

LEAVING POLITICS BEHIND?
DIASPORIC NATIONALISM IN LONDON

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ABSTRACT

Up to one million New Zealanders live overseas at any one time, many residing in London. Exploratory research with members of New Zealand-oriented civil society organisations established in London highlights a strong perception that the expatriate experience provides a certain distance from New Zealand politics – particularly ‘bicultural’ politics – that encourages boundary-crossing relationships and a stronger sense of belonging amongst Māori than experienced at home. This is an important finding but this article questions whether such politics are really diminished, since interview data reveal that London-based organisations undertake significant ‘political’ work in connecting expatriate citizens to ‘home’ and in protecting New Zealand’s reputation. Scholarly analyses of ‘Kiwiana’ and Gallipoli commemorations suggest that such activities may unconsciously reinforce forms of nostalgia that prioritise European/Pākehā norms and poorly acknowledge ongoing tensions in New Zealand’s national story. There is thus a need to further explore the role of such activities in expatriate contexts.

Keywords: diasporic nationalism; expatriate; New Zealand; civil society; biculturalism

INTRODUCTION: DIASPORIC NATIONALISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL WORLD

Nation-state boundaries are more permeable, although not necessarily less relevant, than in the past as many contemporary migrants maintain social, economic and/or political ties across two or more nations (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Expatriate New Zealanders are no exception: up to one million New Zealanders live overseas at any one time, potentially representing twenty per cent of the New Zealand population, with an estimated 59,000 people born in New Zealand living in the United

Kingdom (UK) in 2015. Earlier analyses suggest most reside in London, the highest concentration of New Zealanders outside of New Zealand (Gamlen 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2012; Office for National Statistics 2015). New Zealanders living in London thus make a useful case study for exploring ‘diasporic nationalism’ or how national identity is experienced and articulated outside the territorial nation-state.

New Zealanders are not commonly understood as a ‘diaspora’, a term ‘once reserved for a few archetypal groups that had managed to maintain an intact identity despite traumatic dispersal in the distant past’ (Délano and Gamlen 2014, 44; see Wilson, Fisher, and Moore 2009). There was no traumatic dispersal of New Zealanders and voluntary, relatively short-term travel has historically characterised the open-ended, overseas working-holiday known as the ‘Overseas Experience’ (OE) that is culturally-institutionalised amongst middle-class, largely European/Pākehā New Zealanders in their early-to-mid-twenties (Bell 2002; Wilson 2014; Wilson, Fisher, and Moore. 2009).

Nonetheless, diaspora are increasingly defined more broadly as any:

[...] social collectivity that exists across state borders and that has succeeded over time to (1) sustain a collective national, cultural or religious identity through a sense of internal cohesion and sustained ties with a real or imagined homeland and (2) display an ability to address the collective interests of members of the social collectivity through a developed internal organisational framework and transnational links. (Adamson and Demetriou 2007, 497)

Arguably, New Zealanders in London fit both criteria since the city’s high concentration of expatriates has encouraged the development of a wide range of New Zealand-focused businesses and organisations that address the collective needs of New Zealanders, including sustained ties with a New Zealand identity (Conradson and Latham 2007; Williams, Chaban, and Holland 2011; Wilson, Fisher, and Moore 2009). Although ‘OE’ sojourners are still common, increased maximum age limits for working-holiday visas have encouraged many New Zealanders to complete tertiary education and/or gain some work experience before travelling. This has led to more highly skilled/paid employment, higher living standards and more opportunities for permanent residence in the United Kingdom (UK) but also less time available for the short-term travel and partying supported by unskilled employment once associated with the ‘OE’ (KEA/Colmar Brunton 2013; Williams, Chaban, and Holland 2011; Wilson 2014). Indeed, most of the participants discussed in

this article were long-term London residents and thus more easily categorised as members of a diaspora than OE sojourners.

Such stability provided the motivation and opportunity to volunteer unpaid labour in New Zealand-focused organisations supporting New Zealanders living in London. Based on a small exploratory sample, this article examines how members of such organisations experience and shape a New Zealand diasporic identity linked to – but not exactly the same as – the official national identity promoted by the state within New Zealand’s territorial boundaries (and increasingly through diasporic strategies – see Gamlen 2007). My participants illustrate how the idea of a nation extends beyond state borders: they have not simply assimilated into British society but retain a shared sense of identity tied to New Zealand through collective memories, rituals and practices within UK territory where they constitute a national minority.

