

Towards an equal playing field: Racism and Māori women in sport

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Abstract: Sport is often seen as a microcosm of society. However, due to the cultural understanding in Aotearoa that sport brings people together, there has been little research into how racism operates in sporting contexts, at either an institutional or individual level. This study examines the discriminatory practices faced by Māori women in the contemporary New Zealand sport context.

Keywords: Māori; racism; sport; women

Introduction

This research is a first step towards understanding how Māori women experience sport, particularly in relation to how racialised thinking affects their opportunities. Acknowledgement and awareness is a first step toward eradicating this historically formed social construct, where racialised thinking and practices continue to marginalize Māori women's involvement. Although there is a dearth of literature about Māori, and for Māori in sport, a case will be made that perhaps this absence is generally reflective of the status of Māori in New Zealand society. In order to understand Māori women's experiences in sport, it is first important to explore ideas about the origins of racism (Catagay & Kuban, 2007; Karsh, 2007; Miles, 1989; Woods, 1990).

Defining race and racism

Race refers to the categorization of groups of individuals according to vague phenotypical characteristics, such as skin colour and hair type (Du Bois, 2007; United Nations Committee Elimination Racial Discrimination, 2003). The literature available indicates that the term is problematic by definition, due to its biological reductionism and connection with race ideology of which many researchers are critical (Banton, 1999; Du Bois, 1999; Duster, 2001; Hokowhitu, 2003; Miles, 1989; Palmer, 2007). The racial categorisation of individuals led to 'race ideology' where "phenotypical differences came to imply basic (innate) cultural and intellectual differences" (Palmer, 2007, p. 309; Hokowhitu, 2003). Coakley (2007) describes race ideology as a web of ideas and beliefs that people use to give meaning to specific physical traits such as skin colour, and to evaluate people in terms of how they are classified by race. Two examples of beliefs that stem from the ideology of race are that white possess a higher intelligence than those who are coloured, and that Māori are more likely to be violent and aggressive (Hokowhitu, 2007).

The 'Enlightenment' is cited as the major contributor in the construction of a systematic and institutionalised racism that shaped notions of difference and 'race' (Better, 2002; Foley, 2000; Hokowhitu, 2003). These notions became the dominant mode of thinking amongst European intellectuals (Jordan, 1974). Eze (1997) noted:

... the Enlightenment's declaration of itself as 'the Age of Reason' was predicated upon precisely the assumption that reason could historically only come to maturity in modern Europe, while the inhabitants of areas outside Europe, who were considered to be of non-European racial and cultural origins, were consistently described and theorized as rationally inferior and savage. (p. 4).

Religion has also been documented as an institution that has perpetuated and warranted racialised thinking. The 'Chain of Being' theory posited that Blacks were spiritually and intellectually ranked lower than whites.

We have already seen that various animal forms represent stages in the embryonic progress of the highest-the human being...There is more than this for, after completing the animal transformations, it passes through the characters in which it appears, in the negro, Malay, American, and Mongolian nations, and is finally Caucasian...The negro exhibits permanently the imperfect brain, projecting lower jaw, and slender bent limbs, of the Caucasian child, some considerable time before the period of its birth. The aboriginal American represents the same child nearer birth. The Mongolian is an arrested infant newly born. (Chambers, 1844, pp. 306-307).

Science also has lent itself to substantiating the religious beliefs that dark-skinned people were inferior. In 1859, Charles Darwin published *Origin of the Species* and according to Smith (1999),

The concept of the survival of the fittest used to explain the evolution of species in the natural world, was applied enthusiastically to the human world. It became a very powerful belief that indigenous peoples were inherently weak and therefore...would die out. (p. 42)

Another concept that has relevance to experiences in racism is eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing emphasis on European (generally Western) concerns, culture and values at the expense of those of other cultures (Ballara, 1986; Consedine & Consedine, 2001; Yensen, Hague & McCreanor, 1989). Its origins and emergence can be traced back in history as the expansion of Europe into America in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed the Spaniards, English and others justifying their encroachments into the Americas, assuming their innate superiority over the 'Native Americans' by virtue of their Christendom (Ballara, 1986). Mapping the cognitive choices that have led to the domination and oppression of indigenous people and their terror and suffering, Henderson (2000) claims the "State of Nature" theory as the prime assumption of modernity (p. 11). This theory involves a "cognitive vantage point that informs European colonialists and justifies modern Eurocentric scholarship and systemic colonization" (Henderson, 2000, p. 11). This idea of difference has created the Eurocentric thought, consciousness and reasoning that justify colonialism not only in New Zealand but also around the world (Henderson, 2000, p. 30).

