

Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty:

**Thoughts on Existence and
Resistance in Racist Times**

Edited by Holly Randell-Moon

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Antipode

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Introduction

Holly Randell-Moon

This booklet responds to the current and ongoing histories of the incarceration of Indigenous peoples, migrants, and communities of colour. One of its key aims is to think about how prisons and their institutional operations are not marginal to everyday spaces, social relations, and politics. Rather the complex set of practices around policing, detaining, and building and maintaining prisons and detention centres are intimately connected to the way we understand space and place, how we understand ourselves and our families in relation to categories of criminal or innocent, and whether we feel secure or at home in the country we reside.

Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty: Thoughts on Existence and Resistance in Racist Times was born out of many questions and conversations we have had about whether practices of detention and incarceration of communities of colour and Indigenous peoples are connected. If they are, how can we understand, organise, and support criminal justice reform and abolitionist (the abolishment of prisons) advocacy across these lines of solidarity? Consequently, *Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty* brings together different perspectives on the detention of migrants, refugees, and Indigenous peoples and discusses how the detention of these communities is reflective of state practices of violence against peoples of colour. Contributors also provide a wider historical and geographical context for the settler colonisation of Australia, the Pacific, and Aotearoa and how this effects the movement of communities and families within these spaces and territories.

The idea for *Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty* was to create a space in which different conversations about the struggle around carceral politics and practices could take place. We hope the booklet prompts discussion and thinking about some of the tensions or complexities in refugee advocacy by Pākehā (non-Māori New Zealanders) and non-Indigenous people when they welcome new migrants to a country that is not their own, or how to think about social justice beyond the temporality of a short-lived “welcome”. Overall, *Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty* seeks to situate contemporary carceral practices and the increasing use of detention to manage people as they move across borders within settler colonial histories of the internal policing and imprisonment of Indigenous peoples – where exercising sovereignty has and continues to be linked to criminality under settler state law.

Who is this resource for?

Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty was created for educational purposes to assist community organisers, educators, students, and advocates involved in anti-racist, decolonial, and abolitionist work. It is primarily designed to address the intersections of this work and advocacy based on the understanding that the incarceration of communities of colour, migrants, refugees, and Indigenous peoples share intersections through the racism bought about by settler colonialism. There are four key terms used throughout this booklet that help us to understand these intersections: **Settler**

colonialism; Decoloniality; Racism; and Abolition.

Settler colonialism is an “inherently eliminatory” “land-centred project that coordinates a comprehensive range of agencies” to destroy Indigenous societies and remove their presence from country (Wolfe, 2006, p. 387, 393). What distinguishes settler colonialism from colonialism is “the long-run structural consistency” of settlers’ attempts at legal, social, and political permanence (p. 402). Australia and New Zealand share many of the same symbols of British Christian settler permanence in their allegiance to the British Crown, the presence of the Union Jack or the Royal Union Flag in their national flags, Christian public holidays (based on the Gregorian calendar), and the Preamble to the Australian Constitution contains a reference to unifying the colonies into one country under “the blessing of Almighty God” and New Zealand’s national anthem is entitled “God Defend New Zealand.” While these symbols of British Christian culture have emerged from migration, British Christian culture is rarely named as migrant or ethnic in dominant Australian and New Zealand society. “Ethnicity” or “race” are usually applied to Indigenous peoples or non-white migrants. This is because British Christian or Anglo-Celtic settlers are not framed as migrant on the basis of their “replacement” of Indigenous peoples (Wolfe, 2006). That is, they are the “normal” population against which racial and ethnic others are distinguished. This is how settler colonialism is an enduring and continuous process – a whole range of legal institutions and social structures work to present settler migrants as somehow always belonging to a territory, as if this is a “settled” matter.

Decolonial approaches to a nation’s history and culture attempt to make visible

the settler colonial structures, values, and knowledge that make settler migrants and their ancestors the normal and dominant group in society. As Nelson Maldonado-Torres notes, “Decolonial thinking has existed since the very inception of modern forms of colonization” (2011, p. 1). This thinking has been practised by a diverse group of Indigenous and minority communities to challenge colonisation and its cultural and social effects. Decolonial thinking can be applied to the removal of monuments and names that efface the history of local and Indigenous communities, the history and education taught in a society, or ways of organising and running institutions. One of the key aims of decolonisation is to emphasise the epistemological effects of colonialism and imperialism. Here epistemology refers to not only what we know but how we know what we know. For instance, European and Western histories promote the idea that freedom, scientific progress, and civilisation were developed during the Enlightenment period. But these ideas can only be known if the histories of slavery, colonial genocide, and the theft of Indigenous lands are ignored and excluded. Decolonial thinking is then a method or way of approaching knowledge. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, in order to avoid perpetuating colonising structures, it is important “to decolonize our minds” (2012, p. 63) and work with and from Indigenous and marginalised knowledges. Speaking at the *Space, Race, Bodies II* event, held at the University of Otago in 2016, Moana Jackson commented on the colonial ways of thinking that inform dominant views of Indigenous sovereignty.

I’m not aware, at any time, the King of England waking up and say “ohh I don’t want to be King of England anymore, I’ll go and ask the King of

France to make all our decisions.” Yet we’ve been taught to believe, that on the 6th of February 1840, every Māori in the country suddenly woke up and said “we don’t want to make our own decisions anymore; we’re going to ask a fat lady in London we’ve never met to make them for us.” (in Jackson, Brown-Davis & Sykes, 2016)

What Jackson articulates here, is how absurd it is to think that a society would cede sovereignty to someone they have never met or to a system that would replace their own. And yet, this colonial way of thinking and knowing Indigenous sovereignty persists in countries founded through settler colonisation.

One of the most violent and pernicious forms of knowledge that came out of colonialism and imperialism is the idea of **race** and using it to categorise and distinguish between groups of people. A key effect of settler colonialism is the process of **racialisation** – making non-white migrants into ethnic communities defined by race. “Race” was historically invented to explain the supposed biological inferiority of groups thought to be less evolved than the European and Caucasian race (see Stoler, 2002). While race as a biological trait has been scientifically debunked, **racism** and the application of race to groups persist. Racialisation refers to the construction of groups and individuals as having behaviours, cultural practices, or appearances linked to or explained by race (see Omi & Winant, 2015).

Typically, white people do not see themselves as a racial group or with racial characteristics and appearance. Race is usually ascribed to non-white communities in order to distinguish them from the dominant white culture. The effects of racialisation in this way create inequality. “The claim to power

is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can’t do that – they can only speak for their race” (Dyer, 1997, p. 2). People who belong to a racial group are therefore likely to be stereotyped – linked to a common set of ideas, for instance, X people are lazy, Y are good at mathematics, and Z people are greedy. Negative stereotypes associated with racial communities can have a detrimental impact on self-esteem and health and educational opportunities (see Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman & Stone, 2008; Leavitt, Covarrubias, Perez & Fryberg, 2015). In her seminal book on prisons and racism in North America, Ruth Wilson Gilmore explains, “Racism ... is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (2007, p. 28). Her research shows that being “raced” and categorised within a racial minority means being subject to significant inequalities, including incarceration and violence.

It is important to distinguish between **racism** and **racialisation**. The former describes deliberate acts of discrimination against persons or communities on the basis of a perceived racial inferiority. Racialisation refers to the construction of persons and communities as “raced” or “ethnic”. While its effects are discriminatory and create inequalities, not everyone who is involved in racialisation is intentionally racist. For instance white people who are not racialised as ethnic benefit from this process by not being stereotyped and treated as an individual. White people do not have to be deliberately racist therefore to be involved in racialisation and its discriminatory effects. Similarly Anglo-Celtic or white people with British settler ancestry do not have to be intentionally racist to nevertheless benefit from the social structures and institutions that work to portray them

as the dominant and normal population. For Australian citizens like me, who have Irish and British settler ancestors, I do not need to identify as “ethnic” or take special care to preserve my language and culture as public holidays and state and government institutions operate according to my ethnic-linguistic background, as if this background is normal and non-migrant.

Because of the structural connections between racialisation, racism, and inequality, it is no coincidence that Indigenous activists and scholars, as well as people of colour, are frequently the most critical of prison systems. Many of these researchers have pointed out the historical continuities between strategies of segregation, containment and punishment on Indigenous peoples in the early phases of settler colonialism (see Wadiwel, 2007) to the record-high rates of Indigenous incarceration today. In addition, contemporary practices of detainment with respect to peoples of colour, migrants, and asylum seekers further advance processes of racialisation and racial exclusion. Incarceration and detention does not affect all groups in society equally. Statistics from Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, North America and Canada, routinely show how people of colour and Indigenous peoples are over-represented at all levels of the criminal justice system in terms of arrest, conviction, and detention rates (see Department of Corrections, 2017; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016; Nellis, 2016; Reitano, 2015/2016). However these statistics should not be read as indicators of crime rather they illustrate Gilmore’s argument about institutions and social practices that expose racialised communities to premature death. As abolitionists argue, imprisonment is a systemic practice that goes beyond a simple response to crime; otherwise the rates of imprisonment would be

consistent with crime rates when the latter is declining and the former is increasing.

Other activist and scholarly work has pointed to the over-representation of Indigenous peoples and communities of colour in prison systems as tied to the maintenance of privatised security and surveillance economies (see Sudbury, 2002; Golash-Boza, 2009; Behrendt, Cunneen & Libesman, 2009). That is, the tools and technologies of surveillance and detention required for security and police institutions are part of a hugely profitable industry. This creates an imperative to keep arresting and detaining individuals. This is why prisons are often described as being part of a prison industrial complex. Using this term helps to draw attention to the broader economic, political, and social factors that sustain the need for prisons rather than simplistically explaining them as the result of rising “crime”. Angela Davis has argued that the transference of prison responsibilities from public and state institutions to private companies is problematic because the latter rely on a steady stream of prisoners in order to keep this system going.

[Work] which used to be the primary province of government, is now also performed by private corporations, whose links to government in the field of what is euphemistically called “corrections” resonate dangerously with the military industrial complex. The dividends that accrue from investment in the punishment industry, like those that accrue from investment in weapons production, only amount to social destruction. Taking into account the structural similarities and profitability of business-government linkages in the realms of military production and public punishment, the expanding penal

system can now be characterized as a “prison industrial complex.” (n.d.)