Other authors (e.g. Appadurai 1996; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Blanc 1994) highlight how diasporic practices and identifications lead to changing spatial expressions of national identities and nationalist practices. Levitt (2001) is notable for identifying how civil society organisations can play an important role in this process amongst immigrant communities in the United States. There is value in studying the middle ground of organised social groups which mediate the individual and governmental levels (Levitt 2001; Yarwood 2014) because Délano and Gamlen (2014, 44) stress that: ‘Rather than fixed social entities, diasporas are now recognised as constituency-building projects initiated and led by political entrepreneurs in origin states and abroad’. I argue that such entrepreneurs can include volunteers involved in civil society organisations. However, following an overview of research methods and sample, discussion highlights that my research participants perceived the relative absence of ‘politics’ – particularly around biculturalism – within expatriate organisations (and the overseas context more generally) as providing potential for cultural boundary-crossing not possible at home.

Triandafyllidou (1998, 594) notes that: ‘the identity of a nation is defined and/or re-defined through the influence of ‘significant others’, namely other nations or ethnic groups that are perceived to threaten the nation, its distinctiveness, authenticity and/or independence’. Indeed, one of the major justifications for changing the New Zealand flag, the focus of two referendums in 2015 and 2016, was its strong similarity with Australia’s (Moir 2015). Later discussion further highlights how British people represent the ‘significant other’ to New Zealanders in London, supporting Triandafyllidou’s (1998, 598) view that in the context of emigration ‘members of the national community are characterised

by their ability to communicate with one another *better than* they do with outsiders'. Interview data particularly highlight how expatriate organisations provide opportunities for Māori and Pākehā to focus on their *commonalities* as New Zealanders. Anderson (1991) theorises the nation as an '*imagined political community*' socially constructed in the minds of those viewing themselves as sharing something with other national members, despite not knowing them personally. Arguably, indigenous Māori are frequently framed as the 'significant other' for Pākehā (and vice versa) in New Zealand, meaning that awareness of commonalities when overseas could hold the potential for reimagining a shared Māori-Pākehā community back home.

Nonetheless, the second section of this article challenges the perception that the expatriate space is devoid of 'politics'. Civil society organisations in London may not be considered 'political', because they are independent of the New Zealand state and have social, cultural or professional goals not specifically focused on the ideological task of building, maintaining or reinforcing a New Zealand diasporic nationalism, but they *do* nonetheless undertake 'political' work by connecting expatriate citizens to 'home' and protecting New Zealand's reputation in ways that frequently reflect, rather than contest, the problematic power relations apparent in New Zealand. In this sense, the potential for improved Māori-Pākehā relations may be more elusive than first perceptions would suggest.

METHODS AND SAMPLE

This article draws upon data from a pilot study for planned research examining how expatriate New Zealanders practice and realise citizenship across the political, economic *and* civil society spheres while living in a *range* of overseas locations. London was chosen as the best site for piloting the civil society component of this planned study because a) it contains the largest number of New Zealanders in one city and b) the New Zealand High Commission website provides a list of mostly London-based 'New Zealand clubs and associations', a unique practice likely reflecting the greater number of such organisations in the UK compared to other international destinations. Excluding some organisations run by paid employees or partially funded by the government (such as the Kiwi Expatriate Abroad – KEA – network) and those where contact details were incomplete or invalid, I emailed fourteen of the twenty-four organisations on the High Commission list seeking to recruit the key contact person for each. Six of the fourteen contact persons agreed to take part, while others suggested alternative members of the organisation and three additional members were recruited at an organisation meeting that I was asked

to attend to explain the research to potential participants. A total of eleven participants took part in qualitative, semi-structured interviews in London during August and September 2015.

The organisations to which participants belonged were diverse: three professional or business networks, two Māori cultural groups, two educational/social networking organisations and one that used social media to provide information to New Zealanders on their OE. Some might not traditionally be considered ‘civil society’ organisations, often defined as being distinct from government *and* business, yet they met the key criteria for this study because each organisation was reliant on volunteers to achieve its purpose, whether that was providing educational, social and other support to members of a particular group of professionals, promoting and maintaining Māori cultural practices, organising social and educational events or providing settlement advice. The High Commission list does not include all such organisations operating in London, the total number of which is undetermined, so the interview data are not representative of such organisations overall. Given the way in which they were recruited, the participants are also not necessarily ‘typical’ members of their organisations nor do their views represent the official viewpoint of each organisation. Personal and organisation names are not used for this reason, as well as to protect the anonymity of participants belonging to the small number of organisations within the tightly-knit London expatriate community.

Of seven females and four males interviewed, four identified as Māori (one also identified with a second ethnic group), while the others were from New Zealand’s majority ethnic group (referring to themselves variously as ‘white’, ‘European’ or ‘Pākehā’; the latter term will be used for brevity). Notably, all four Māori participants were recruited through the Māori cultural groups, although interviews revealed some engagement with other New Zealand-focused organisations. The Pākehā participants were all recruited through generic ‘New Zealand’ organisations, although both of the Māori cultural groups included non-Māori members.

