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MAORI PUBLIC RELATION INVOLVEMENTS

This paper attempts to define and nurture thinking into the New Zealand public relation practice. It provides a highly critical analysis of aspects pertaining to theoretical public relation theorem in contrast to Maori culture. It provides leeway to further examinations within the field.

Maori traditions, customs and images have played a significant role in New Zealand (NZ) public relation (PR) practice. The concept of storytelling embedded within NZ Maori culture indicates an encapsulation through narratives encompassed in cultural dancing, sport and traditional customs. Organizations in NZ have to abide through principles of biculturalism, that is, the idea that Maori and Pakeha (non-indigenous) cultures must exist on equal terms. Concepts of Maori language pre-schools further emphasize the nature of amalgamation in culture in NZ and hence PR practice in the country needs to take into account the natural tendencies of the populace in an unreflective way. Organizations operating in NZ focus on interpretation aspects when dealing with PR medium and this occurs in both discursive space and through analytical frameworks.

It is said that a sociological contribution takes place within discursive PR practice in NZ and that managing of particular types of individuals takes into consideration symbology embedded in both Maori and Pakeha cultures. A PR practitioner in NZ has to be able to grasp the complexity of the system and understand the context and its inter-dependence to in accordance to traditional values and the treaty of Waitangi which changed

the face of NZ by setting a framework for the relationship between two treaty partners. PR practice in NZ is aware of storytelling concepts and employs an ethnomethodological approach which is constructive in nature. The model has been enacted through society's culture without conscious awareness by participants – it is simply part of the culture. I believe PR practice in NZ is reflexive without conscious nature of it and that perspectives between cultures are intertwined through local customs such as the passion for sports (rugby), cuisine, and the cultural labour that has evolved over the many years in a variety of aspects pertinent to NZ culture. Weber, Foucault & Bourdieu argue further for a mastery of self which I believe is present within traditional Maori groups in NZ. The concept of empowerment comes to mind, and that is, indigenous groups in NZ are backed up by prestigious and educated Maori citizens who undertake routines pertinent to PR practice throughout mainstream society. This culturally rich atmosphere warrants an advanced network of relationships that spans across indigenous PR practicing individuals. I believe PR practice within indigenous NZ residents takes a twist towards an interdisciplinary function through social shared values and communion characteristics well in line with utopian anarchic ideals. Management within PR practising individuals takes into consideration family values and a vast social network that is inherent to traditional Maori culture.

Bourdieu argues that a culture's 'habitus' is distinguished through the possession of assets that inherently distinguish the individual ahead of

other social groupings. Maori norms places values on aspects related to value life, friendships, and well being. This feminization in ideals goes well in line with Geert's categorization of Maori culture. I argue that the 'habitus' in Maori culture is not encompassed by traditional asset possession but through the inherited social capital that eventuates from a rich historic background filled with character and social traits. Traditionally Maori's are over represented by prison stereotypes in NZ media, and education has been a fallacy in Maori culture but in contrast to indigenous populations across the world it ranks at an all time high. Maori residents in Australia that I am affiliated with have established an income 'habitus' not through educational expertise but through sheer hard yakka. The social knowledge of these very same individuals is immense and the cultural values that are displayed by some of these PR practicing characters are truly unique to an indigenous group that has distinguished itself ahead of the rest through family social networks.

Maori individuals certainly exhibit a social power when it comes to affiliates, in general. Maori culture by itself is rich with descriptive texts pertaining to social hierarchies of mutual gain. There are implicit beliefs within Maori culture that dictate that they belong to particular fields, in Bourdieuvian terms 'doxas'. A Maori PR practitioner generally openly embraces his/her heritage and instantly adopts a doxa power field that is not so much related to capital in terms of economics, but instead representative of a richly cultural and social discourse. In Maori culture it

is a privilege to belong to their doxa, and it is certainly clear that a consideration of a 'fit' of others by indigenous culture bearing residents – this portrays Maoris as being from a power base that is to be recognized. It would be a good argument to examine further and analyse the capital grants of power embedded within Maori culture. Competition in PR practice in NZ only occurs through discursive space and hence I argue that Maori's abroad (only when in touch with indigenous groupings abroad) exhibit an extra advantage when it comes to social networks than regular PR personnel.

The treaty of 'Te Tiriti' exemplifies many ideals that are encompassed by traditional ethical terms and philosophies. Concepts of partnership play a key focus in undertakings and this is clearly evident in traditional Maori family life and values. It is inherently an imperative to perform PR consultations with full awareness of the social groupings involved. This includes a consideration for all publics affiliated with any issue and a strict adherence to protection of the public rights in every context of the way. Maori culture further stresses the need for compensation for any wrongdoings which lines in well with most traditional Western ideals. Maori PR practice has become visible in all aspects of NZ PR life, and practitioners are open about and proud of their cultural identity.

The Kaupapa Maori dictates protocols related to cultural context and it sorts imbalances in communications across the board. It in specifically tackles dominance conflicts and seeks to establish equality in practice in PR

which takes away any stigmas of discrimination. Maori protocols are consultative from the start and purport the need for guidance and collaboration among all participants in need. It specifically attempts to achieve a utopian view of relinquishing all power to the publics in a bid to work in ideals of two way symmetrical PR stances. It is certainly a more ethical approach than contemporary approaches abroad, and it brings into mind that kin relationships are important for accountability of one's actions. I believe that this PR practice model is certainly superior to contemporary Western ideals and more restrictive Eastern ideals. However a mix of two way and one way a/symmetrical still leaves paving for an un-experimented ideal benchmark of which Maori culture and protocols have not been able to capitalize on.

