

# Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

## Theme 8 'Māori violence'

*In this negative theme, Māori are portrayed as affected by violence more than others, either as perpetrators or victims.*

### How this is being said in the news

Warriors, 'warrior gene', primitive, Jake the Muss, gangs, 'bro' type language, thugs, staunch, Māori child abuse.

### Examples

- Repetitive use of Māori children as illustrations of child abuse.
- Widespread and repeated use of images of haka and wero to represent Māori.
- 'A New Zealand researcher claims there is an over-representation of the 'warrior gene', which has been linked to aggressive behaviour, in Maori men.' NZ Herald online audio, Aug 9, 2006.

### What does this assume?

- Māori, and Māori men in particular, are inherently violent.
- Non-Māori violence is the action of 'bad apples'; Māori violence is cultural or genetic.
- Non-Māori don't abuse their children, or do so less than Māori.
- Māori accept and cover up violence.
- Māori are generally unconcerned about using crime to support themselves.

### What does this do?

- Creates fear of Māori.
- Makes Pākehā family violence and child abuse invisible.
- Focuses the stigma of violence on Māori families.
- Reinforces stereotypes of Māori as violent.
- Increases Māori belief in these negative stereotypes.
- Encourages media to sensationalise Māori crime.
- Ignores state violence against Māori (eg Ruātoki raids, being beaten for speaking Māori at school, Land Wars).

### Other ways to talk about this

- Unmask White crime.
- Reporting should reflect the fact that child abuse and family violence happen in all cultures.
- Well-off families are more able to keep family violence from coming to police attention.
- Between 2009 and 2012, 41% of children killed from child abuse or neglect were Pākehā or other non-Māori, non-Pacific people (Family Violence Death Review Committee, *Fourth Annual Report*, 2014)
- Māori child-rearing practices were subject to the changing whims of the dominant culture. EG: Pākehā researchers in the 1950s said that Māori spoilt their children and didn't hit them enough, and that Māori thought corporal punishment in school was abhorrent and cruel.

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See [www.trc.org.nz/  
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Submit your own examples of this theme in the media and suggest your alternatives. Suggestions will be moderated and uploaded to the site.