Two participants aged in their mid-twenties had arrived less than two years ago but most had lived between eight and forty-plus years overseas and were aged between their late thirties and early sixties. The majority left New Zealand on a traditional OE in their mid-to-late twenties but four participants embarked on their travels in their thirties or forties, with one coming with children and a spouse while the other left grown children in New Zealand. In this sense, they may not be typical of most New Zealanders in London or elsewhere although

KEA/Colmar Brunton (2013) data does suggest that New Zealand expatriates *are* generally older and staying away longer than in the past.

Aside from the two participants who were relatively early in their overseas journey and could not yet commit to long-term plans, all others identified themselves as ‘accidental expats’ who had not left New Zealand planning to stay away permanently. The opportunity to travel, family and better employment prospects/wages kept them in the UK and only two participants had certain plans to return. For others, a return was desirable but likely to be in retirement or delayed indefinitely given perceived problems with poorer work opportunities/wages and geographical isolation. All, however, had regular physical/virtual social and economic ties with New Zealand and those with children visited frequently to ensure they felt an affiliation for their ‘homeland’.

Participants were asked about civil society activities prior to leaving New Zealand, their understanding of their organisation’s purpose, the types of people participating in activities, how and why they got involved and how this involvement has impacted their sense of meaning or purpose in life, their sense of identity as a New Zealander and their sense of belonging in London/UK. Interview data were thematically analysed based on these questions and emergent themes. Using the High Commission list for recruitment meant that all organisations contacted had a very explicit link to New Zealand, meaning themes around diasporic nationalism, rather than the organisations themselves or issues relating to volunteerism, dominated the analysis and thus this article’s discussion.

LEAVING POLITICS BEHIND?

The most common theme emerging from the interviews was the perception that the ‘politics’ of home were either absent or diminished within expatriate organisations and the overseas context, providing space for identity-making, relationship-building and ultimately a sense of belonging that is more constrained in New Zealand than overseas. Closer analysis revealed that participants were largely talking about ‘bicultural’ politics. Brandt’s (2013) research suggests that, despite a high level of contact in their daily lives, many Māori and Pākehā individuals lack opportunities to form close friendship bonds in New Zealand, not so much because of cultural differences but because of colonial power relationships and the resulting social dominance of Pākehā. Hokowhitu (2010) further contends that Māori are always in opposition to the ‘colonial oppressor’ and thus politicised in their defense of Māori culture and rights to self-determination. Māori experienced significant loss of land and the

repression of their indigenous culture and language. However, opportunities to contest ongoing colonialism were provided by recourse to the 1835 Declaration of Independence, which asserted the tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) of tribes, and Article Two of the Māori-language Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840, which guaranteed Māori the continuing possession of tino rangatiratanga in balance with the ‘kāwanatanga’ (governance) granted to the British Crown in Article One (Mulholland 2015). Alongside the settling of resource claims through the Waitangi Tribunal, a governmental policy of ‘biculturalism’ has aimed to improve the delivery of government services and programmes to Māori by including Māori perspectives, offering Māori better representation and improving cultural sensitivity. Since the 1980s, this policy has seen Māori culture shape, at least to some degree, government documents, practices and public discourse including how a ‘New Zealand’ identity is represented at home and overseas (Durie 1998).

Biculturalism has, however, been critiqued by some Māori as narrowly focused on Māori *culture* while ignoring *political* claims; at best, Māori are assumed to be a junior political partner in any Māori-state relationship (O’Sullivan 2007). Many Pākehā individuals are also ambivalent about biculturalism. Anderson (1991) notes that the nation is usually conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship regardless of actual inequality and exploitation; certainly many European/Pākehā New Zealanders endorse the symbolic inclusion of Māori culture – perhaps feeling proud that each All Blacks rugby game begins with the haka (an action dance traditionally associated with battle) – while at the same time negating claims for resources and reparation for historical injustice experienced by Māori at the hands of European colonists (A. Bell 2004, 2009; Sibley, Hoverd, and Liu 2011). Terruhn’s (2015) research found many Pākehā had genuine intentions regarding recognition and engagement with Māori culture yet their narratives reflected colonial, nationalist and racialised assumptions that protected the majority’s privileged position, while perpetuating old myths and creating new ones about the ‘need’ for a multicultural future to ‘resolve’ the tensions apparent within biculturalism. Biculturalism thus remains a contested part of New Zealand’s national story, even if New Zealand’s relationship with its indigenous peoples and the unique Māori culture are commonly framed internationally as distinguishing it from both its former imperial power and other settler-state nations.