Colonizers start with the fundamental assumption that their ways are inherently superior to those of the colonized. The histories of indigenous peoples show how colonizers used a racist ideology to maintain their dominance and hegemony (Tauli-Corpuz, 2007). Daes (2000) points out that "a fundamental weapon used by colonizers is to feed colonized peoples with carefully aimed messages convincing them they are backward, ignorant, weak, insignificant, and very, very fortunate to have been colonized" (p. 7). A key point is "at the individual level, colonized people learn to hide their real feelings and sincere beliefs because they have been taught that their feelings and beliefs are evidence of ignorance and barbarity" (Daes, 2000, p.

7). One of the most destructive of the shared experience of colonized peoples around the world is the intellectual and spiritual loneliness; and as Daes points out, a consequence is “a lack of confidence, a fear of action, and a tendency to believe that the ravages and pain of colonization are somehow deserved” (Daes, 2000, p. 7).

Race and colonisation in Aotearoa

Although there are similar characteristics in the pattern of racism that has spread globally, the history of racism against Māori in Aotearoa has its own “peculiarity” (Engerman, 2007, p. 1). Māori too became objects of racial classification similar to Indians and ‘blacks’ in Europe and America. Ballara (1986) quotes Sir John Gorst who made the point about New Zealand in 1864 that:

It is urged that, whenever the brown and white skins come in contact, the former must disappear, and that the old fashion once pursued by our forefathers in the back woods of America was a more merciful, because a more speedy, way of doing the inevitable work than the lingering modern method which has superseded it. (p. 86).

These comments demonstrate that racism and discrimination clearly underpinned the colonization and marginalization of Māori in Aotearoa. Other early Pākehā clearly demonstrated Eurocentrism in their beliefs. For example, the following quote is reflective of the attitude of Pākehā in the early 1840s:

The native race is physically, organically, intellectually and morally, far inferior to the European. No cultivation, no education will create in the mind of the present native race that refinement of feeling, that delicate sensibility and sympathy, which characterize the educated European... the Māori is an inferior branch of the human family. (Southern Cross newspaper editorial, 1844, cited in Ballara, 1986, p.86).

It is suggested that these Eurocentric assumptions justified the historical attempt to create a homogeneous society in New Zealand through assimilation (Ballara, 1986). In the New Zealand context, Ka'ai (2004) states that colonization is a process “brought about by the culmination of political power and social pressure which sees the significant elements of Māori culture undergo a steady cumulative deterioration” (p. 202). New Zealand was annexed at a period when ideologies of the ‘superiority’ of particular races over others were very influential (Johnston & Pihama, 1994). Ballara (1986) claims that the assumptions of Europeans prior to 1840, were influenced by their own intellectual and religious traditions into regarding “all ‘coloured’ peoples as ‘lower’ than themselves by virtue of their nature” (p. 170). Walker (1990) claims the colonization of New Zealand by the British during the era of European expansionism in the nineteenth century was a historic process predicated on assumptions of racial, religious, cultural and technological superiority. The Treaty of Waitangi (1840) between Māori and the Crown was to ensure that “the Crown would protect and guarantee the rights of the chiefs and tribes to their lands, homes and treasured possessions” (Walker, 1990, pp.289-290). The Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 resulted in proclaiming British sovereignty over New Zealand (King, 2000). Yensen (1989) argues that the treaty was used as an instrument of domination and that the Crown has only honoured when and if they furthered the long-range objective of gaining or retaining control. Yensen (1989) continues, “...the Treaty ensured Māori co-operation while Pākehā were still a minority” (Yensen, 1989, p.63). In effect, the Treaty of Waitangi allowed the safe passage of Pākehā settlement in New Zealand.