Prison **abolitionists** argue for abolishing prisons because they consistently target those most affected by racial, gender and class oppression; extend and reproduce harm (rather than address it); perpetuate ongoing inequalities and racisms for not only those who are imprisoned but their family members and friends; and they frequently isolate and harm imprisoned people without addressing the structural issues that contribute to crime in the first place (see Cullen, Jonson & Nagin, 2011; deVuono-powell, Schweidler, Walters & Zohrabi, 2015; Coyle, Fair, Jacobson & Walmsley, 2016; Russell & Carlton, 2013). One of the key challenges for abolitionists is epistemological and decolonial. That is, prisons seem so ingrained in our ways of thinking about responding to harm that it is difficult, as Angela Davis comments (2003), to think or imagine alternatives to this system.

How was this resource created and organised?

The contributions to *Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty* emerged from an academic and activist symposium entitled, *Space, Race, Bodies II: Sovereignty and Migration in a Carceral Age*, held at the University of Otago, May 6-8, 2016. As explained earlier, the aim of this event was to centre questions of Indigenous sovereignty to discussions and advocacy for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in the context of detention and prison practices.

The symposium was the second in a series of *Space, Race, Bodies* events where our aim is to draw attention to the importance of race and embodiment to geography. Space is typically abstracted from bodies and lived experience in ways that reinforce dominant

state and colonial formations of power. As Jacinta Ruru notes, it was “upon declaring the lived homes of Indigenous peoples ‘space’ that colonial governments successfully overlaid their laws and rules on Indigenous place” (2008, p. 105). Imagining a space without bodies, or imagining that space is not racialised, is how racism, violence, and their effects on people in places become invisible. Audio and video recordings as well as other resources arising from these events are available at: www.spaceracebodies.com

Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty is self-published by the editor with institutional support from the University of Otago and funding from the Antipode Foundation. The contributors to this volume write from a range of geographical and national spaces and their contributions have been published in the language in which they were submitted. In order to reach a wide audience, English is the main language of the contributions. The predominant use of this language is not meant to imply an inherent hierarchy of English above others. In reproducing the publishing conventions of settler colonial countries, the editor acknowledges that using English as the main language for speaking across these spaces contains numerous contradictions and limitations. In acknowledging this problematic aspect, we hope the booklet nevertheless encourages an inclusive dialogue and debate about the issues raised in each contribution.

The contributions have been organised into three sections: *Sovereignty: Struggles and Solidarities*, *Prison and Beyond*, and *Belonging and Sovereignty*. The first section features a contribution from Teanau Tuiono, who discusses the violent surveillance and management of Indigenous and Pasifika communities when they exercise sovereignty and self-determination over issues such

as the criminal justice system and climate change. The second section featuring Emmy Räkete, Fadak Alfayadh, Crystal McKinnon, and Emma Russell examines the challenges of working with communities affected by detention and prison practices and the need to consider the intersectional dimensions of incarceration – in terms of how the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and sexuality differently position and affect people’s treatment within carceral institutions. In the final section, Marie Laufiso, Suzanne Menzies-Culling, and Michelle Schaaf provide a historical education of the roles settler colonisation, migration, and Indigenous sovereignty have on different communities and their sense of belonging to the nation. While each contributor brings their own perspective and expertise to the topic at hand, it is hoped that readers find many points of similarity across the contributions or find the differing perspectives productive for stimulating thinking and activity around criminal justice, prison abolition, and refugee advocacy.

Conclusion

In bringing together contributions on migration, the prison industrial complex, refugee rights, and Indigenous sovereignty, *Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty* aims to highlight how the movement of people and communities in and out of spaces such as a country, a city, a town, or an institution is affected by racism and racialisation. It’s important to highlight race and racism in order to understand the effects of discrimination and inequality. As social psychologists Stephanie A. Fryberg and Nicole M. Stephens note, “colorblindness reflects the perspectives of majority groups in society, but does not reflect the perspectives of underrepresented racial-ethnic minorities”

(2010, p. 115). In their social science research, they find “that denying or ignoring the consequences of race does not make them cease to exist; rather, in many cases, it can serve to maintain or even amplify them” (p. 118). We hope that by identifying the connections between settler colonialism, migration, and incarceration, that the racisms sustaining these connections can also be acknowledged, examined, and challenged.

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Resources

Many of the contributions featured in this booklet provide helpful guides and information for further reading and education on settler colonialism, migration, refugee rights, Indigenous sovereignty, and the prison industrial complex. Below are some additional resources which provide an introduction to these topics:

Dunbar-Ortiz, R. (2015). *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press

Independent Iwi Working Group on Constitutional Transformation. (2016, January). *He Whakaaro Here Whakaumu Mō Aotearoa: The Report of Matike Mai Aotearoa – The Independent Working*

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If you would like to access these research resources, or any of the sources listed in the contributions, but are unable to, please contact space.race.bodies@otago.ac.nz and we will work out an arrangement to provide them.

SOVEREIGNTY:
STRUGGLES AND SOLIDARITIES

Erasing lines, dismantling borders: Rethinking Pacific borders in the context of colonization

Teana Tuiono

Whakapapa: (noun) genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent – reciting whakapapa was, and is, an important skill and reflected the importance of genealogies in Māori society in terms of leadership, land and fishing rights, kinship and status. It is central to all Māori institutions. (John C. Moorfield, Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary)

It's 2015 and I'm sitting in the Akapuanga Hall in Porirua – we are celebrating 50 years of the Cook Islands becoming a country. My father who was born on the island of Atiu in the Cook Islands a few years after the end of World War 2 is older than the country that bore him. The lines that demarcate the Cook Islands owe its inception to New Zealand's colonial activity in the Pacific in the early 20th century. Along with rounding up young men from the Cook Islands and Niue to serve the British Empire in a war that had nothing to do with them, New Zealand also occupied German Samoa. This was an occupation so insidious in its racist incompetence that it resulted in the death of twenty two percent of the population. In 2002 Helen Clark apologised on behalf of New Zealand for those deaths and the shootings in Apia in December 1929 of non-violent protesters by New Zealand police. At least nine people died, including Tupua Tamasese Lealofioana III, and fifty were injured.

The colonial imperatives of yesteryear still send ripples into our present tides. Last year Ioane Teitiota, a self-identified climate change refugee was imprisoned here in Aotearoa, where he had sought refugee status after fleeing his home on Kiribati.

Teitiota's ability to stay or not stay in the country is dependent upon those lines drawn around our Pacific nations. The government ultimately deported Teitiota back to Kiribati. These issues will become more pronounced as displaced Pacific communities head to Aotearoa for sanctuary as sea levels continue to rise in the Pacific, due to climate change caused in no small part by western countries like New Zealand.

These colonial lines that carve up the Pacific, determine who can go where and when for how long, and who needs a visa and who doesn't. They determine who can enter New Zealand as a migrant and who has to do legal acrobatics to qualify as a refugee. If you are from a white western country it is easier to enter the country than for many of our Pacific whānau that sit right on our doorstep. "Opening the borders" is not as simple as removing an arbitrary line on a map in a land locked place like Europe because we are surrounded by the largest ocean on the planet. In order to migrate here, particularly from outside of the Pacific, requires privilege. This is something boatloads of refugees do not have.

“*These issues will become more pronounced as displaced Pacific communities head to Aotearoa for sanctuary as sea levels continue to rise in the Pacific, due to climate change caused in no small part by western countries like New Zealand.*”

“

Being grounded in place and community along with understanding the history of the place in which you stand is the beginning of this connection.

If the lines that demarcate national borders prompt questions of separation and disconnection, then any answer must be based on values that are in opposition to separation. They should view the world as it could be, not only decolonising our thinking about spaces but also reindigenising our ideas and practices. The tapestry of history between Māori and the rest of the Pacific has been woven over centuries of interactions and pushes directly against those lines.

For me this history is encapsulated in the idea of whakapapa – not just of how we are genealogically connected but also how our struggles are connected too. How we see ourselves reflected in other people helps to build solidarity between movements. These are the things that should determine who is allowed to come and go into Aotearoa.

Being grounded in place and community along with understanding the history of the place in which you stand is the beginning of this connection. Having that history breathe in a way that cannot be ignored by the mainstream political institutions ensures that the struggles connected to those spaces continue to live.

For me this started with family. On the one hand I'm a first generation Pacific Islander in Aotearoa: my family migrated here from the islands for work and educational opportunities. I am also Tangata Whenua, Māori from Ngāi Takato and Ngāpuhi with connections throughout the Tai Tokerau including Ngāti Hine.

Within our own communities we are the norm. Understanding the whakapapa

connections and distinctions both in genealogical terms and colonial histories is something intuitive to many of us who are both Pasifika and Māori. Navigating how you interact with the majority (white) culture is something that you must learn as a minority and sometimes the manifestation of that navigation may differ depending on whether, for example, you are a migrant or an indigenous person. My Pacific Island grandfather would tell me stories about when he first came to NZ, and how tricky it was because he could not speak English well. My Māori mother would tell me about the times that she would get whacked at school for speaking Māori and how they forced her to speak English. She subsequently lost her birth language.

Viewing life through this bicultural lens helped me focus my understanding on what it means to be rooted to this place, Aotearoa, the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Tino Rangatiratanga. The struggle for Tino Rangatiratanga is part of a long tradition of resistance against colonisation and the Crown sponsored theft of Māori land and resources is part of the international movement of indigenous peoples' drive for self-determination. Such a concept also embraces the spiritual link Māori have with Papatūānuku.

In the mid-1990s, like many young people, I had no kids or a fixed job nor a car or even a license to drive it. I would hitchhike around the motu and spend time at wānanga, protests, and also land occupations. Those occupations that had engaged communities behind them with an organised paepae and kauta got the most momentum. They had organisers who knew how to speak past the mainstream media (who were often hostile), and utilised Māori media who tended to be more informed about Māori issues and

could at least pronounce our names properly.

