities presented on American prime time television than explicit acts of violence (I’m counting the ads). Our public fears are endlessly debated in terms of quakes, nuclear winters, AIDS, global greenhouses, what next? There is nothing to fear (it may seem) but the probabilities themselves. This obsession with the chances of danger, and with treatments for changing the odds, descends directly from the forgotten annals of nineteenth-century information and control (Hacking,1990:4-5 cited in Asad,1994:75).

Statistics became important to European empires also for the purposes of colonial administration and discipline. Statistical representation was not merely a mode for understanding and representing populations but was an instrument for regulating and transforming them (Asad,1994:76).

European domains of knowledge overshadowed and dominated other domains in making claims to what was regarded as valid and ‘truthful’. The domain of scientific knowledge with its emphasis on method, enumeration and objectivity developed conventions and standards of assessing knowledge claims against which most others were measured.

This development has been termed a 'positivist current', positivism being associated with a certain philosophical attitude to human knowledge:

a collection of rules and evaluative criteria referring to human knowledge: it tells us what kinds of contents in our statements about the world deserve the name knowledge...regulating how we are to use such terms as 'knowledge', 'science', 'cognition', and 'information' (Kolakowski,1993:2).

Recognising what counts as knowledge and who owns it is crucial to understanding the processes of power and social control as knowledge is power (Oakley,1992:341; Small, 1989:38). The 'facts' or 'knowledge' generated by official enumeration processes have been portrayed as a true representation of social reality by governments, despite the partiality of the particular standpoint from which they are constructed.

This process of construction of identity, particularly by hegemonic and dominant practices and groups is of special importance to understanding the role of official data collection and its uses. The control of minority groups via their naming, categorisation, and classification is made possible by creating exclusive boundaries, and locating these 'others' in a world of often negative meaning (Jordan,1985:29). This 'knowledge' of minority groups then informs research, policy and resource allocation (Small,1989:39).

The process of naming or classification for official ethnic data collection constructed ethnic boundaries which gave meaning to ethnic identities as they were understood by the European State. The State as producer of official ethnic data is not an object or thing, but is a series of arenas through which groups struggle to articulate their interests and maintain or preserve their power and position in society (Pringle and Watson,1992:63; Pearson,1990:33). The domains of government have been and continue to be mostly culturally European, masculine and aligned to the interests of capital and as such have produced ethnic data according to the dominant culture's perspective of race and ethnicity.

The relationships of Maori and other non-European ethnic groups with the State have been strongly influenced by the construction of certain racial and ethnic identities with rights, privileges and constraints attached (Weaver,1984:182). Spoonley (1996:62) aptly describes this as a process whereby ethnic groups are racialised as 'deficient' in individual and cultural terms, which then justifies "the transfer of resources such as land to settlers and the subjugation of cultural practices". This agenda underpinned the State's early approaches to ethnic data collection in New Zealand "Establishing superiority over peoples such as the Maori was one of the ways in which Europeans defined themselves" (Belich,1996:182-3).

It was initially important that the state take account as New Zealand was still a Maori world and the new colony relied heavily on Maori agriculture

and trade (Williams,1989:72). In the politics of the developing colony however, the European State was to “convert Maori by addicting them to the benefits of individualism, civilisation and subordinacy” using the tools of law, war and land buying (Williams,1989:75; Belich,1996:191-2). It was a widely held view that Maori were dying out, and the only way to arrest this decline was through a process of rapid assimilation. Policy which promoted individualisation of Maori land tenure and the ‘detrribalisation’ of Maori society was considered the most effective way to achieve this goal.

The object of the Native Lands Act [1865] was twofold: to bring the great bulk of the lands of the Northern Island which belonged to the natives... within reach of colonisation. The other great object was, the detribalisation of the natives - to destroy if it were possible, the principle of communism which ran through the whole of their institutions, upon which their social system was based, and which stood as a barrier in the way of all attempts to amalgamate the Native race into our own social and political system. It was hoped that by the individualisation of titles to land, giving them the same individual ownership which we ourselves possessed,...their social status would become assimilated to our own (Sewell, 1870,cited in Sorrenson,1956, 185).