During the nineteenth century, New Zealand witnessed masses of white settlers immigrating that eventually saw them outnumbering the Māori. Previously European settlement had taken place on Māori terms, with Māori having more control of the process than what was to come (King, 2000). But slowly, in the 1840s, Māori began to realize the extent to which their identity and customs could be swallowed up by this mighty influx of foreigners (King, 2000). The greatest disadvantage Māori people had in coping with the influx of settlers was that they accepted the Treaty, relying on the honesty and honour of the Queen and her representatives and believing that chieftainship of their properties was guaranteed to them unreservedly and with no hidden conditions or reservations (Waitangi Tribunal, 1983). To Māori people, the Treaty was a covenant they stood by (Yensen, 1989). It can be argued that the beliefs, laws and practices of Pākehā that subsequently disempowered Māori have contributed greatly to the legacy of disparities seen today in the areas of health, economic status, education, language and media representation. Many of these disparities can be attributed to institutionalised racism which is defined by Jones (1999) as “differential access to goods, services, opportunities by race” (p. 15). Usually there is no identifiable perpetrator but it is often manifested as inherited disadvantage (Jones, 1999). Institutionalised racism is manifest in material conditions, access to power and societal norms: for example, differential access to sound housing, quality education, employment opportunities and income (Cheung, 2007; Crampton, Salmond & Kirkpatrick, 2004; Howden-Chapman & Tobias, 1999; Jones, 1999; Ministry of Social Development, 2004; “Pakeha couples”, 2002).

Research methods

One of the aims of this research was to give voice to Māori women who are involved in predominantly Pākehā-dominated sporting contexts, so as to begin to understand how racialised thinking influences Māori women’s experiences. It sought to understand further the perspectives of Māori women by conducting semi-structured interviews with five Māori women who live within the Waikato and who affiliate to Tainui. All five women have been and still are heavily involved in their respective sports, which are team ball sports with high Māori participation rates. The participants’ ages ranged from 28 to 65 years old. Due to New Zealand being a relatively small sporting community, retaining the anonymity of the participants was paramount due to their current participation as coaches, players, administrators and/or mothers of up-and-coming athletes. This risk was minimized by changing the names of the participants, and by not naming their sports. While the interviews covered many more issues that are beyond the scope of this article, four key findings are presented.

Finding 1: The dirty word that is racism

The interviews revealed that there exists a developing tension in the minds of some Māori athletes, including their whānau, regarding what seems blatantly obvious to and amongst Māori in sport. It is described as some form of discrimination and it manifests itself in different ways. However, there is a noticeable reluctance to name what is being described in these interviews. As the interviewer, it seemed apparent to me that there was an initial difficulty for the participants in *saying* the word “racism”. They more readily *described* racism in their sporting experiences, what it looked like, and how it felt to be on the receiving end of it, but couldn’t find their way to speaking the word. For example, after one participant described her most memorable experience of discrimination, she explained “So yeah, it [discrimination] was happening back then. I don’t know what you call it” (Alicia). However, in the conversations off-camera and outside the ‘official’ interviews they became more explicit in their perceptions of Māori being discriminated against on the basis of being Māori. For example, I asked Alicia, “If your children were white, would they be in the New Zealand

team? Alicia answered, “*Yes!*” which was similar to Agnes’s answer, “*Course, without a doubt!*”

Attempting to understand any reasons why racism is an inappropriate term, requires at least a brief detour into the discourse of racism in New Zealand. Racism is often marginalised as an explanation in discourse (Cormack, 2006). The use of racism for seemingly obvious unfairness draws a negative reaction from the dominant culture. Criticism is levelled at those speaking out about such a practice in any New Zealand context, given that New Zealand’s reputation overseas often conjures up images of one big happy family of races and cultures harmoniously co-existing. New Zealand has enjoyed the international reputation of tranquil race relations, a country with an exemplary protection of indigenous rights, and complete religious freedom with social and legal egalitarianism (McGuire, 1985; Meijl & Miedema, 2004). The strategy of labelling those who use the word ‘racism’ as ‘stirrers’, ‘radicals’, ‘activists’ or ‘terrorists’ is then used to deny all credence to the identification of racism in New Zealand contexts. What follows is that these labels work to undermine the credibility of the so-called ‘radicals’. For example, Pākehā attribute divisiveness and the collapse of the ‘multiracial harmony’ ideal to the actions of Māori and other groups contesting discriminatory practices (Wetherell & Jones, 1992). This ability to negatively frame attempts to identify and name racism is one of the most pervasive features of contemporary race discourse, and it allows, in New Zealand’s case, “discursive strategies that present negative views of out-groups (Māori) as reasonable and justified while at the same time protecting the speaker from charges of racism and prejudice” (Augustinos & Every, 2007, p. 124).