One Pākehā participant explicitly stated that national identity gains more importance when ‘[y]ou leave home and then you start becoming a bit more patriotic’ and this may be particularly so for members of the New Zealand’s Pākehā ethnic majority, who frequently feel they lack a cohesive ‘ethnic’ or

national identity (A. Bell 2004; C. Bell 2012). Reflecting Triandafyllidou's (1998) theoretical arguments, both Māori and Pākehā participants in my study indicated that British people represented a 'significant other' that enhanced their sense of being a New Zealander, even given their own genealogical ties with the UK and/or New Zealand's historical and cultural legacy as a former British colony. As Bell (2002, 154) has argued, '[f]or New Zealanders with British or European heritage, the OE helps the individual understand their own nationhood. Any New Zealander who has been to Europe is unlikely, afterwards, to categorise themselves as "European".'

Historically, indigenous Māori were great travellers but research suggests that most Māori citizens who leave New Zealand today migrate largely to Australia, largely to improve work and lifestyle opportunities (Hamer 2007; Kukutai and Pawar 2013). Only limited attention has been paid to how such travel affects identity amongst Māori (see Bell 2002; Taylor 1997; Wilson 2014). It is thus significant that all four of my Māori participants explicitly spoke of gaining a sense of belonging within their expatriate organisation that was *stronger* than that experienced in New Zealand. Belonging is a multi-layered and multi-scalar emotional attachment to feeling at 'home' which 'becomes articulated, formally structured and politicised only when it is threatened in some way' (Yuval-Davis 2011, 10). While this 'threat' can include migration, in fact two Māori participants noted that the Māori language and culture was more valued overseas than in New Zealand. One said that when people talked to him about New Zealand:

[...] they don't want to know about the lakes ... rivers and all that, they want to know about the Māori, the Māori culture and so I suppose it's ... it's really refreshing like that ... finding our culture's valued overseas whereas back home it's very taken for granted.

The value placed on Māori culture here may in part be explained by its 'exoticism' for non-New Zealanders but Pākehā participants positively viewed their London-based civil society organisations as valuing Māori culture as a symbol of national identity, for instance by using Māori greetings on their websites and to start major events. Māori participants also spoke of how Pākehā in London had a greater appreciation (if not necessarily significant knowledge) of Māori culture, which facilitated more positive interactions between Māori and Pākehā New Zealanders than experienced at home. One described how a Pākehā friend joined his organisation: 'back home she wouldn't have geared toward joining a kapa haka [performances based around songs, chants, dance] group, whereas here she kind of feels almost like it's needed, just to kind of

make her own like belonging, some kind of feeling and being a Kiwi, some kind of tie back home'. Similarly, another member of the same Māori cultural group noted how most of its performances were at weddings, anniversaries and birthdays where non-Māori surprise their New Zealand partners and friends:

[...] we'll be snuck in, sat down in the basement somewhere and all of a sudden there's, you know, the reception [and] we'll come up and then, you know, he'll cry and she'll cry and they'll come and sing Pokarekare Ana² with us and he'll cry more and, you know, it's lovely.

Both examples *could* be read as a form of cultural appropriation by Pākehā but this was not how the participants interpreted these Māori-Pākehā interactions. Thornley's (2015) research with New Zealand expatriates also found the same Māori cultural organisation provided a sense of belonging, history and community to Pākehā who expected to find a sense of kinship in the UK but felt more at home in the Māori cultural group. One of my Māori participants talked about the explicit way in which belonging is facilitated through the formal welcome given to newcomers (known as the pōwhiri), which communicates: 'you're not just someone in London, you're part of us if you want to be' and will be included in a family-like network of friends where everyone looks out for each other. Thus some Māori and Pākehā shared a *real*, rather than imagined, sense of community in London.

Importantly, three of the four Māori participants said that their organisations made them feel more at 'home' than in New Zealand because they also felt less constrained by *Māori* cultural norms and politics. While being 'Māori' offers a social location, identification and attachment to a collective group and a set of value systems for belonging for many New Zealanders (see Yuval-Davis 2011), a participant who left home almost twenty years before remembered Māori in New Zealand being 'very judgemental' because she was interested in different things than most of her Māori peers. In contrast:

I've found the Māori side to be so much more welcoming here, they don't care that you can't speak Māori or that you can't sing or that you don't know any songs or anything like that, to make a mistake is more than okay, very supportive.

As a result of her engagement with Māori-focused civil society organisations in London: 'I feel so much more stronger and confident as a person, as a Māori person, when I go back now'. A recently-arrived Māori participant talked of

how he belonged to a kapa haka group in New Zealand but ‘I kind of just grew out of it, too much politics and arguing, bickering in the group, you kind of get pulled into it, it kind of just drags you down, pulls you away from the whole kaupapa [approach] of performing and so I kind of got away from it’. In London, he felt such ‘politics’ were notably weaker than in New Zealand. The small size of this study requires caution in assuming these findings are relevant for all Māori expatriates. But neither finding is surprising given Māori politics are strongly shaped by opposition to the colonial nation-state, which encourages a sense that Māori must stand united and firm around issues of cultural practice and identity (Hokowhitu 2010).