The thrust of official belief in the ultimate outcome for Maori is highlighted by H.F. Edger, Under Secretary in 1906:

the ultimate fate of the Maori race is to become absorbed in the European. Whether any tendency is shown in this direction must be gathered from the increase or decrease in the number of half-castes (A.J.H.R.,1906,H26a:2)

It was clear by the 1920s that the Maori population was increasing and the “problem for statesmen was to provide not for a declining race, but for one reinvigorated and multiplying in numbers” (A.J.H.R., 1931,G-10:iv). Imperative to the European administration was the adoption by Maori of European culture, politics and economic structures. In practice, the notion of putting Maori on an equal footing with Pakeha translated to the ongoing individualisation of Maori land title for Pakeha settlement and increasing Maori land alienation (Butterworth,1969:105). During this period, as Maori were demographically “in recovery,” the European administration was able to assert the benefits of assimilation to New Zealanders.

Practices of enumeration reflected the drive towards similarity and assimilation. During this time census schedules were gradually standardised for Maori and Pakeha and any form of separate arrangement for collection was abandoned. Complete standardisation along European

lines was considered an enhancement to the process (Population Census, 1956, Volume VIII).

The elimination of difference between Maori and Pakeha was considered to be the best way to assist Maori to take a full and active part in the New Zealand community. The ongoing maintenance of separate Maori institutional arrangements, such as schools, was considered to hinder Maori progress towards becoming fully assimilated into European life. It was feared that the “continued separation of Maori and European children in different schools carries a danger of racial prejudice and unnecessary jealousies” (Auckland Star, 9 November 1955; cited in Ballara, 1986:95).

Equality was equated with conformity and sameness and differences of a social or economic nature between Maori and Pakeha were represented during this time as failure by Maori and interpreted within stereotypical parameters. Maori as inferior, inherently less capable, lacking initiative, possessing a ‘happy go lucky’ attitude and genetically predisposed towards idleness, laziness, indolence and wastefulness were commonly used themes (Ballara, 1986:111-124).

The power of this discourse and representation lay in the incorporation of this ‘knowledge’ into common, everyday understandings. The construction of normative or ‘commonsense’ identities and practices such as the “happy savage” or the “lazy Maori” which have a profound impact on individual experience are conceived of as factually based and ‘normal’ and become uncritically accepted, even by Maori (Ballara, 1986:121).

The State continued to define and construct the statistical identity of Maori and other ethnic groups within this assimilationist and racist framework largely unchallenged until the 1960s and 1970s.

Palat (1996:35) suitably sums up official policy toward other ethnic groups when he suggests that xenophobia and racism are “hardy perennials in the attitudes of many New Zealanders”. Restrictive legislation controlling Asian immigration introduced in 1920 was to remain in force for Asian immigrants until 1987 (Palat, 1996).

Although during the early part of this century, it was considered that assimilation of “coloured races” was not “conducive to improvement of racial types” and presented administrative difficulties “in no mean degree” (Population Census, 1926, Volume VI:2), the statistical monitoring of the degree of intermarriage or miscegenation of ‘race aliens’, which denoted all other non-European ethnic groups was considered one of the most important features of the statistical enquiry.

The historical way in which the power relations between European and other ethnic groups in New Zealand have been institutionalised have always been disputed by Maori and other non-European ethnic groups.

Since the 1970s, the power of the dominant culture to monopolise official ethnic collection processes has been challenged, particularly by Maori, demanding to be able to negotiate their own identity and ethnicity for their own purposes (Weaver, 1984; Metge, 1995:19). Official ethnic data collection has become a site around which the meanings and definitions of race and ethnicity are contested as are the practices of collection, access and uses of ethnic data.

