

# Communities of Difference

Partnership and Biculturalism in  
Aotearoa New Zealand

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# New Forms of Governance

- ‘More market’ variants of neoliberalism during the 1980s and 1990s
- Knowledge economies, creative cities, local partnerships, and new forms of public participation in the 2000s
- More recent governance innovations include individual and community empowerment, social cohesion, sustainability, reflexive skills and behaviours.

# Prefigurative Practices

Examples include the linking of:

- self help movements *with* new approaches to health, welfare and community programmes
- women's movement *with* new strategies of governance that focus on personal lives, informal care, parenting and well being
- collective and cooperative movements *with* new organisational forms and managerial practices
- anti-racist and equality struggles *with* new community-based norms of 'good governance'
- 'alternative' co-operative political projects *with* new forms of social entrepreneurship
- 'green' activism *with* the new emphasis on sustainability
- indigenous people's movements *with* new understandings of property, community and personhood

# New Sites, Skills and Careers

- ‘Strategic brokers’ are operating in a variety of interstitial spaces between states, markets and civil society
- Their activities combine personal commitments, political activism and paid work
- Often this is seen as women’s work
- New gendered careers for intermediaries, transactors and reflexive practitioners

# Aotearoa New Zealand

- Series of deep and rapid reforms over the last 25 years
- Early example of the move from social democracy to 'more market' neoliberalism
- Recent efforts to combine economic policy premised on fostering a globalising knowledge economy with forms of social development premised on local partnerships and cultural diversity

# Tino Rangatiratanga

- Retrospective recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) between British Crown and Maori
- Series of major land claim settlements
- Biculturalism in public sector organisations
- References to ‘the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi’ now found in many government documents
- Treaty-based claims are often supported by Pacific communities and other long standing minority groups.

# Local Partnerships

- Early examples were inter-agency initiatives aimed at providing intensive support for 'at risk' children. Explicit focus on Maori and Pacific communities.
- Subsequently complemented by place based community/regional development initiatives also often targeted at Maori and Pacific people.
- Result is that local partnerships are both explicitly and implicitly linked to issues of race/ethnicity.

# Social Policy or Indigenous Politics?

- ‘There is a conflation of equity and indigenous issues; these are not the same thing. Maori have a special place because they are the indigenous people, not because they are poor. Treasury just doesn’t understand this’ (Participant, Waitakere Hui, 2005).

# ‘Maori Solutions for Maori Problems’?

- Partnerships are often explicitly connected to principles of self-determination
- Debates over the relationships between big ‘P’ Partnership of the Treaty and the little ‘p’ local partnerships.
- Explicit Maori representation, use of formal cultural protocols, embedding of Maori (and often Pacific) concepts in policies and programmes

# Partnership Working Practices

- Position Maori and Pacific women as both the targets and agents of social change
- Over-represented amongst those called upon to generate social capital within their communities.
- Involves both voluntary and (increasingly) new forms of paid work 'brokering' partnerships
- Mediating and translating cultural, sector and technical knowledges as they produce new forms of economic, human and social capital.

# Conclusions

- New Zealand material exemplifies how new pathways of governing are opened up through ‘prefigurative practices’
  - Local partnerships are interstitial spaces (between the categories of state, market and civil society)
  - Maori conceptions of politics, community and personhood shape the forms these partnerships are taking
  - Maori (and Pacific) women are often positioned in new roles as transactors, translators and mediators of multiple knowledges
- Raises important questions about the racialised gendering of contemporary forms of governance

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