In this context, tradition is defended in ways that do not seem as important overseas. Examples include the way a female Māori participant was asked to lead a Māori-focused cultural group that would normally have been directed by a male in New Zealand, while the two younger Māori male participants were offered leadership roles within their organisation that they likely would have been excluded from at home because of their age. One recalled how he was the youngest child, so did not need to worry about speaking in Māori at formal events because his father and brothers had more seniority than him. But in his London-based organisation:

[...] all of a sudden I was thrown in the deep end ... and I got better ... my first few attempts I wasn't [laughter], I wasn't that good, I was a just a nervous stumbling wreck but oh yeah got a lot better with experience and, but everyone appreciated it regardless how good or bad.

He contrasted this experience with several months spent in Australia, where he was frustrated by the ‘different mind sets of Māori’, driven by individual egos and ‘judgment from others’. Notably, these experiences ‘broadened my view on Māoridom and I suppose the whole – cos it’s a really contentious sort of issue as well – what is Māori, what is Kiwi, what is a New Zealander?’ was lived first-hand, not just abstractly debated as experienced during his university studies.

Kaiwai and Zemke-White (2004, 153) note that kapa haka, which is extremely popular with New Zealand schools and other organisations running performance groups each year, has been a means for making culture and defining tradition in hostile times and ‘[i]n recent years, traditionalists have raised concerns over some of the innovations that today’s kapa haka groups threaded into their performances.’ The participant quoted above had certainly grown up believing there was only one way to perform waiata but found

himself becoming more flexible as the London cultural group's different interpretations 'sort of loosened my views a bit about, you know, what is right, what is wrong as opposed to what is right for right now and right for later'. In his view, the flexible interpretation or construction of 'Māori culture' in London meant: 'everyone was happy there was another, another Māori here, another one who can speak Māori, another one to contribute to the group and I loved it, you know, in my mind that's what Māoridom is all about'.

While it is possible that such a glowing report reflected a desire to promote the Māori cultural group to which he belonged, it is notable that no Pākehā participants spoke of feeling as if they did not belong in New Zealand prior to departure. Two participants acknowledged that belonging can be difficult for expatriates returning 'home' because their global perspectives are under-valued or resented, while several reported that their involvement in a New Zealand-focused organisation in London offered opportunities to cross class boundaries that inhibited social relationships at home (for example, meeting 'famous' New Zealanders or gaining unprecedented career opportunities or social status). Given the original research focus was on civil society engagement, this topic was not specifically explored with Pākehā participants but none spontaneously spoke directly of limitations to their sense of belonging in the way Māori did. The following section indicates that this may be tied to the power dynamics that shape Pākehā narratives of national identity and nationalism. These were promoted, consciously or unconsciously, by New Zealand-focused civil society organisations in ways that suggest 'politics' was at play even if this was not always recognised by the participants involved in them.

MISRECOGNISING POLITICS?

Participants were asked about how their organisations encouraged or reinforced a New Zealand national identity. Although not intended as such, many examples offered could be viewed as reinforcing nostalgia for a past that sits in tension with the apparent openness to Māori culture and biculturalism discussed above. One participant noted how key national events have little meaning until 'you come overseas and back home they're celebrating these things and [...] you're not part of it, so I think there's that [...] sort of the fear of missing out and you become extremely patriotic'. Indeed, most of the organisations made some attempt to celebrate New Zealand events that draw on shared historical memories embedded in the discursive repertoires or scripts articulated in the media and political institutions and reproduced in everyday language and life.

Notably, Waitangi Day – held on 6 February each year to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi – was mentioned by participants as a focus for diasporic nationalism but far less frequently than events such as ANZAC Day and the Rugby World Cup (held in the UK in 2015). Waitangi Day in New Zealand is often fraught with political tension because it highlights ongoing discrepancies between Māori and state perceptions of what level of power-sharing the Treaty intended. Three participants said their organisations were involved in events marking Waitangi Day but their descriptions suggested little or no engagement with the historical meaning behind the day. Most commonly mentioned was the Waitangi Day Inner Circle Pub Crawl, which has long been controversial because it involves hundreds of New Zealanders travelling on the underground trains from pub to pub, at times leading to drunken violence and arrests. It is an extreme example of how expatriate organisations shape the ways in which Waitangi Day is commemorated. While a lack of political discussion may have encouraged cross-cultural relationships in London, arguably the ‘commonalities’ between Māori and Pākehā discussed earlier are unconsciously founded on a silencing of the more difficult and controversial aspects of New Zealand’s national narrative.