It is 1995 and Whanganui iwi assert their mana motuhake at Pākaitore¹ by taking over what was then known as Moutoa gardens. If you had been there before it was just your average park, pruned trees, garden paths. The park was adorned with a statue commemorating colonist John Ballance. The statue did not last the tenure of the occupation. The occupation transformed the park into a marae setting, complete with whareniui and waharoa. The most tense moments are looped on TV and fuelled by racist commentary on talkback radio, creating discomfort for an already willfully ignorant mainstream population. On March 30, 1995 the occupiers of Pākaitore are given a deadline to leave. A sense of hope hangs in the air like electricity. Support swarms in from all over the country and because of the large numbers in favour of the occupation the deadline passes without police action.

Fast forward 10 years later to 2005 and I'm dropping a friend's car off in Ruatoki who is doing law work for the claim there. A pōwhiri for the hearing is scheduled for that day. When I pull into the valley on that road from Taneatua and park up my car I feel like I've stepped back in time.² The tribunal is riding a horse-drawn carriage across the 19th century land confiscation line.

They are greeted by protesters on horseback. Bonfires and overturned cars line the main road with art depicting fallen warriors. Gun shots are fired into the sky. At the marae Tame Iti shoots what appears to be the NZ Flag – and those 5 seconds of footage are instantly on media repeat for the next week.

These types of actions disrupt the everyday use of space, they transform a seemingly ordinary space into something that speaks deeply to the history of those locations. They breathe life into the history of those spaces. The media spectacle may play out on television screens outraging mainstream audiences across the nation. But those who can see beyond the spectacle understand that there are deeper issues at play. Issues predicated on the brutal history of colonisation and dispossession of Māori land. Issues that sometimes only get traction if the mainstream is provoked out of its rugby fuelled lethargy and a willful amnesia around issues of importance to Māori. Our actions should always make power and the good consciences of those in power uncomfortable.

I look forward to building solidarity in the spirit of mutual respect of each other's struggles.

“*Our actions should always make power and the good consciences of those in power uncomfortable.*”

1 Young, D. (2015, February 10). Whanganui tribes – The 20th century. *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/photograph/2193/the-pakaitore-moutoa-gardens-protest>

2 Indymedia. (2005, January 9). The Ruatoki valley blazes as Tuhoe stands tall. *Indymedia*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from: <http://archive.indymedia.org.nz/article/72141/ruatoki-valley-blazes-tuhoe-stands-tall.html>

PRISON AND BEYOND



Dismantling the Detention Industrial Complex

Fadak Alfayadh

This piece will reflect on ways of dismantling and decolonising the detention industrial complex from the perspective of a refugee advocate.

RISE Refugees opposes all forms of mandatory detention, irrespective of how much it is justified – whether politically, economically or philosophically – or if it is a short period of time. The struggle between abolition of the system altogether against implementing reforms to benefit refugees and asylum seekers, is an ongoing challenge. There are times when we have to work with and within these systems in order to ensure the safety and non-detainment of members of our refugee community. It may mean that we have to visit members in detention or engage with the methods of appeal available to those seeking asylum – in other words, become involved in the processes we challenge, to implement change.

Working alongside the Indigenous Struggle

Within our work, we recognise, respect and aim to continuously support the struggles of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. The Indigenous community has been the first to struggle against racism in Australia and their work is solid and on-going. The refugee movement is one of self-determination and survival, and so cannot be likened to the colonial invasion of Australia by the British. Unlike the invading colonialist forces, refugees are seeking protection on this land and escaping persecution. As the Indigenous communities in Australia (and New Zealand) continue to face genocide, rape, murder, violence and forced displacement, people seeking asylum

are escaping similar atrocities. Further, the same forces that invaded these lands, the British colonial forces, have invaded many of the countries asylum seekers originate from. It is then the colonial powers that also dictate who is able to come to Australia and who is able to stay and live in Australia. Therefore, it is evident that the structures of Imperialism continue until today even in so-called “post-colonial” times. These power structures continue to define and control borders, including who can and cannot cross these borders safely. For someone working within the framework of refugee advocacy, it is evident that the movement between borders is racialised.

That is why it is a historical moment for the First Nations Peoples in Australia to recognise the plight of asylum seekers and grant them First Nations passports. Events such as this highlights Aboriginal Sovereignty over Australia and that it is Aboriginal recognition of asylum seekers that supersedes the colonial ruler’s detainment of refugees. That is, although colonial authorities in Australia impose mandatory detention on those seeking asylum in Australia, the Indigenous community welcomes refugees and has granted them with the most crucial document a citizen would need. In turn, asylum seekers who receive these passports are recognising the Indigenous community as the primary authority on the nation. As refugees and asylum seekers, we have recognised that it is the Indigenous community who decides who can come to and stay in Australia, which for all is a victorious occurrence.

Much of the work in the refugee reform and activist sector in Melbourne largely

ignores the past and the on-going struggle of the Indigenous community towards decolonising the land. What existed before the colonial powers settled in Australia must lead the focus of our work. RISE aims to bring a different and unique approach to the reform in the refugee sector where we continuously are engaging with the Indigenous community and exist on this land on their terms.

Abolition of Detention

The movement of RISE Refugees is to abolish the detention of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia altogether regardless of how short the detainment period is or the justifications behind it. This movement is unlike no other and is often seen to be a radical one due to the “common sense” idea of the necessity of the detainment of asylum seekers and refugees. Complete and grassroots abolishment of the imprisonment of asylum seekers and refugees should be the focus of all refugee organisations and activists. It is hard to envision the non-detainment of asylum seekers arriving to Australia, because it has become so deeply ingrained within our political sphere and our national culture.

One of the many ways politicians control the rhetoric around asylum seekers is by utilising and instilling the fear of Islamophobia and terrorism. For decades now, politicians in this country have used this fear in order to legitimise administrative detention of refugees. There have been record numbers of refugees deported back to the very horrors they ran away from due to classified adverse Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) assessments that have deemed them to be a risk to Australians. With assessments like these, the applicant has no right to reapply, appeal the decision or find out the reason for their rejection. Through Islamophobic fears, the government

succeeds in making some form of mandatory detention acceptable in society, until the “security checks” and “health checks” for asylum seekers are cleared. These checks are imposed on every asylum seeker or refugee who enters Australia. A health check is regular upon arrival and is usually done prior to or as soon as asylum seekers are detained. Security checks meanwhile are more tedious and if an asylum seeker or refugee fails the security check, they are immediately rejected. A failure to meet the security clearance would not only guarantee a rejection, but the applicant is not even informed of the reason for the rejection. It also means that they would not be able to appeal against the decision or be able to provide evidence that is contrary to the finding. Moreover, these checks do not exist for those migrating from “Western” nations, which only points to the fact that there is a fear of races that are not white. The methods of controlling refugees are evidently rooted in racism and the fear of black and brown bodies as well as the desire to control and confine them.

Vying against detention systems is a tedious task because it calls for the abolishment of systems that are backed by society, political parties as well as large corporations. This is a difficult task to achieve as we are calling for the abolition of systems that have existed for decades. Systems of detention have become so commonplace that the fight against them is almost unwinnable. Even the most sympathetic and humanitarian of political parties demand some form of mandatory detention to all those entering Australia on a humanitarian basis. Protecting Australians from diseases and from terrorism has been the argument for imprisoning and detaining asylum seekers. This is tragically ironic as people imprisoned in detention systems suffer dramatic mental, sexual, and physical

abuse. Irrespective of their sex and age, all detainees are affected by the system of detention and the consequences of imprisonment follow them all the way out of detention and for the rest of their lives. The effects of detention are stark. There are however inequalities within these systems. Women, children, and queer and trans people are at times victimised more than the other detainees. All women inside detention fear rape and sexual assault. Large numbers of detained women have in fact been sexually assaulted or raped by those who are employed in the centre, whether they be guards or personnel contracted by security companies. People who are queer also face discrimination due to the backgrounds of some of the other detainees. They are then subjected to social isolation and are shunned amongst others in the centre, which further adds to the decline of their mental health.

Overall, the abolition of detention centres should take place as soon as possible and all those who are currently detained should be instantly released into the community. Meanwhile, their claims for asylum should be processed whilst they are in the community enjoying rights to education, healthcare, welfare, housing, and employment. Asylum seekers and refugees should not be imprisoned and treated like criminals as they are coming here to seek protection and so must be welcomed and offered assistance.

Recommendations

There should be safe passages created and implemented by each country that receives refugees. This would ensure that people would not take risky journeys on unseaworthy boats and there would be no deaths at sea. Safe passages should accompany processing methods of asylum claims that are completed in an urgent and timely manner considering

Those working in the refugee sector must give the space and respect to those of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds first and foremost. People from our community should be listened when policies are created and implemented.

the plight of those seeking protection. These claims should be processed with full consideration of the necessity for protection the applicant is seeking and therefore should be granted immediately. Efficient and humane processes like these would ensure that people do not risk their lives seeking protection. Such processes are much more effective than the current Australian government's policy of turning back boats of asylum seekers or detaining them.

Those working in the refugee sector must give the space and respect to those of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds first and foremost. People from our community should be listened when policies are created and implemented. In addition to consultation regarding legislation that affects us, we should also be consulted in media and academic representation and our voices should not be silenced, pushed aside, or disregarded. Currently, this is how we are treated and it should cease.

Beyond Walls and Cages: Dismantling Detention and Prison

*Emmy Rākete, Fadak Alfayadh, Crystal McKinnon and Emma Russell*¹

Space, Race, Bodies II workshop, 7 May 2016

This is an edited version of a kaupapa that brought together refugee and anti-prison activists from three different organisations: No Pride in Prisons (Aotearoa), RISE and Flat Out (Melbourne, Australia).² It was designed to interrogate the links and tensions between systems of offshore detention and domestic incarceration including how gender, race, sexuality and Indigeneity shape their operations but also how resistant movements can mobilise these categories in efforts to bring them down. It aimed to build solidarity and forge greater connections between refugee, Indigenous, and anti-prison movements.