Consequently, it becomes a social ‘taboo’ that is not spoken about by Māori amongst Pākehā company, perhaps to avoid discomfort and associated anxieties. And so effectively between Māori and Pākehā, it becomes a non-discourse, a non-conversation, with no dialogue and no discussion. Yet as John Minto expresses, “we should not be afraid of conflict, debate or challenges. They are all a necessary part of any societal change and essential to avoid issues festering away out of sight” (2007, ¶ 8). It could be argued that Pākehā have appropriated the language of racism, where Pākehā have shaped the parameters on how and when racism should be discussed. Nevertheless, Camara Jones (1999) comments, “I realise in New Zealand you no longer talk about ‘race’ but about ‘ethnicity’ instead. I would just like to say that even though you don’t mention the word ‘race’ anymore, doesn’t mean that racism no longer exists in New Zealand”(p. 14).

According to Street (2002) who refers to the American context, it is as though New Zealanders are also being conditioned to believe that all the relevant racial barriers have been torn down and that Blacks (and Māori) have no one but themselves to blame for their persistent pain and disproportionate presence at the bottom of America’s and (New Zealand’s) racial hierarchy. That thought lies at the heart of this country’s colour-blind racism, and is at the core of the hesitancy many New Zealanders may feel about speaking openly on race.

This hesitancy was observed in the interviews as the women either appeared to struggle with what could be said and what could be discussed or could not match their experiences of racism with the term racism. It was not until they seemed to realise that it was ‘safe’ to discuss such issues openly that the conversation began to go more deeply into the hurtful and painful lived experiences to which their involvement in sport had exposed them. These included a range of stories that talked about their feelings of anger and frustration that despite being extremely talented, Māori athletes seem to be rejected from selection for ‘weak’ reasons such as not talking enough, lacking confidence or having “attitude”-- reasons the women felt would not stop a Pākehā player being selected. Bambi discussed the feeling of abandonment in reaction to a Māori representative team being left overseas by a Pākehā-dominated national

body when international travel plans (organised by the national body) fell through: *“They didn’t give us enough time to prepare ourselves and they didn’t give us enough information. They put us in positions, put us on the plane, sent us over there and it was sink or swim.”* When I asked, *“Do you think they would’ve done that with a Pākehā team?”* Bambi replied, *“No, they wouldn’t have!”* To my further prompt, *“But it’s ok to do it with a Māori team?”* she responded, *“Because I don’t think they wanted to see us be successful”*.

In any case, the conversations between homogenous groups, such as Māori women about other groups, are intriguing. It must be openly acknowledged that what is said *about* each other is rarely said *to* each other. For example, Agnes makes it clear that she could openly discuss issues of discrimination on the basis of race with other Māori involved in the sport context, *“Like I said, they walk the same lines”*. But when asked if they could discuss them with Pākehā, the three women all spoke at once, *“No, no.”* This was further supported when Gwen was discussing the reaction of a group of Pākehā parents to the success of a predominantly Māori girls’ team. She said, *“It was the most annoying thing. [Pākehā parent] was telling us that “oh they won’t last long, all those Māori girls, they’ll be pregnant.”* Both Gwen and Justine reacted negatively to this view: *“I said ‘whatever...’ That was a stupid thing to say.”* (Gwen) and *“For an adult to say something like that was just stupid.”* (Justine) When asked if the pregnant comment was amongst Pākehā, Justine replied, *“Yeah amongst themselves.”*

The ‘dance’ we do as New Zealanders around each other so as not to offend, masks the reality that New Zealand race relations are not as cosy as we care to admit. Obviously the cultural comfort felt within the same culture also gives permission for members of that culture to speak to the underlying sentiments about racialised thinking. The failure to speak to each other probably is more reflective of the reluctance to confront our history with an open honesty.