Moreover, according to Wilson (2014), both New Zealand-focused media and the High Commission have historically reminded the expatriate population that they are representing their country at the Waitangi Day pub crawl, suggesting this event is widely viewed as a threat to New Zealand’s image. It is unclear whether this indicates respect for such an historical political event or simply a desire to preserve stereotypes about ‘friendly’ New Zealanders but participants generally focused on the latter, highlighting how both New Zealand and New Zealanders are well-regarded internationally:

‘everyone that I come across you know, every Brit, every non-New Zealander will say “oh New Zealand’s on my list to visit” or “I’d love to move there”. This reputation creates pressure to maintain a positive image of New Zealand and ‘any bad publicity [...] in the news, you sort of feel like you do have to defend what’s going on.’

As a result, a participant involved in the organisation of the pub crawl noted how considerable time was spent ensuring the event ran smoothly without the violence that could mar New Zealand’s image. A further example was noted by two participants who had been involved in a delegation that visited a pub where a small number of New Zealanders had participated in a violent altercation with bar staff. Although not present at the time, one participant was made aware of the situation:

[...] so I went along on a Saturday afterwards with other Kiwis, we'd made them pavlova and got some presents for them and stuff like that and gave the bar staff a big New Zealand kind of sorry ... and they loved it, you know, and it was quite nice and I said like 'there's more of us, you know'.

This was framed as simply 'doing what New Zealanders do', rather than political work protecting New Zealand's reputation overseas, but arguably members of civil society organisations in London were actively (if unconsciously) engaged in promoting and maintaining a certain national imaginary of New Zealand and its people whether 'reminded' by the state to do so or not.

A more frequent topic of discussion was ANZAC Day, which is celebrated in New Zealand and Australia on 25 April to mark the contribution made by ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) soldiers in World War I's Gallipoli campaign, where they captured the strategic point of Chunuk Bair before being forced to withdraw with significant loss of life. Wilson (2014) notes that the sacrifices made at Gallipoli contributed to the birth of a sense of national identity in both colonies, creating a sense of collective memory. Yarwood (2014, 143), commenting about war memorials and statues, argues that: '[t]hese landscapes of memory often represent hegemonic visions of state and identity', being both highly gendered and racialised. For example, although fighting alongside each other in World War I is said to have brought Māori and Pākeha soldiers together in unprecedented ways, Māori received lesser citizenship entitlements than their Pākeha counterparts and faced ongoing discrimination upon their return home (New Zealand History 2017).

There appeared to be little awareness or concern about this history amongst my participants, some of whom had been directly involved in events commemorating the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign in 2015 and found them extremely emotional, not only because of 'the magnanimity of the event – you know, it's a huge event, it's 100 years since', but also because of the way they felt it brought New Zealanders together *in the present*. One of the participants who took part in Māori cultural performances at the key ANZAC centenary event spoke enthusiastically about the New Zealand High Commissioner's idea for:

[...] a mass waiata [song], so we had ... between 200 and 300 New Zealanders, so building up to ANZAC week did all these practice sessions all week. It was awesome. We had all these people from New Zealand, that wanted to come and learn not only Māori

culture, learnt this waiata – actions, it was an action song ... [it was a] farewell for the Māori – well soldiers in New Zealand – but it was, it felt like this is an awesome ... sort of occasion of what a Treaty relationship should be you know. I mean we got Māori and Kiwi working together ... Speaking Māori, Māori language now doing Māori songs, understanding, feeling, feeling what it is the biggest thing, I think, like with kapa haka and everything it's not just, it's that emotion it gives you that, that whole sense of unity and wonder.

This participant does acknowledge the significant role that Māori soldiers played during World War I but discussed the mass waiata more as a way of *putting into practice* a personal and state desire for Māori and Pākehā (interestingly, using the term 'Kiwi' which is usually associated with New Zealanders generally) individuals to work together on a 'bicultural' project. His narrative further highlights how Māori cultural performance group members enabled this desire to be fulfilled through their willingness to perform at national events and how they helped defend the New Zealand state's reputation as a world leader regarding biculturalism and indigenous rights. Talking about how his participation in the group sharpened both his Māori and national identity, he said it:

[...] enhanced the New Zealand bit because we're standing there as faces of not just Māori but as New Zealand and felt like privileged to be there representing New Zealand because this is, I suppose we're representing the New Zealand that we want it to be. We're representing the New Zealand that is the Treaty partner, yeah, like it would be awesome again if everyone in New Zealand could speak Māori and everyone you know, when the All Blacks do the haka everyone in the stadium could just get up in their seats and do it, you know, with them and doesn't have to be what the All Blacks did, just what the Māori's do, it's all inclusive, that would be awesome and so that's what we're representing [...]