Much official ethnic statistical representation has been considered deficient by many of the groups about whom the data was collected. It is precisely because the data was collected *about* these groups and not *for* these groups that it has been unable to serve the needs of many ethnic groups and communities. Hardly surprisingly, many Maori have a distrust of statistics (Kilgour and Keefe, 1992:3). This is not a new phenomenon, as early as the 1890s Census enumerators noted distrust and reticence with regard to official ethnic collection.

Belich (1996:249) suggests that “A feature of persistent Maori independence was that you did not let the government count you”. The use of information for taxation purposes and further reinforcement of negative stereotypes was not without foundation, and the attitudes of enumerators would not have calmed any Maori fears about how the information might be used as these words from sub-enumerator Charles Ferris illustrate:

I wish to inform you that the majority of Maori mothers are absolutely unfit to rear and look after their children ... I have often remarked to Native women that a common household fowl or hen could rear and look after her chicks better than a Native woman (A.J.H.R., 1896, H13b:14).

This very real distrust of statistics stems from a concern regarding the uses the data will be put to after collection. In a discussion of ethnic enumeration Booth (1985:256) makes the very moot point that in Britain, the official justification for the production of ethnic data is to measure and monitor racial disadvantage, but that no explicit intention is made to act upon this data.

Previous use of ethnic statistics, to give credence to racist policy and political decisions, has fuelled the debate concerning the acceptability of race questions in British Census data (Booth, 1985:268). Bagley (1988:230) suggests that some ethnic minorities in Britain have opposed ‘ethnic counting’ on the basis that the government may misuse the information; for example, for policies of repatriation. In New Zealand Durie (1994:125) describes statistical collection having been driven by “Questionable political motivation” which has led to “biased and unethical practices and to the application of ethnic statistical data for dubious purposes.” Pool (1991:16) suggests this is not a simple issue of “warm, fuzzy, liberal significance,” but one where a very real possibility of

respondent resistance to official data collection exists if it is not taken seriously.

A different form of scepticism of ethnic data collection is that voiced by what Pool(1981:92) describes as conservatively orientated views of the collection of ethnic statistics. He suggests that these 'conservatives' argue that the identification of Maori is being used to gain special privileges. This view is illustrated by Mitchell (1990:26-27):

A question which is sometimes put to me, and deserves an answer, is: "Aren't you worried that Maoris are more than proportionately represented among school drop-outs, jail inmates, tenants of run-down houses, gang members, the underskilled, the unemployed, and all the other groups who are at the bottom of the socio-economic scale?" Of course I am worried The current system of showering favours on Maoris simply because they are Maoris, ... while offering only the most grudging of help to other people simply because they are not Maoris... if continued, being so wasteful of resources, could eventually degrade New Zealand into a third-world slum.

In Australia, Price(1980:17) argues that these conservative or 'civil-libertarian' viewpoints called for the abolishment of ethnic questions in the 1981 census. They too were concerned with policies which assigned privilege on the basis of ethnicity. Bagley(1988:20) discusses similar arguments in Britain, where ethnic measurement has been described as irrelevant pandering to the interests of minority groups.

However, there are strong arguments for the continued enumeration and measurement of ethnicity from social scientists, historians, and social policy analysts. As Bulmer (1980:5) argues:

It is not some 'academic' exercise, but a means of gathering essential data about the condition of different ...groups in terms of employment, housing, education and demographic characteristics, in order to compare... with ...other sections of the population.

A commitment to social well-being and social justice is evident, and this principle clearly guides Bulmer's opinion. Shannon(1991:30) suggests that statistics alone cannot provide the answers to the nature of social well-being and how it is to be achieved, but statistical enumeration of ethnic data does provide one form of knowledge which can be used in this process. This is the sentiment also expressed by Kilgour and Keefe(1992:1) with reference to the collection of Maori health statistics:

To be effective, policy needs both relevant and accurate information on Maori Health. Maori health statistics are used for planning and evaluating services and, in some cases, to justify funding. Health

service workers also find information on ethnicity useful to provide culturally appropriate services. It is difficult to plan services which meet the needs of Maori if accurate information is not available on the ethnicity of the client population.