Finding 2: “Māori styles”, stereotypes and deficit thinking

While exploring the perceptions that Māori had of Māori athletes during the interview, the participants had clear perceptions that Māori had superior skills and genetic potential for sport in general. For example, *“I guess Māoris, we have natural ability... While stating that “colour doesn’t bother me”* Alicia also said, *“ You see a white person and you see a Māori person, and by far the skills, you can soon see the balance that Māori are more skilful, there’s no two ways about it.”* These beliefs support the dominant ideologies that people of colour (e.g., Māori, Pacific Islanders, Aboriginal, African-American) are more physically skilled than those of white or Pākehā heritage, *“as opposed to being intelligent and/or having a strong work ethic”* (Hokowhitu, 2007, p. 87). Palmer (2007) argues that *“dominant race ideologies that attribute the success (or failure) of ethnic minority athletes to innate and instinctive attributes, by default ignore and discount the influence of training and culture”* (p. 311).

According to James and Saville-Smith (1989), the belief that Māori are privileged in sport is just a strategy to disguise the social disadvantage of ethnic minority groups in New Zealand. So how does racism exclude Māori in what Jones (1999) defines as the *“differential assumptions about the abilities, motives and intents of others by race and the differential actions that follow from these assumptions”* (p. 17)? The participants saw Pākehā coaches as having a limited vision which was not always open to the different skills or styles of Māori players. One participant discussed how she coached differently from Pākehā coaches. From the interviews it appeared that being marked as having a Māori attitude, Māori style or even being described as ‘undisciplined’ could be used as a rationalization for non-selection in sports teams -- as coaches simply act on the stereotypes Pākehā have of Māori athletes. In this context, if the deficit model which sees Māori in negative terms has influenced the way

coaches select their players, then Māori athletes are being made to be the problem (Shields, Bishop & Mazawi, 2005). As one participant said: “...they [Pākehā] have a certain way that they coach, and if those kids don't fall in under that thing, whether they're good players or not, then they'll put them aside, and they'll take ones which they can mould already” (Alicia). The participants share the belief that Māori have their own 'style' of playing sport. This was identified as 'flair' which was then described as, “flair, well they have that extra...” (Agnes) and as “getting them out of themselves and expressing themselves, out there.” (Gwen). Alicia said,

They're good to watch, as opposed to white genes, they're not as nice to watch, it's all structure. Māori can do structure too and look good, where you get a damn ugly (laughing) player that's straight up, not as exciting to watch...They (Pākehā) took longer to develop, the Māori already had the skills and the basics there.

The interviews suggest that many Māori athletes have had to face a dilemma. To 'flair', or not to 'flair'? – that is the question. One of the participants expressed a frustration at the reluctance of coaches at national level to use a style of play that suits Māori athleticism: a style that utilises a range of skills and ability to make decisions producing 'outstandingness'. Their reluctance seems to confuse Alicia who questioned why some talented Māori athletes who display a wider range and depth of skills than their Pākehā counterparts are not selected for representative teams at regional or national level. She reasons: “Sometimes I've heard the comments that Māoris are hard to coach because they're not disciplined, they want to do their own thing...they [Pākehā coaches] say that they're not used to their structure” and “um... I think maybe they feel Māori are a threat” (Alicia).

Perhaps the model of 'fitting people into a system' could be modified into a system that is modelled around the athletes' skill, abilities and vision. How can a sport know the heights of where it could be, if it does not utilise all its resources available to it? It is contended that if the New Zealand teams in the sports being discussed by the participants chose their best players, then the outcome would be greater success.

Finding 3: The Treaty, power and sport

Many critics of New Zealand history and the discussions around The Treaty of Waitangi labelled the relationship between Māori and Pākehā as being paternalistic, with the senior partner being Pākehā. It can be argued that The Treaty of Waitangi may have set a precedent for Māori-Pākehā relations where Pākehā have assumed in theory and practice that they are deserving of the senior partner role and that Māori become the junior partner by default (O'Sullivan, 2007). And so, in the sport context, “the less powerful groups come to accept that the differences in levels of power and economic wealth within a society are natural and just, and so will consent to the rule of their 'betters'” (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000, p. 48).

Māori in power-positions: Coaching and administration

One of the points made in Poia Rewi's report (1992) is the low percentage of Māori involved with administration and coaching in sport. This finding was further supported by the participants when asked if Māori were in decision-making positions: “No, no. Nah, they're just players. Yeah, that's where we need to get in, that admin” (Agnes) and “That's where we need to get, in the top. We've noticed that, so we need people in there” (Gwen). The power base being firmly held by Pākehā in society generally would suggest that Pākehā are also in control of the levers of power in sport. There are not enough Māori making decisions regardless of the high level of participation by Māori as athletes. Māori seem to be missing in substantial numbers that would affect representation in key functionary positions such as

coaches at national level, selectors, officials, administrators at board level. Although Jordan (1980) speaks in the American context, the scenario is comparable in New Zealand. Because of the prejudices of 'Whites' that predetermine 'Blacks' to be lacking in sound judgement, and decision-making ability 'Blacks' tend to be under-represented in 'central positions' (i.e. those that necessitate social interaction, group acceptability, coordinate tasks, and decision-making) (Jordan, 1980).