Another member of the same cultural group said he was immensely proud of the way 'you [Māori performers] kinda look like a big, a big bunch of misfits, kinda sitting down and eating food and playing around and then all of a sudden they start singing and then it just makes sense', suggesting the professionalism of the group helped to shift stereotypes about indigenous peoples. Bargh (2013) notes that academics (and undoubtedly others) often fail to recognise that many of the spaces where Māori participate are 'political' or represent some kind of work. Although she refers to the volunteering

undertaken in the management of marae (tribal meeting places) and tribal organisations in New Zealand, the same can be said for the key role this and other Māori organisations – including those outside the country – play in presenting a particular image of New Zealand through kapa haka and other cultural performances (Kaiwai and Zemke-White 2004). This serves the political interests of the state yet participant comments suggest Māori culture was considered by some New Zealand officials merely as a tokenistic gesture to ‘just make them look good’ internationally. Taylor’s (1997) research participants in London highlighted similar limits to Māori representation within a New Zealand national identity.

Nostalgic forms of diasporic nationalism were also evident in more mundane, day-to-day practices. When asked about how their organisations promoted or reinforced a New Zealand national identity, many participants talked proudly about how ‘New Zealand’ wine and food was promoted at organisation functions. They named iconic food items (pavlova, afghans, lamingtons, lolly cake, pineapple lumps and meat pies) that may be regarded as ‘Kiwiana’: products originating in New Zealand and utilised as national symbols both by government and commercial companies because they are packed with social, cultural and symbolic meaning that feeds the collective memory by harking back to ‘simpler’ times post-World War II (C. Bell 2004, 2012; Day 2104). Being sold almost everywhere, they represent a form of ‘banal nationalism’ – commonplace, everyday symbols and images (Billig 1995) – that go unnoticed in New Zealand.

In the expatriate context, however, such foods invoke a sense of familiarity and nostalgia for time spent growing up in New Zealand where they were commonplace. These ‘memories’ of home are not necessarily personally experienced but became familiar through their constant representation (Bell 2012). A participant commented that many members of her organisation say: “‘I never liked coffee before, but give me a flat white³ now” you know or ... any of the Kiwi treats.’ Another participant illustrated how well-worn some cultural symbols associated with New Zealand are, noting that when his organisation held a barbeque ‘we got people to bring puddings, every pudding was a pavlova so next year we’re going to check, even my wife who’s a Brit made a pavlova for the Kiwis with kiwifruit [laughter]’.

Some groups have more power to shape ‘memory’ than others and Claudia Bell (2004, 180) contends that: ‘Nostalgia is pleasurable because it is a site in which inequalities are glossed over; historic reconstructions make the past look charmingly innocent’. In particular, she believes Kiwiana imagines a fictional

collective history for Pākehā that suggests ‘a national convergence in the way we once were’, prior to any anxiety about bicultural politics. More recently, Day (2014, 2) similarly found ‘food nostalgia on New Zealand television presents a specific utopian vision of New Zealand national identity and culture’. Kiwiana is thus far from politically neutral. There was no acknowledgement of this in the London interviews and I suspect many participants would be horrified to discover the foods they promote at events could be viewed in such a way. But notably only Pākehā participants discussed the use of such common ‘Kiwi’ foodstuffs and no participant mentioned traditional indigenous foods, such as hangi (food cooked in an earthen pit).

Many participants did discuss how New Zealand expatriate networks and friendships were facilitated by an enduring belief that there is a set of fairly precise characteristics that define a ‘New Zealander’, particularly in contrast to the British people amongst which expatriates lived (Wilson 2014). Research identifies common stereotypes of New Zealanders as: innovative and entrepreneurial; hardworking; friendly and approachable; and respectful of other cultural groups (Akoorie 2014; Sibley, Hoverd, and Liu 2011). These characteristics are all associated with the purported egalitarian values evident in New Zealand which are said to distinguish it from the UK’s class-based hierarchies, but nonetheless reflect a ‘fictive cultural history, one that is plainly Pākehā dominated’ (C. Bell 2004, 175) valorising ‘simple’, unpeopled rural life, sporting prowess or other activities built upon the colonial ‘taming’ of the land and of the indigenous peoples already settled there.