Emmy Rākete (ERĀ): Kia ora, so ko Emere ahau, I'm a second or third generation urban Māori from Tamaki Makaurau, ko Ngāpuhi tōku iwi. I've been involved in left-leaning activism for a while but two years ago being Māori and transgender and a lesbian, seeing that there was going to be cops and screws marching in my Pride parade, I got together all of my friends as quickly as I could and we started to work out a response to this use of our space and our kaupapa to cover up the modern spearhead of genocide in this country. It went really badly; I got my arm broken by a security guard. But since then, it's been going really well. It turns out, if you have more than three people for a direct action,

they tend to go a lot better. Who would have thought?! At Pride this year, we had 300 people show up and that's 100 times more people. I'm expecting 30 000 to show up next year if we're following this trend.

I work directly with incarcerated trans women when I can, which isn't as often as I'd like, but I do phone calls and coordinate letter writing. I try to get material support for these women: money if they need it, legal aid if I can swing it, which is also difficult. Generally, I'm trying to do whatever it takes to help, which is improving conditions – and that's important and good – but also, to destroy the institution that makes these situations actually happen in the first place. Otherwise we're running around putting out fires while we're on fire, and it doesn't work.

Fadak Alfayadh (FA): My name is Fadak, I'm from RISE Refugees. At RISE, almost all of the people who manage it and who volunteer are from a refugee or ex-detainee background. My family and I were refugees from Iraq after the invasion happened in 2003. My Dad came to Australia by boat and we were in Jordan. He was in detention for a while and when he came out, we made our way to Australia. That's how I came to work with RISE, doing a bit of advocacy work and helping with the settlement processes. As for how RISE started: Ramesh Fernandez was in detention for a couple of years and he was

1 Thank you to the organisers of *Space, Race, Bodies II*, Holly Randell-Moon, Mahdis Azarmandi and members of the organising committee. Special thank you to Bell Murphy for convening the panel and to Jade Aikman for transcription.

2 For more information, see: noprideinprisons.org.nz/ www.flatout.org.au/ riserefugee.org/



L-R: Bell Murphy, Emmy Räkete, Fadak Alfayadh, Crystal McKinnon, and Emma Russell at Space, Race, Bodies II: Sovereignty and Migration in a Carceral Age conference, University of Otago, Dunedin, 7 May 2016 (Photograph by Lauren Caulfield.)

a teenager at the time. A lot of the men he was detained with were very helpful and they put money towards his education. Before he left, one of the things they asked him to do when he is released is to advocate for their cause and to bring attention to what is happening in the detention system, as well as what people who are seeking asylum are facing. So that's how RISE started. Having your own people support you and give you that assistance is really important for self-empowerment and representation.

Crystal McKinnon (CM): My name's Crystal McKinnon, I'm an Amangu woman from the Yamatji nation in Western Australia. I've been living on Wurundjeri land in Melbourne since I was 17. I've been involved in Flat Out since around 2012. I'm a PhD student looking at arts and resistance in Indigenous communities and I've worked at many Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in Victoria, including the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. I'm currently working as a project coordinator at Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service, which is a support and advocacy agency for people facing family violence, and it's also moving into prison work as well.

Emma Russell (ERU): Kia ora, my name is Emma and alongside Crystal, I'm here to represent Flat Out. I became involved in Flat Out in 2011 and have done various kinds of volunteer and paid work with the organisation since then. Flat Out is an organisation based in Melbourne that works with criminalised women, women who are in prison or have been in prison in Victoria. It's a relatively small and independent organisation that was founded in 1988. It was founded by a group of women activists and advocates working around the issue of women's imprisonment, which, at the time, was a pretty seriously neglected issue. A lot of women were dying upon release from prison. A group of activists got together and decided to found an independent organisation to support women exiting prison, particularly with housing issues, and it has been an explicitly prison-abolitionist organisation since its inception. It combines activism with individual support and advocacy work. There's both caseworkers who work with women to address the individual matters in their lives and also an activism wing of the organisation that tries to raise broader awareness of imprisonment issues and work towards prison abolition.

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And I'm 100% glad that refugees are coming here, but Māori are uninvolved at any stage in the process. Every decision is made by the state. We don't get to say, "10000 more please". We don't get to make those decisions. We show up, we do our little tika for them, and once they are sick of us, we can just leave, because we're done. It's like a dial-a-pōwhiri. It's a dismantling of the Māori cultural paradigm as an actual meaningful structure, reduced down to an instrument of state power to legitimise the occupation here.

Q: How do anti-prison and refugee politics align and/or conflict with decolonisation?

CM: When we talk about prison abolition, in many ways it aligns with decolonisation. Decolonisation is about abolishing systems of oppression and settler colonial structures, which operate to oppress Indigenous people primarily, and others within that. When you talk about missions and reserves historically, they're also sites of detainment and imprisonment of Indigenous people. There's a clear link between what's happening now and the way that these other sites have operated in the past.

FA: From a refugee perspective, in terms of who decides who comes to Australia, is it really the British colonial law that should decide whether people are allowed to come to Australia or not? Because that's what's happening now. Indigenous Australians don't have a say as to who can cross these borders and who can stay.

ERĀ: When refugees arrive in Aotearoa, there's a tendency to pōwhiri them at the airport, which is really nice, because Māoris like doing pōwhiris for manuhiri. It's cool that we get to do Māori stuff for our whanaunga from overseas who have come to live with us now. But after the pōwhiri, we can fuck off, because the state is done with us. We've exercised our duty to show up and be friendly

Māoris and they made the call that these people can come here. And I'm 100% glad that refugees are coming here, but Māori are uninvolved at any stage in the process. Every decision is made by the state. We don't get to say, "10000 more please". We don't get to make those decisions. We show up, we do our little tika for them, and once they are sick of us, we can just leave, because we're done. It's like a dial-a-

pōwhiri. It's a dismantling of the Māori cultural paradigm as an actual meaningful structure, reduced down to an instrument of state power to legitimise the occupation here. It's disappointing that the entirety of the Māori involvement in these processes seems to be ceremonial. Not in the sense that ceremonies are unimportant, but that actual material power does not reside with us. That's how it ties into decolonisation: we would have material power to shape how our whanaunga would be welcomed here if we weren't ruled. But we are. So we get to do our little performance when the Pākehā say to.

Q: What are some ways that you navigate the tension between the long-term vision and goal of abolition and the short term needs in your work, on a political-ideological level but also on a practical-everyday level?

ERĀ: After the first protest at Auckland Pride, the Pride board had a series of hui to consult with the community about what people want. And overwhelmingly, people jumped up and said "Maybe cops and Corrections shouldn't be in the Pride Parade because they are fuckers." (A penny which they didn't take). But one of the compromises the Pride board tried to pitch to me as a sign that Corrections was definitely

materially changing was that they were offering to organise a support group for transgender prisoners and they wanted to talk about that with me. All I could think the whole time they were pitching this lovely idea to me was: “What do you think they’re going to talk about in a support group that Corrections organises for them?” They’re going to talk about their problems and every single one of their problems is caused by Corrections. So no, I don’t think that that is very meaningful to provide a platform for them to reiterate that they’re still getting fucked over really badly and it’s not any kind of meaningful change in the material circumstances that those people are living in.

ERU: As a concrete example from Flat Out that we’ve really struggled with: women inside the prison were identifying that they had a significant lack of access to information about services available to them, ranging from legal advice regarding child protection orders to health and housing issues. Corrections weren’t providing this information, nor were they facilitating community organisations or services who could provide that information. Flat Out decided to start running a program in the prison based on the information deficits that women were identifying. We had to negotiate with Corrections to be allowed in – initially once a month, and then they reduced it to once every two months. We would invite a speaker from the community who had particular expertise on an issue to come into the prison and present to the women about harm reduction practices, housing, gambling, or whatever women said they wanted to know about. Questions we’ve really grappled with are: at what point do we then just become part of the system? Are we just bolstering and building it up by filling a gap in the lack

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Questions we’ve really grappled with are: at what point do we then just become part of the system? Are we just bolstering and building it up by filling a gap in the lack of services inside prison? Are we making it look like they’re running the prison more efficiently and more effectively on volunteer labour?

of services inside prison? Are we making it look like they’re running the prison more efficiently and more effectively on volunteer labour? But at the same time, women were consistently identifying that this was a massive problem for them and that it was preventing them from accessing services or information that would potentially enable them to get out more quickly, whether it was to improve their parole eligibility or a whole raft of issues. I don’t think we’ve necessarily resolved that tension; it’s still one that’s quite discomfiting within the organisation in terms of how we balance abolition politics with the immediate needs of people inside. One key reflection on that programme has been that Corrections has sought to sabotage or repress it, to ensure that people didn’t know about the programme, that it wasn’t promoted, the number of times we’ve gone in and it’s been cancelled due to lock downs. There’s all sorts of ways in which Corrections has tried at every turn to ensure that women weren’t able to access that programme. At the same time, I’m sure they’d also use it as a way to promote and bolster the prison as something that’s responsive to women. There’s a lot of paradoxes.

FA: There is a similar sentiment with regards to detention as well. RISE is completely against mandatory detention. That’s why we never take part in activities such as workshops or arts activities in detention centres, because it is a way of being complicit and not

“*So instead of doing the critical work, which we would be doing, since we are from a refugee background, we end up putting what very little money and resources we have into helping people get the material services they need for everyday life. So we end up filling the gaps.*

rallying against mandatory detention altogether. We don't get any sort of government funding and it is a way of staying independent because we are against the government policies which detain refugees. At times, we end up filling gaps for people who aren't getting services from organisations that are being funded by the government, or contracted by the government to provide housing or services for those refugees. So instead of doing the critical work, which we would be doing, since we are from a refugee background, we end up putting what very little money and resources we have into helping people get the material services they need for everyday life. So we end up filling the gaps. Organisations or individuals who aren't from a refugee background don't understand the complexities of why people go through those measures to seek asylum and what could go wrong in the process of filing their asylum claim. There ends up being a lot of the critical stuff that doesn't come to the fore.