The issue of a racial hierarchy in power was woven throughout the interviews. The overarching power of the dominant culture was felt by Māori participants along with a frustration. For example, when asked who Alicia gets upset at, she replied, "*Those that have the empowerment to choose as they please*". All of the women identified the unequal positioning of Māori and Pākehā throughout the sports hierarchy. However, the participants were also aware that Māori worked hard, often as volunteers, behind-the-scenes to ensure the sport was successful. Yet this work seemed not to translate into decision-making positions afforded to Māori: "*You do have Māori in there but they're not the decision-makers*" (Alicia) and "*Admittedly in a lot of areas it is Pākehā, but behind that Pākehā is probably two or three really good Māori who have been supporting them all the way through*" (Baby).

The existing power structure is seen as privileging Pākehā because they are already in positions of power: a situation which is made worse by what the participants see another element of the selection process, at least in one sport:

Just because it's so- and- so's daughter on the committee. It used to run like that, 'Oh my daughter's on the committee. Therefore, I should get in' or 'my father's the big sponsor for [team].... so I'll get in the rep team'. It used to run like that. That's bullshit, bullshit. (Agnes)

These experiences raise questions about whether Māori in sport should cease hoping for benevolent Pākehā to share their power under a true partnership rather than the dominant culture's current idea of partnership – the illusion of inclusion. A strategy discussed by Agnes, Gwen and Justine of encouraging Māori into coaching clinics, sharing information from seminars and sports board or committee meetings may be an interesting step in claiming a form of representation that is meaningful and successful for athletes in the near future.

Finding 4: The scam, sham and shame of representative sport

The results of this research and wider reading suggest that the so-called liberating potential of sport that supposedly offers contemporary consolation from the pervasiveness of racism is a sham. To believe that people "irrespective of their color or background can compete in an open system where talent is *the* determinant of success" (Jordan, 1980, p. 447) is deception. Taking this view further leads to the burning question of whether the best athletes, coaches or administrators are being chosen in the sports with which these Māori women are involved. The selection processes in the sports discussed is believed by the participants to cater more to a team that is left with the best of those that can afford to pay financially for what is required. Thus the additional financial element may further marginalise Māori who are more likely to face economic barriers, as Rewi (1992) reports, in a study of Tainui physical activity, of the 74% respondents who believed that Māori faced barriers which limit their involvement in sports or physical activities, "almost all stated that the cost associated with participating in organised sport was the main barrier" (p. 59).

Having considered the barrier of cost for Māori to participate in sport and aspire to achieve, I ask if the benefits are worth it for Māori women in sport. What does representative sport have to offer and whom does it really serve? Is it just about sport? What is at stake here? For Pākehā, is it another opportunity to assert their dominance in whatever form it takes (e.g.,

selectors' subjective decisions overriding good sense and displaying apparently blatant discrimination yet offering 'logical' reasons for not selecting Māori players). Is this just reflective of the way society is and part of the tensions that have existed in New Zealand society? That is the scam, sham and shame of representative sport for these Māori women.

Conclusion

This study reveals the shared belief by five Māori women that sport has not been and is still not a level playing field. From the level of an athlete through the levels of coaching, and including administration, there remains a barrier that can only be described as racial discrimination. Should there be a call for coaches to expand their own skill set as an exciting possibility that may open up a new frontier in sport psychology that is able to 'roll' with the Māori and/or Polynesian psyche instead of requiring the Māori/Polynesian to get some 'discipline' and fall into line? A possibility for a new paradigm may include such an approach if New Zealand sport is to compete better on the international stage.

Although there remains difficulty in dealing with the uncomfortable topic that is racism, to avoid doing so is to force it 'underground'. It is hoped therefore, that these findings add to our understanding and assist in facilitating positive transformation of this aspect of life in Aotearoa.

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