Such stereotypes were evident in participant discussion about the things that draw New Zealanders together and distinguish them from other nationalities, with egalitarianism being the most commonly reported. A Pākehā participant challenged class or status distinctions several times in her narrative, suggesting New Zealanders were willing to help with menial tasks without concern for their status and invited strangers into their houses, treating them like friends. She said she would not have stayed in the UK if she had not liked the English but contrasted the easy-going nature of New Zealanders with ‘English reserve’. Another participant put it more bluntly, noting that in the UK: ‘there is that class thing and, and I’m inclined to forget, in fact New Zealanders try and bulldoze their way through it and not notice it, which is not a bad way to deal with it, I don’t think – and we don’t feel held back’. Putting this egalitarianism into practice, the leader of the social media organisation offered small businesses free access to the website because ‘being the Kiwi that I am’ he thought lack of funds was an insufficient reason for exclusion.

The idea that New Zealanders are sensitive to cultural differences was also evident in interviews. A Māori participant thought her New Zealand values were critical for successfully undertaking her profession:

[...] when I walk in the front door [of a client's house] and see the shoe rack, I just take my shoes off and they might not say that the English people wouldn't, they might not say anything in front of them [...] but when I'm leaving and go to put them on, they would you know, the family would say 'thank you so much for removing your shoes'.

New Zealand's long history of accepting refugees and migrants was offered as a reason for a further Pākehā participant's belief that 'we're not perfect on it [but] we are incredible on our social integration of all cultures', at least compared to the British. Although the same person felt that status differences were growing in New Zealand, only one other participant explicitly acknowledged that the stereotypical image of New Zealand egalitarianism did not always hold true and neither referred to Māori-state relationships in this context. This again represents a major silencing of the reality of the New Zealand experience for Māori which, alongside the dispossession of land, culture and language, includes ongoing institutional racism and disproportionate socio-economic disadvantage. It is important to acknowledge that such issues were not an explicit focus of interviews and the dominance of Pākehā-dominated forms of nostalgia reflected in London was both unconscious and reflective of the forms of nationalism promoted within and by the New Zealand state. Nonetheless, this lack of awareness does raise questions about the extent to which focusing only on 'commonalities', while ignoring differently racialised experiences, can sustain long-term cross-cultural relationships.

CONCLUSION

Believing that the problematic politics of home – which can restrict cultural boundary crossing and a full sense of belonging amongst Māori – were diminished in the expatriate context, some of my participants saw living overseas as offering unique opportunities for national identity construction and for Māori-Pākehā relationship building. One Māori participant explicitly stated: 'it's almost like you want to put everyone in New Zealand on a plane, leave the country and see what the rest of the world's like and then realise how unique what we've got here and you know, [if] we can capitalise on that it would be great.' This suggests that the expatriate experience can be a site for

personal growth and development, as well as national identity construction, which could benefit New Zealand more generally.

While acknowledging the sense of hope articulated by participants, this article has highlighted the need for further research to assess the broader relevance of findings that challenge this perception in several ways. First, it seems unlikely that overseas experiences can be replicated within the New Zealand nation-state where Māori represent the ‘significant other’ to Pākehā social and political norms by articulating desires for self-determination, challenging the idea that there is just *one* ‘imagined community’. Second, it is questionable whether ‘commonalities’ experienced at the personal level are sufficiently deep to challenge socio-political norms if they are based on a valuing of Māori culture that overlooks the fraught politics of Māori-state relations. Third, this article has highlighted that New Zealand-focused organisations in London are far from politically neutral: on one hand, their members protect New Zealand’s international reputation and encourage acceptance of Māori culture as a distinctive symbol of New Zealand, yet on the other hand they promote foods and events that have been identified by scholars as encouraging ‘banal’ yet Pākehā-dominated forms of nostalgia that ignores/reinforces existing inequalities. This political work was neither conscious nor deliberate but arguably reproduced the same tensions in New Zealand’s national story evident at home.

Without being able to examine the experiences of other members of expatriate organisations and expatriates in general, it is difficult to estimate the generalisability of these findings. But they do suggest that the key tension around the role of Māori within the nation-state requires far deeper reflection about what it means to be a New Zealander than recent debates about changing the flag or even the ‘constitutional conversation’ of 2015 have offered. Is it possible to be an ‘egalitarian’ New Zealander while also ignoring historical and contemporary inequities that disadvantage Māori? If Māori are able to exercise greater control over things relating to them, what does this mean for Pākehā? Do Māori and Pākehā share more values and behaviours than divides them? This pilot study suggests that such debates should be inclusive of those who continue to imagine themselves as part of the national community while living overseas because, ironically, their distance from New Zealand offers fresh experiences that could facilitate more positive bicultural interactions when they return home. However, only time and further research will tell us whether improved *personal* relationships overseas can eventually challenge the ongoing *political* dynamics shaping New Zealand national identity both outside the country and within Aotearoa.

NOTES

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Email: l.humpage@auckland.ac.nz
- 2 A famous Māori song often performed at events in New Zealand.
- 3 A style of coffee originating in New Zealand but now available in London and elsewhere.

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