ERĀ: With Pride, the whole argument being made was that police officers covered in glitter make less racism. Or prison guards with rainbow flags make less bad prisons. It's an inane argument but it's a spectrum of thought that can extend out into this region as well. There's not a clear barrier between what is meaningless reformism, and what is part of a legitimate abolitionist programme. And it's difficult to tell sometimes when what you're doing is

part of that programme, and when what you're doing is part of window dressing. There's not like a clear rubric to assess your actions whether or not they are truly part of destroying that structure, or if they're part of managing that structure. Sometimes you can tell, because cops at Pride – that's probably just management. But if people are uncomfortable with what you're doing, then it's likely that you are reaching towards a point of rupture and that's kind of the goal: to reach points of rupture and engineer situations where rupture is possible. And rupture's scary, and it makes people mad.

FA: When we at RISE say something that's completely *not* in the general discourse, like that we are completely against mandatory detention, general society are like: “What? How can we be against it altogether?” It's like that's not something that people can ever think about and it's seen as something that's not possible or it shouldn't be an option at all. And I think that's part of it as well because maybe we aren't seen as human. People don't know what we've been through: you leave or you die. You don't have a choice. And that's the difference: we're seen as really radical, but we really just make sense.

ERĀ: Abolition is the obvious thing to do that never seems to occur to anyone. It's indicative of the experience of colonialism, or the experience of incarceration in this country, that the most obvious thing to do never occurs to anyone. All of these structural systems foreclose our abilities to go to our imagination places and to think critically and realistically about what our capabilities

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are, what our machines within us can do. If it was possible to always think like that, to always assess the situation materially, the situation would be destroyed, because the obvious thing to do would be to destroy it. The fact that it doesn't occur to most people to think in that way is a function of that situation.

ERU: Crystal was saying yesterday that often when we talk about women in prison, we say how it's a product of homelessness and poverty, and experiences of abuse, etc., and take them as if they are static things, rather than products of processes of colonisation and of dispossession that mean that particular women, and in this case particularly Aboriginal women, are likely to experience those things. We have to be careful when we're trying to intervene in public debates about imprisonment and who ends up in prison, that we don't end up talking about those issues as if they're individual problems, or as if they're incidental issues. Rather, we have to always bring it back to that analysis of the foundational conditions of structural inequalities and how they're reproduced. Which is a hard conversation to have.

CM: The other thing I think that Flat Out does well is it consults with others and doesn't speak for different positionalities. There's a difference between looking at conditions and including these perspectives, but not speaking for them. This position I think gives us a good foundation to work with, and be allies with, other agencies and activists.

Q: In what ways do sexual and gender non-conformities shape experiences of the prison-industrial complex? And how do queer and LGTBTIQ politics bolster or unravel the prison-industrial complex?

ERĀ: There's a sense among a lot of queers that the priority has changed from "Let's build up our people" to "Let's become part of those people". So rather than building queer liberation, we're going for "Let's be friends with cops, let's have a cool business association, let's hire a security guard to throw all of the sex workers off the street outside." Assimilation into the world of power, that's what Pride has been about lately. It's been about appealing to cops and picking sides. Because there are real sides to these issues. Wealthy queers and business queers, they definitely pick their sides. I had a woman getting up in my face, pulling my hair, telling me that I should be ashamed of myself while I was sitting there with a broken arm handcuffed behind my back and being questioned by a cop. It's impossible to overstate the ways in which queers can be complicit with these kinds of state violences, because there is absolutely no sense in which being a queer automatically puts us into a coherent political category anymore.

Q: What do you see as the new and emerging issues associated with the prison-industrial complex in relation to your work and the focus of your activism?

ERU: One of the big issues that's been on the agenda in Victoria recently has been the Royal Commission into Family Violence. A big thrust of the movement against violence against women and the way that it's been taken up by the state and bureaucracy has been to bolster reliance on police and prisons as a response to that violence. From Flat Out's perspective, many of the women that we work with have experiences of family

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violence. They most often can't contact the police in those instances because it would worsen the situation. There are instances where women will call police to respond to a family violence incident and the police will side with the male perpetrator and arrest the woman for an outstanding warrant. A lot of the women that Flat Out and other agencies work with can't turn to the police for help. If that's the dominant response that's being proposed by the state and other bureaucracies to the issue of violence against women, it essentially abandons women who have a negative relationship with the criminal justice system. That's a real challenge for us because we're also a feminist organisation and it's really important for us to have alliances with other feminist and women's organisations, but it's a real tension that's emerging. Flat Out has to continually highlight that prison is a form of violence against women, and that's not something that's taken into account in those discourses. It's completely erased.

CM: Absolutely. In Victoria, Aboriginal women ring police and get arrested themselves for outstanding warrants, for infringements. It's a real issue that's not considered enough, that people have negative experiences with police and that police respond to these issues badly. In Victoria, Aboriginal women – and it's the same story everywhere across every settler colony – Aboriginal women are the fastest growing prison population. It's not getting better; it's getting far worse. These are issues that are on everyone's mind. Prisons are overcrowded, there's not enough housing to exit women from prison, social conditions upon release are getting worse, and it's harder to get out.

ERĀ: There's more Māori in custody now than there has ever been at any point in history. Ever. It all looks like it's coming to a point where it can't be sustained anymore.

We literally are at over 100% capacity right now. The highest prison population ever. More Māori women in prison than ever. Sexual violence, non-access to health care, counselling, therapy, hormone replacement therapy for transgender people, which is like the number one indicator for whether or not we kill ourselves. No access to transition surgery for people who want it, which again you can't even get on the outside right now because the Ministry of Health haven't found another surgeon to perform that surgery for the last two years. The waiting list, right now, if you're trans and you want to get surgery, is 40 years long. So if I signed up now, I'd be in my 60s before I got that. Assuming the list was even moving, it's been paused for the last two years. So it's just not fucking happening. Anywhere. Let alone in a fucking prison. And there's a legal obligation for the Corrections Department to provide healthcare, which is roughly in line with the care they'd receive outside of prison. And that's absolutely not happening.

Q: I was really fascinated how you always tied in the prison-industrial complex with the question of the non-profit industrial complex, where there's a danger of falling into the trap of filling the gaps that actually should be provided for if we were to take the state seriously. My question is: where does the academic-industrial complex fit in there?

FA: There's a very fine line between solidarity and taking over and dehumanising people. At RISE, if you look at our website, there are no pictures of anybody really. For a number of reasons. One of them is that we don't want to use people to make you feel sorry for us, because we are human after all and that's something you should already feel, that we should be able to cross borders and we should be able to come to Australia because

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As activists and academics, or if you're doing academic work, it's really important for that work to be community-driven. You can't just impose yourself upon a community of which you're not a part. Let the community decide what they need and how you can best help.

we have nowhere else to go. And one thing that stands out to me is that some people clearly have the idea of speaking *for* refugees, and speaking over them, in a very problematic manner. What ends up happening is that the actual problems, the systematic problems, are not addressed. For example, racism, Islamophobia, this fear of brown people coming here and taking “our” jobs, and terrorists. The Minister for Immigration at the time claimed, “The boats are pipelines for terrorists”, that they are packed with people who are here to kill us basically. Sometimes people might not have these ideologies, but they do take up space, so I think if you want to help, maybe think about “is someone from a refugee background able to do this?” “Should I be taking up this space and doing this instead of them?”

CM: In terms of the academic-industrial complex, in my own work, one of the questions I always try to check in with myself about is: “Am I working for my people’s liberation or am I furthering oppression?” “Am I just producing shit – what am I doing to address systemic change?” You need to use that privilege in ways that liberate, not oppress. As activists and academics, or if you’re doing academic work, it’s really important for that work to be community-driven. You can’t just impose yourself upon a community of which you’re not a part. Let the community decide what they need and how you can best help.

One of the tensions at Flat Out is because of the absolute power in places like detention, accessing prisons can be difficult. We’ve had a case worker before who has had trouble working with women in prison because they have a friendship with a person in the men’s prison, so Corrections will arbitrarily say “Oh, we’re banning them for now”. If you’re

from a community of criminalised people or a community which is over-represented in the criminal justice system, it makes it more difficult to access these spaces as well, which is the same for refugees, asylum seekers, Aboriginal people, particularly if you’ve been criminalised or incarcerated before – this makes it even more difficult. I think the idea of the prison as a site of “You do the crime you do the time” is a real fallacy because criminalisation, incarceration, that follows you forever. It makes it difficult to get jobs and you’re discriminated against in various ways.

ERĀ: Being under military occupation – prisons are real big, they have like a mass to them that warps the whole social environment around them. Being Māori, there’s no way for me to definitively avoid prison. It might happen, it could easily happen. It’s real hard not to have that happen to you when you’re brown in this country. The prison is everywhere. This is the prison, every day, waking up under occupation is the prison, and it’s always waiting in the closet at night, or maybe it’s around the corner, or maybe it’s under my shoe, it’s impossible to escape really. Because there’s a cop on every corner.

I don’t feel like prison abolition is a *kau-papa* that is totally alien to most Māori. Like I was saying before, it’s the only thing makes sense for us to do. But it’s hard to have these kinds of conversations. Talking amongst ourselves is really important. Rather than trying to think of it as building a movement, or a nation, or assembling machinery, it’s better to think of it as engineering situations



The prison system relies on capitalism and settler colonialism, so I don't think you can imagine abolition without unpacking and addressing these causes for its existence. It exists to contain.

so you can bring people – political units – together in the right ways that something arises out of them, that is its own thing. It's not me and you starting fire, but creating situations in which there's a fire there that can do its own work so that we don't have to pick apart the prison; it'll burn down on its own.

Q: What does it look like if we abolish prisons?

FA: From a detention perspective, to think about abolishing detentions, the alternative would be to create safe passages for people to come to Australia, to end mandatory detention and have people come straight into communities, not detention.

CM: The prison system relies on capitalism and settler colonialism, so I don't think you can imagine abolition without unpacking and addressing these causes for its existence. It exists to contain. It creates and reproduces ideas about race and gender. You can't just have abolition without addressing all of these other things that produce systems of detention in the first place. We need to begin with decolonisation strategies, which centre Indigenous land ownership and sovereignty, and work out from there – that is how we need to start to change the world, that is how we need to think about what this world should look like.