Pomare et al(1995:41) suggest also that whilst it is widely acknowledged that statistics have significant limitations, their routine collection by government is both cost effective and also allows for the measurement of trends over long periods of time.

The resurgence of a market driven economy in recent decades has seen the reappearance of some of its classic features: chronic unemployment, low wages, insecurity of employment, increasing inequality and poverty (Mishra,1995:43). Race and ethnicity like never before have been revealed as ongoing axes of difference and disadvantage around which our society is structured. Most social and economic indicators show that in areas such as health, education, housing, and employment, most non-white groups, and particularly Maori, fare worse than white New Zealanders. The existence of ethnic data makes these comparisons possible.

In an ironic twist, as government spending on welfare is rationalised as a major factor in fiscal crisis and subsequently clawed back, the need for social policy and assistance grows. And in the pursuit of projects which seek the improvement of the divides of growing disadvantage, ethnic statistics are vital to justify resource allocation.

From the perspective of recent governments guided by monetarist doctrine and economic rationalism, the 'fairest' allocation of scarce public resources is best managed by the targeting of these resources to those groups and individuals with "genuine need" (Shipley,1991:15). Establishing and justifying the need for access to public funds in competition with others, requires ethnic statistical information.

From one perspective, collection of ethnic data for targeting of social provision and services has been interpreted as the increased policing of the deserving poor by a paternally benevolent state apparatus. Certainly the practical application of "better targeting" via the introduction of increasingly restrictive eligibility criteria gives credence to this view (Yeatman,1990:18; Shipley,1991:19).

The New Right has been successful in characterising social democracy and the bureaucracies of state as remote, insensitive and lacking accountability (Boston, 1991; Pierson, 1991:196). However, partly as a result of the introduction of the new managerialism, but also part of the Left's response to the challenge of 'marketization', has been the re-interpretation of beneficiaries of state assistance as consumers "whose

support needs to be regularly tested by evaluations, market research, representation and participation” (Gilliatt,1992:240).

Whilst schemes for democratisation and participation have been far from unproblematic, this emphasis on the consumer or customer has increased demands from wide ranges of consumers for improved quality and appropriateness of provision and service. This is particularly pertinent to policy and service delivery to Maori. Maori are undoubtedly one of the more “disadvantaged groups” and as consumers of state assistance argue increasingly strongly for the right to determine what is appropriate policy and delivery for Maori. Participation in policy and provision is considered fundamental, “by Maori and not for them” (Durie,1995:4). The project of improving ethnic data is situated in this context. Ethnic data is considered to have value not because it is *about* ethnic groups, but can be seen as useful *for* them in the contest for resource allocation.

Statistical information...is a product with peculiar properties. One of them is that users are seldom in a position to check its quality directly. Yet data that are not trusted are clearly of little utility, whatever their intrinsic quality. Short of direct quality checking, the degree of confidence that users attach to the product is necessarily a direct function of their confidence in the producer (Felligi,1989).

Felligi’s comment draws attention to the moot point that although general endorsement for ethnic statistical collection is evident for such things as planning purposes, for comparison with other groups, for funding, and for appropriate service delivery (Durie,1994:125;Kilgour and Keefe,1992:3), there must be a sense of trust between producers and users of statistics for the information to be considered useful and have value.

The way in which ethnic data is defined and collected has undergone considerable change in recent years in response to demands from those for whom the information was until recently collected *about*. As ethnic statistics assume a purpose *for* those consumers and groups engaged in the pursuit of resources, they have been subject to redefinition in order to be useful for this purpose. For example, as resources are allocated to Maori in many contexts, ethnic data becomes increasingly important, for Maori also. And the value of ethnic statistics lies in their ability to be useful for achieving the purposes they are intended for.

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