The Kaupapa Maori stresses the need to maintain publics as sovereign entities – that is, as bodies in charge of power of all dealings and hence empowerment by the organization and communities around them. Co-negotiation agreements pertain to the ultimate objective within the Kaupapa Maori and it leads way to ongoing support and re-evaluation over a period of time. The NZ PR individual is further encouraged to share a voice of opinion and express freedom through suggestions and self thoughts. Engagement henceforth is a tool that is used towards the good of the collective, and hence can be argued that it is feminist in nature when combined with the perspective of caring and nurturing of minority groups. I am in strong concord that Maori culture is effeminate and lacks

authoritative assertive rule. I do not perceive this to be a weakness in culture but instead I propose that these very same means may be what has contributed to the success of biculturalism within NZ.

Whakawhanaungatanga refers to the need to establish whanau relationships, that is a concept that has grown to define 'extended family' relationships. It is epitomic of representation of giving birth, that is, fostering new social networks and crossing boundaries towards the amalgamation of the identity of the PR self. It co-relates engagement as vitality to achieving whanau and the process is comprised of a rich cultural exchange of values that involves bodily and social interaction. The Tangata whenue instead focuses on dealings of hosts and visitors at a location as determined by the involved publics. It is believed that such interaction shreds away the boundaries encompassed by PR practice, media and organizations and is an equitable form to empower the publics. The process can epitomize a greater transference of ideas and is deemed utterly noble and ethical. The Nga tikanga o te marae equates to rules within the meeting house and the social interactions that ensue – it is a methodological procedure to warrant that decisions are made as peacefully as possible and without conflict whilst fostering and encouraging friendships.

I am in the view that PR dealings in NZ act on the basis of cooperation and is synonymous to reciprocal dealings which can foster mutual success.

Kinship is highly regarded as it is an initial process to sequential procedures

that lead to freedom in expression. Aotearoa NZ believes in a dissemination of equal sharing ideals and it is deemed that such processes lead to autonomous undertakings within the PR practice. When responsibility is shared it is believed that if one of the participant's actions falter in ethical standing than the other involved parties is better empowerment to mitigate the situation and educate the individual.

PR practice in NZ emphasizes ethnicity rather than race comparison. In other words someone's physical appearance should not be a context of talk but indeed one's cultural heritage plays the significant aspect in dealings and interactions. There is a great deal of commotion about non-white and white majorities in NZ that has been under constant work over many decades in the country. Maori television and successful individuals such as netball player Temepara George and singer Anika Moa have transformed the stereotypes of Maori's in contrast to non-Maori's. It is imperative that PR relations within NZ understand the complexity of a non-western environment within the country and that a critique be taken place that places the lives of others in terms that are amenable to the PR's own terms. Critical viewing of traditional values and local NZ culture remain important aspects for foreign PR to consult when dealing within the country. However, such perceptions must be extended to Maori's living and working abroad as knowledge of one's cultural background, in order to ameliorate hardships, remains a key ingredient for PR success.

Critical race theory (CRT) is examined through lenses that shape lives through oppression-able means. CRT indicates that 'whiteness' equates to culture, and no whiteness indicates no centrality, legitimacy for interests and identities. Maori culture is certainly not centralised and instead it fosters a harmonious development for a collective. Maori culture is legitimate due to cultural and primordial custodians of NZ, this in contrast to CRT perspectives. A group of identities is built through establishment of structured norms within one's society – Maori culture is certainly rich and vivid with identity hence paving way to Pakeha-Maori relations in what is deemed a renaissance. CRT race theory is engrained on racist thoughts and indicates that the dominant race in NZ is the white culture. This is not true in NZ and it is commonplace for white citizens to openly embrace traditional Maori culture.

PR CRT positions that white supremacy is the ideal method of model, that is, Western ideals. In a PR CRT world racial discrimination would be commonplace as the incompatibility related to cultural values would never find an in-between ground. The publics would be disempowered and broken away from collective ideals. The concept of affirmative action comes to mind and insuperable barriers to mutual understandings. It is a colourblind ideal that perpetuates racial power and subordination – this is what Maori PR practice avoids.

Diversity paves the way for more advanced consultancy methods through discourse and in NZ it fosters openness and rich cultural variety. A

consensus of judgemental neutrality deserves merit and equates to a well established ethical protocol. The concept of 'whiteness' is an invisible orientation to those around that share the Maori culture. Specific role criteria(s) within NZ PR practice warrants that oppression is combated without obstruction to development. CRT practice is not a remedy and any post colonialism view is in fact a detriment to Maori PR culture as the system within NZ is already well established to perform symbiotically like in a well evolved organism.

This essay highlighted fundamental aspects related to public relations (PR) as evident in Maori New Zealand (NZ) culture. Concepts relating to storytelling, traditional cultural values, and reflexive thought are brought into consideration when revealing the very nature of Maori culture. A critical examination is made from a Bourdieuvian perspective that portrays Maori culture as a power base that ought to be recognized abroad.

Ultimately public relation practice in NZ is explained through various indigenous protocols that have been validated through parliament. It is a utopian thought and relates closely to anarchy ideals. The paper finalizes with a discussion of topics in relations to diversity and in particular critical race theorem as a contrast that primarily highlights the beautiful harmonious nature of Maori PR practice in NZ.

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