ERU: It's a really common question and it's a hard question. I always think back to Angela Davis' answer: we can't just have one alternative or replacement to the prison, because that would rely and instil all the same logics that are already in place. It would need to be a “constellation of alternative strategies and institutions” (2003, p. 107): housing, healthcare, education and community support systems, because of the way the prison functions now as an all-in-one response to a

whole bunch of complex social problems. It is warehousing. But prison abolition movements have also rightfully been critiqued for minimising the issue of harm, particularly for groups that experience violence routinely, such as women. What you do about the issue of routinised gender and sexual violence that people live? The prison is held up as a response to this, and it's not a response because it is violence in and of itself, and it exacerbates those patriarchal and hegemonic masculine ideals that are the roots of those kinds of problems anyway. But we can't ignore that issue of what to do when violence occurs. There are small examples of different groups that are imagining and practicing alternative ways of holding people to account, and envisioning what preventing violence in communities would need to look like. What sorts of conditions and ideologies would need to change? That's a really important part of a broader movement towards abolition. At Flat Out, we focus on *this* side of the prison, bringing it down, but supporting those inside in the meantime. Of course you need to think of those other aspects – the gap that the prison would leave for some people, because that's a big, resistant, sticking point for people when you say abolition. They're worried: “What about those dangerous people? That's where the dangerous people go, that's how I'm kept safe.” That's a real thing that we have to be able to contend with. And if we don't contend with that then I don't think we're going to necessarily be able to win people over.

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BELONGING AND SOVEREIGNTY

Thoughts on Migrant Place(s) in a Settler Space (Decolonisation and Te Tiriti o Waitangi)

Marie Laufiso and Suzanne Menzies-Culling

Whānaungatanga

People had travelled to Aotearoa New Zealand long before the British and other nations sent their first boatloads of sealers and whalers to exploit the rich resources of the Southern Ocean. From ancient times Polynesian navigators had been exploring the Pacific Ocean, this vast watery continent known by many other names. Historian James Belich writes that in the mid-eighteenth century, European explorers “were stunned” by the number of Islands in the Pacific. “How could stone-age folk have” traversed “the great Pacific like a garden pond many centuries before European made it across the petty Atlantic?” (2001, p. 16–17). Their unparalleled expertise was apparent at a time when European navigation was still primitive. (Captain Cook’s voyage was, after all, to observe the “Transit of Venus” in order for European sailors to understand how to determine “latitude.”)

Because of Pacific navigation, people from all around the Polynesian triangle had populated numerous island groups and had spread themselves around almost a third of

Background

Tauwiwi is a relational term defining all peoples and individuals whose ancestral homelands are outside and external to Aotearoa. “Tauwiwi Solutions” is a consultancy owned and operated by Suzanne Menzies-Culling (of English, Scottish, Irish and African-via-Antigua descent lines) that offers workshops to primarily Tauwiwi groups and organisations.

The workshops offered by Tauwiwi Solutions were first designed in 1991, following New Zealand’s Sesquicentennial Commemorations of the 1840 signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The Treaty of Waitangi is a treaty signed on February 6, 1840, by Crown representatives and Māori representatives of some iwi. It was interpreted by the Crown representatives and subsequent New Zealand courts to establish British sovereignty and legalise Crown possession of Aotearoa. The version of the Treaty signed in Te Reo by Māori gave permission for British occupation of the territory but did not cede sovereignty. The document forms the basis of native title claims, sovereign advocacy, and the principle of bi-culturalism (respecting equally the linguistic-cultural heritage of both Māori and Pākehā by incorporating both languages into public and governmental institutions for example) (see Network Waitangi, 2016).

As an evaluation of 1990’s year-long Treaty “celebrations,” Suzanne and Marie Laufiso asked ourselves, “Why – for all the energy expended on anti-racism and Treaty workshops – is there still deep antipathy towards Māori across all sectors of the New Zealand mainstream?”

We concluded that this societal antipathy towards indigenous peoples masked mostly unconscious and therefore unacknowledged deep grief on the part of Europeans who had little choice but to “leave home.”

Our workshops therefore focus not on Māori but on Tauwiwi. This is because, in order to find common cause with Tangata Whenua, Tauwiwi individuals, families and communities need to identify “their vested interest.” What is going to motivate them/us to keep working on challenging racism

the Earth's surface. They were and are related to those inhabitants of other Pacific lands, known as whanaunga (relations). This circular and continuous movement of Pacific peoples around the great ocean was not new. What was new was European interest in the region, and in the ardent pursuit of conquest, European explorers paved the way for the violent exploitation of the Pacific's rich resources.

Post 1945 Pacific Migration

The 1960s heralded a mass migration of Pasifika peoples to New Zealand, from nations such as Tonga, Samoa, Fiji as well as the New Zealand dependencies of the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau. Following the first "oil shock" of the 1970s, the economy began to falter, and the rosy glow of the post-war boom decades began to fade. Robert Muldoon's National government came to power in 1975, using race-based rhetoric in his campaign. During the election, a now infamous series of cartoon advertisements were aired. One featured dancing Cossacks, and another highlighted "troublesome" migrants of colour. This demonised trade unionists and brown people with "afros", who were portrayed as fighting in pubs and who were illegally in New Zealand "taking our jobs". 1976 saw an intensification of the notorious Dawn Raids, where those suspected

and colonial structures when things get tougher? From our perspective, the systemic restructuring of current Taiuiwi-Māori relations needed requires unswerving and long-term commitment. This is not sustainable for Taiuiwi who decide they are doing this "for Māori." You need to have "skin in the game" – yours – not someone else's.

Aotearoa at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a very different place from that envisaged by the Ariki and Rangatira who signed up to a relationship with the British Crown in the early 19th century. Of course, Aotearoa's development has been determined by progress and increasingly complex global relationships, which have been shaped primarily by a British culture that has its roots over 12,000 miles away, on the other side of the world.

Over the years, Parliamentarians have touted Te Tiriti o Waitangi (brought here by Captain William Hobson and debated and amended by the Rangatira who came together to discuss terms for a treaty of friendship in 1840) as this country's "founding document". In fact, it is our first Immigration document. In the Māori language version (the only one signed by not only Captain Hobson, but over ninety per cent of all the signing Rangatira) it is clear that what was offered to the British Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors was the right to come to this land and live amongst those who were already here. Her representative would be given the right to sit amongst all the other Rangatira and make laws pertaining to and protecting all migrants who arrived on these shores.

The neo-liberal revolution of the 1980s: Globalisation and immigration

The Lange-Douglas régime of 1984's Fourth Labour Government ushered in a neo-liberal revolution with radical and fundamentally ruinous changes, perpetuated by the 1990 National Government and Ruth Richardson's 1991 "Mother of All Budgets". One of those changes was New Zealand's attitude to migration and foreign investment. People wanting to immigrate here and who have scarce skills are still sought. But now a "free pass" is granted to anyone who has sufficient money. This is whether or not they have anything to contribute to our national or social wellbeing apart from cash! Rather than citizens with collective power to make or resist fundamental changes, New Zealanders

of housing “overstayers” had their homes raided in the early hours of the morning. The raids were violent, and basic police procedure was often not followed (such as the display of warrants). Inappropriate policing procedures were exacerbated because many people were unaware of their rights.

The only people immune from being stopped by police and immigration officials and asked for their passports, were White people. This was the “Settler Space” at its most crude and abusive. Many ordinary New Zealand Pākehā were very shocked to learn that Māori women and men were also caught up in this clampdown of overstayers. And some were galvanised into further protest action through such organisations as CARE (Citizens Association for Racial Equality) and ACORD (Action Committee on Racial Discrimination).

Dr Camara Jones on Racism

- It’s difficult for us to recognise any system of inequity that’s privileging us.
- Racism is a system of power, structuring opportunity and assigning value based on a social interpretation of how we look (race).
- This system is sapping the strength of the whole society with the waste of human resources.

have been relegated to the status of mere consumers and taxpayers. Now, if foreigners are wealthy enough, they are welcomed. However for an ordinary person looking for a better life for self and family members (not unlike some of the early settlers) there are many bureaucratic hoops – often insurmountable – before migrant or refugee status is conferred. Globalisation has meant the easy movement of capital all around the world. However the movement of certain peoples has been restricted since the 2001 attacks on American soil carried out by mainly Saudi Arabian fundamentalist Muslim operatives.

Because of the “9/11” terrorist attacks on America, New Zealand’s long-existing fear of the “Other” (persons who are viewed as fundamentally “different” from national culture) has been heightened (a fear equally promoted in other nations, especially ex-British colonies/settler states such as Australia and the United States). This has increased the carceral nature of our society, evident since early colonisation and demonstrated by such events as the settler Invasion of Parihaka and the imprisonment without trial of Parihaka men in 1881, the imprisonment of Waikato men during the first World War for refusing Conscription, the invasion of the Tuhoe village of Maungapōhatu in 1916 and the arrest and imprisonment of Rua Kenana, a Māori leader and activist, that followed.

Time and again since 1840 we have seen Māori resistance to Settler authority and domination being met by force, “scorched earth” policies, imprisonment and death. This incarceration of the “criminal” and “physically violent” Other is how we protect ourselves from any challenge on our unearned privileges conferred by our European/settler ancestries.

Colonisation has always been about domination and subjugation and in New Zealand, the foot soldiers of this process have been the settlers. Domination has always been about controlling the land, the indigenous peoples, and their resources. Subjugation has always been about breaking the spirits of any indigenous peoples who may prove troublesome, breaking in the Earth (as Jehovah instructed Adam) and plundering the natural world in order to become rich, taking public resources to establish and enhance the acquisition of private wealth.

Spaces Migrants from the Pacific have been permitted to inhabit

Dr Jones defines *institutionalised racism* as “differential access to the goods, services and opportunities of society by race” (2000, p. 1212). For at least four generations, Pacific Islanders (or “South Sea Islanders”) who migrated to New Zealand have been constrained by limited access to opportunities, services, and goods.

Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Pacific Islanders were mainly confined to working in low-paid and low-skilled jobs. While some had been teachers and nurses, “at home”, or held positions of responsibility in their extended families or church groups, there was little desire on the part of the settler institutions to genuinely extend further opportunities.

