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UNDERSTANDINGS OF BEING PĀKEHĀ:

EXPLORING THE PERSPECTIVES OF SIX PĀKEHĀ WHO HAVE
STUDIED IN MĀORI CULTURAL LEARNING CONTEXTS

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management: Communication Management at Massey University, Turitea campus, Aotearoa – New Zealand.

M a r g a r e t A n n M i t c a l f e

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TRIPLE DEDICATION

To the six participants: you gave so generously of your time, of your selves and of your stories to this research. Your words were so appreciated.

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Ben (1975 – 2008)

Bess

Carraldo

Georgia

Hosanna

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Manawa

Matilda

Michael

Miha

Rita

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taonga of the past, of the present and of the future.

ABSTRACT

This research studies Pākehā who have engaged with Māori cultural learning contexts. Within a social constructionist theoretical framework, and with a combination of the critical and communicative approaches to cultural identity, the research explores the meaning these Pākehā bring to being Pākehā. Discourse analysis tools of interpretative repertoires and linguistic resources are used to analyse data from semi-structured interviews with six Pākehā participants. Participants have experienced Māori cultural learning contexts before or during the research, through learning te reo, tikanga Māori and about nga ao o nga iwi Māori. The research found that, largely, meanings participants brought to being Pākehā were in contrast to stereotypical notions of what it means to be Pākehā. Participants demonstrated that for them being Pākehā meant being connected to nga ao o nga iwi Māori; being aware of Pākehā privilege; mediating and negotiating being Pākehā with dominant notions of Pākehāness; valuing the history of Aotearoa-New Zealand, along with valuing te reo me ona tikanga. Furthermore, the research also found that the consistently postcolonial identity participants brought to being Pākehā shifted according to context, troubling the meanings of Pākehā also.

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