For New Zealand-born Pacific Island children and young people, many grew up as interpreters for their parents and Elders, or were lost in the enormous gulf between parental and cultural expectations and the requirements of the settler society’s school system. There was also a great dearth of positive media images and role models for both Tangata Whenua and Tangata Pāsifika.

Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, it could be concluded that the only

Settlers and settlement

In 1840, Tangata Whenua regarded manuhiri (visitors) as guests – albeit troublesome ones – arriving daily in Kororāreka (now Russell). Particularly duplicitous and conniving were the Wakefields. The Wakefields, along with other “men of enterprise” such as Russell and Whittaker, had plans for colonising the country and making huge profits from Māori land. In 1840 the British government’s hand was forced by the activities of the Wakefields’ New Zealand Company. After fruitless lobbying in London, the New Zealand Company decided to go ahead and set up an independent colony of its own around the area that became known as Wellington.

Because of the wholesale settlement that followed the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840, the “guests” proceeded to take over lands and to build towns and cities where the hosts were not only unwelcome but also in many cases were regarded as “enemy rebels”. In 1852, when the Constitution Act was passed and the British Government pulled back from direct administration of the territory, passing the responsibility of governing the dominion of New Zealand to the settlers, all decision-making power, as to who would be welcome to come here as migrants, has been maintained by force of numbers and legislation by the settler population and their descendants.

There was and has been no reference in immigration policy to the hapū and iwi whose lands were being taken and who, because of the agreement made in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, had the right to decide on matters that affected their lives and wellbeing. Because of the deleterious impact of immigration on indigenous peoples’ health and their lands and the ability of hapū and iwi to maintain control of their resources, 176 years of exclusion of Tangata Whenua from fundamental decision-making should be of great concern. Further, enduring values of whānaungtanga, manākitanga (looking after guests), and aroha (love) definitely form no part whatsoever of the system by which New Zealand authorities currently determine who should be allowed to make a new home here.

The creation of settler space

Colonial settlement was predicated on an assumption derived from the Darwinian theory of “the survival of the

“permitted” roles available to young people, born of Pacific migrants, were those of labourers, performers, elite athletes and military/security personnel.



fittest”. Modern thinking as espoused by the Victorian élite was that the Englishman was the ultimate civilised human being – culturally, racially, scientifically, linguistically, technologically and intellectually superior to all others. The settlers who began to arrive in New Zealand from the mid-1800s onwards had no doubt that they were the ones ordained to inherit the Earth. In the South Island, because of the absence of land wars, and the small number of hapū dispersed about a large landmass, settler perceptions of the Other were limited and Māori were not seen as a threat to their privilege or assumptions of superiority. In the North Island however, land was scarce and hapū were more numerous. Competition for resources, especially land, was fierce and once the Land Wars were over, the settler government ensured ongoing alienation of land by planting soldiers on the confiscated land.

As well as a constructed belief system, the settler space became tangible and physically real. The pattern of settler development in this country was mostly one which saw new arrivals joining old hands in towns and cities that in some ways looked remarkably like those that had been left behind, while whānau and hapū were mainly still living in the rural backblocks. And never the twain did meet.

The discovery of gold in Otago, the West Coast, and Coromandel encouraged a huge influx of mainly white men from the gold fields of Victoria (Australia) and California (the United States). Eventually Chinese labourers were sought to process the tailings – that is, to see what they could extract from the leavings of white prospectors and miners. However, unlike other new arrivals, Chinese migrants were not viewed as desirable permanent settlers. Like the other British colonial outposts of Australia and Canada, New Zealand passed an 1881 Poll Tax of £10 (and later £100) per immigrant to limit the number of Chinese people who could afford to settle here. Until World War 2 New Zealand society was fairly homogeneously British although there were small communities of Greeks, Dalmatians, Lebanese, Poles and Chinese scattered around the country, mainly in the city areas.

Post-World War 2 migration from Europe

After 1945, a couple of things took place, which began to challenge the settler space:

1. Partly because of legislative constraints on building on ancestral lands, young Māori men and women began to move in large numbers to the towns and cities and apprenticeship schemes were created so that they could participate in the “new” New Zealand that was being created by the post-war government.
2. A concerted effort was made to bring in more migrants as part of New Zealand’s push to industrialise.

Most desirable were people from Northern Europe who were hard working, displaced by the war and most of all, white! In this way, the colonially constructed settler space was maintained and kept intact. These migrants blended into the mainstream Pākēhā community, they brought much needed technical and manufacturing skills and were seen to be contributing useful and scarce skills to the workforce, which would enhance our economic growth.

Settlers as “the gatekeepers” between migrants and Tangata Whenua

The new New Zealand polity is the result of a complete makeover of the original space into something that reflects the dreams, aspirations and values of the new masters. If they meet the mainstream settler culture’s priorities and abide by its values, migrants are able to enter and settle down in New Zealand. Since the beginning of colonial settlement by England, successive New Zealand governments have promoted the image of pristine nature and smiling natives to people both at home and abroad as the reality of our country. From anecdotal knowledge, many migrant families have arrived, expecting to see traditionally clad Māori women and men actually walking around the towns and populating the countryside. This pictorial image of the “best race relations in the world” has been produced for internal consumption as well, and was not disrupted until the 1975 Land March led by the late Dame Whina Cooper.

Rather than joining and becoming part of a healthy society that genuinely celebrates and welcomes diversity, new migrants rarely meet Māori on Tangata Whenua terms or learn from them of their histories under colonisation, much less form meaningful relationships with whānau or hapū. This is at variance with the obligation of Tangata Whenua to care for and maintain the wellbeing of visitors who arrive in their lands. The present day migrant has not been invited to live here by both Treaty Partners. The role and traditional obligations of indigenous New Zealanders have been subjugated by the government’s exercise of power to define and decide what should happen and what is important.

“He aha te mea nui o te Ao?”

“What is the most important thing in the world?” is part of an old whakatauki (proverb), perhaps most recently quoted by former New Zealand Prime Minister – and one of twelve candidates currently vying for the post of United Nations Secretary-General – Helen Clark. “He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata” or, “It is people, it is people, it is people” is the answer to that question. Such a whakatauki is an insult in the mouth of Helen Clark, who in 2004, preferred to meet Shrek the Sheep, rather than the 20,000 marchers protesting against the Labour Government’s proposed Foreshore and Seabed Bill (intended to foreclose the possibility of Māori claiming land on beaches and the surrounding ocean). While Tangata Whenua were expressing their opposition to a twenty-first century’s land grab (or raupatu, confiscation),

Ms. Clark branded the protesters as “haters and wreckers”. The Namer of Names is, after all, the Father (or Mother) of all things. As with indigenous nations the world over, Tangata Whenua iwi may forgive, but they never forget.

We could speculate that the carceral age had its beginning in 1492 with the “discovery” of the Americas. As Robert A. Williams Jr. said, Columbus bought a “racist legacy ... to the New World” and “the use of law as an instrument of racial domination and discrimination against [I]ndigenous tribal peoples” (as cited in Gunn, 2007, p. 39). And as Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith says “to deny historical formations of such conditions” is to deny Māori claims “to having a history” (2012, pp. 34–35).

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Further resources

Taiwi Solutions is a facilitation and workshop service offered by cross-cultural Taiwi facilitators based in Ōtepoti (Dunedin). <http://www.taiwiwsolutions.org.nz/>

After the New Zealand Government ignored key Tangata Whenua legal and constitutional framework experts in the 2011 naming of their “Constitution Advisory Panel,” *Matike Mai Aotearoa – The Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation* – was established by iwi Māori. The Working Group’s Report can be accessed here: www.converge.org.nz/pma/MatikeMaiAotearoaReport.pdf

The Pacific body and Racism

R. Michelle Schaaf

*Mālō e lelei*¹ and *Talofa lava*,² my name is Michelle Schaaf. I am a Sāmoan/Tongan female, born and raised in New Zealand, and this is part of my story about some of my experiences, of the ways racism³ became embodied during my life and that of my parents.

The range of sites where I was subjected to racism were dance, sport and education. My parents' encountered racism first-hand in the following multiple settings: migration, language, employment, and accommodation.

For a Sāmoan/Tongan female, surveying the social construction of the physical body is like being born into a whole new and unheard of world. Pacific people⁴ have a particular set of values that have been passed down by our ancestors through our families and our communities. These Pacific values are inscribed in my body and are part of the unconscious. Therefore, the body conforms to affirm its membership in a particular community. *Fa'āSāmoa* (Sāmoan culture) became a prescriptive guideline and an instrument of disciplinary power. For me, the practice and the maintenance of *fa'āSāmoa* acted like a gaze of self-surveillance whereby I internalized and self-monitored the experiences of my own body accordingly.

First and foremost, I am a manifestation of my ancestors. While my biological father is Tongan, I was raised by my Sāmoan step-father (the only father I have ever known) and my Sāmoan mother. They raised me

according to *fa'āSāmoa*. My mother was the most influential person while I grew up. Her teachings, values, and beliefs about the Sāmoan female body were passed down from her Sāmoan ancestors and they have played a fundamental role in how I read my own Sāmoan/Tongan body today.

Fa'āSāmoa and *gagana Sāmoa* provide the blueprint upon which Sāmoans base their conduct. The demonstration of respect for chiefly and/or senior authority, and for Sāmoan custom is a central feature of the core values governing behaviours and bodily demeanor. Showing respect in Sāmoan culture governs one's bodily actions. To earn approbation, one's actions must manifest a sense of duty to one's family, children, extended family, village, church and/or traditions. How a person walks, for instance, portrays something about who they are. How a person sits and represents themselves physically is interpreted by others. In essence, a person's actions, their movements, their physical appearance, and how they dress are open for others to comment and judge.

Understanding my own body has been difficult for me, because Sāmoans and Tongans approach their physical bodies as if they were tools they had borrowed from God, rather than as the embodiment of who they are. Talking about the body is not acceptable in our cultures. Bodies are not important, or rather bodies are to be ignored and veiled.

1 Greeting in Tongan language.

2 Greeting in Sāmoan language.

3 Explanations of racism encompass, "a mix of prejudice, power, ideology, stereotypes, domination, disparities and/or unequal treatment" (Berman & Paradies, 2010, p. 228).

4 There are various terms employed to portray the Pacific ethnic group, comprising Pacific Islanders, Pacific People, Pacificans, PIs, Pasefika, and Pasifiki.

As a Sāmoan female, I have been raised to hide my body.

My Sāmoan/Tongan body carries not only DNA,⁵ it also carries the human history of Sāmoan and Tongan people. When we look at our bodies, we see our cultural values and ideals. These values and ideals are determined by what has been written by culture onto our bodies (Bordo, 1999, p. 36.). Claude Levi-Strauss has observed that:

All cultures leave their mark on the human body: through styles of costume, hair, and ornament, through physical mutilation, and through gestures, they mimic differences comparable to those that can exist between races, and by favoring certain physical types, they stabilize and perhaps spread them. (as cited in Becker, 1995, p. 28)

My earliest experience of being different from the other girls I grew up with occurred when my mother took me along to my very first ballet lesson. According to my mother, I was the tallest, the biggest and the only brown skinned girl there. At the end of the first lesson, the ballet teacher suggested that I take up another form of dance, rather than ballet. She felt that I would grow to be too big to do ballet.

Growing up, I went against the flow by excelling in water polo. It seemed to me that people had difficulty imagining a Sāmoan/

Tongan girl in her two bathing suits and cap, playing water polo, especially since water polo resembles a combination of basketball, soccer and wrestling, while swimming. The only negative memory I experienced throughout my years of water polo was being called a *kaffir*⁶ by a representative water polo coach. To this day, I cannot understand why he was allowed to call me a *kaffir*.

My initial experiences of the state education system awakened my awareness of the notion of racism.⁷ I was unable to speak English when I first started school at the age of five. As an adult I have lost this earlier fluency in the Samoan language. Like numerous New Zealand born Pacific children of migrants, I learned to speak English before my mother tongue had been completely developed:

The younger children are when they encounter these assimilative forces, the greater the effect on their primary languages. It is especially problematic for children in the pre-school period, that is, under the age of 5. At this age, children have simply not reached a stable enough command of their native language not to be affected by contact with a language that is promoted as heavily as English is in this society. (Wong-Fillmore, 1991, p. 342)

On the very first day at school the teacher

5 Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a nucleic acid that contains the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living organisms and some viruses.

6 According to *The Chambers Dictionary*, "kaffir" is an offensive South African word for a black African. So no one ought to be called that.

7 According to Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner: "Racism may be defined as the determination of actions, attitudes or policies by beliefs about racial characteristics. Racism may be (1) overt and individual, involving individual acts of oppression against subordinate racial groups of individuals, and (2) covert and institutional, involving structural relations of subordination and oppression between social groups. While individual racism consists of intended actions institutional racism involves the unintended consequences of a system of racial inequality. Racism may be accompanied by either implicit or explicit racist theories, which seek to explain and justify social inequality based on race" (1994, p. 342).

sent me home with a note for my mother. The teacher notified my mother of the need to promote the use of English and that speaking Sāmoan at home would be damaging to my educational progress. There was no acknowledgement of my communicative competency in a language other than English, that I had a value system centred on Samoan culture, a personal experience of family life, and a certain expectation of school. My home environment was viewed as deficient. Jan McPherson outlines the problems with this deficient model in the context of education.

Minority-languages are said to be linked to problems such as underachievement in school, unemployment, and lack of social, economic, and political opportunities for the minority-language speakers. The “best” education for cultural and linguistic minorities is claimed to be one that stresses the dominant language and culture. (1994, p. 74)

The teacher and students continually mispronounced my Tongan surname (Liava’a) and the students constantly teased me about it in the playground. At the age of five, I refused to use my Tongan surname and made a conscious decision to use my Sāmoan father’s surname (Saisoa’a), because of the teasing and ridicule. Unfortunately, this form of relational racism⁸ had an enormous impact as it forced me to shy away from my Tongan heritage and all things Tongan while I was growing up.⁹

My growing up was loaded with contradictions. My parents were members of the

Dunedin Sāmoan Catholic Community (DCSC). A membership that provided one of the primary orientations to my Sāmoan cultural heritage. Through this close association between family, church and culture, my attitudes, lifestyle, and opportunities were shaped by the Sāmoan language, values, and social institutions. Through these links I was able to acquire and familiarize myself with *fa’aSāmoa*.

The DCSC was a source of strength that reaffirmed and valued our identity as “Sāmoan”, especially through its affirmation of our Sāmoan language and culture. Through the DCSC, I was exposed to the normalcy of the Sāmoan world, the use of Sāmoan language as the only means of communication, while *fa’aSāmoa* dictated how one was to behave. The naturalness of our Sāmoan worldview was reaffirmed (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p. 33).

My parents migrated to New Zealand firstly, to support their families by giving financial support to non-migrant kin who remained in Samoa. Secondly, to earn higher wages and have access to a wider range of medical services and consumer goods. And thirdly, to build a future for themselves and their children (Lay, 1996, p. 12).

As immigrants, my parents were forced to quickly adjust to a New Zealand way of life. Auckland and Dunedin were overwhelming to them in relation to their scale, pace, anonymity and indifference (see Saisoa’a, 2004). The cold climate was like nothing we had experienced, the town was small, with very few Pacific people.

Language was also an area where discrimination was endured by my parents. Making

8 Relational racism occurs when a person experiences discriminatory behaviour from people they encounter in their daily life.

9 This event reinforced a sense of inferiority about my being Tongan, that also created a sense of identity uncertainty.

the transition to using English as the language of communication and survival was compulsory. In New Zealand, English is both the dominant and major language. It is the major language for national and international communication. Thus it is politically, socially and economically powerful (McPherson, 1994, p. 9). As Pacific migrants the transition was difficult and at times painful, for them both. Pacific migrants were often discriminated against and socially excluded.¹⁰ For example, people treated them as ignorant and it often penalized their job opportunities. English was used overtly and in more subtle ways to stigmatize, trivialize and exclude my parents (Waite as cited in McPherson, 1994, p. 7).

My father did not have the opportunities to develop the skills to enable him to participate fully and to be confident in all aspects of life where English is used in New Zealand. As a child I assisted my father with the grocery shopping, acting as a translator. Having to rely on a child to communicate and interpret on their behalf was necessary for survival and at times humiliating for my father. These negative incidents have scarred him and to this day he refuses to deal with people in a formal situation without family support because of his lack of confidence and the fear of being ridiculed.¹¹ Although my father has lived in New Zealand for the last 50 years, he staunchly retains his Sāmoan identity and the use of *gagana Sāmoa* (Kerslake & Kerslake, 1987, p. 144).

Another illustration of the way in which racism was manifested in the past was in

the circumstances relating to Pacific peoples who sought accommodation (Pearson, 1990, p. 159). “Ethnic minorities frequently encounter ethnocentrism and racial discrimination in gaining access to and maintenance of rental accommodation” (p. 158). My parents’ own experience of structural racism¹² mirror experiences for other Pacific migrants. In negotiating a rental property with a property owner, the owner approved the lease over the telephone to a Miss Wilson. However, on making face to face contact in order to sign the lease the property owner reneged claiming he had given it to someone else. Miss Wilson, suspecting an anomaly in the situation requested her brother-in-law who is *pālāgi* (a white or non-Sāmoan person, especially Europeans) to make a similar bid for the property. The outcome was much different. In fact, he was offered the property. This is an example of “gatekeepers” such as landlords, estate agents, and the providers of housing finance using their power to limit access to the valued amenities, resources, and services of society. This discrimination with regards to accommodation is based on negative stereotypes of particular ethnic groups. Pacific peoples, for example, were widely deemed as unsuitable tenants because many were believed to be unskilled in the correct use of household appliances and to overcrowd rental dwellings with relations and friends (Trlin, 1984, pp. 194–195).

New Zealand’s immigration policy towards the Pacific Islands since the 1950s and continuing today has been to see the Islands as a source of cheap, disposable

10 Pacific migrants were socially excluded from equally participating in and benefiting from employment, educational, economic, political, and health systems.

11 My father’s feelings of inadequacy and embarrassment regarding his lack of English language fluency, can be read as an indicator of internalised racism at the individual level.

12 Structural racism refers to the economic, social and political institutions and processes of society and the moral and cultural systems that underpin them.

labour. This geopolitical view has enabled institutional racism. “Institutional racism refers differential access to societal goods, services and opportunity based on ethnicity ... [it] operates without individual identifiable perpetrators but via practice, legal and policy frameworks that govern societal institutions” (Jones, as cited in Barnes et al., 2013, p. 71). An example of institutional racism was the Dawn raids that were commenced in the early 1970s by the New Zealand police on Pacific peoples who were suspected of overstaying their visas. This occurred despite the majority of illegal immigrants in New Zealand at the time being Europeans (Anae, Uli & Burgoyne, 2006).

The dawn raids were shameful, because in essence they set out to pick up anybody who didn't look like a Pākehā or Palangi New Zealander. They swooped on people who were Māori, they swooped on many Pasifika people who had absolutely lawful residence in New Zealand, may even have been born here.¹³

This form of institutional racism cultivated an explicitly negative public response to Pacific communities. The situation was further exacerbated and acted as a control mechanism for the influx of Pacific peoples thus achieving the outcome of reducing the numbers of Pacific peoples migrating to New Zealand. These Dawn raids had the effect of placing a huge stigma on Pacific peoples in New Zealand society that has survived several generations (Pearson, 1990, p. 156). Pacific people's lives and aspirations were ravaged as a result of this institutionalised racial profiling. Families were torn apart and the situation was made worse by the portrayal of Pacific peoples as illegal aliens.

My parents lived in fear and hoped it would not be their relatives who would appear on national television, having been manhandled by police and totally traumatised by the experience (see Lay, 1996, p. 13).

This institutional racism was fomented by the National Party Government during their demonstration of racism, in their 1976 election campaigns. Pacific peoples were portrayed in television advertisements at this time as violent people who broke the law and who took jobs away from New Zealanders (Krishnan, Schoeffel & Warren, 1994, p. 15). The uses of these tactics, savoring a police state to manage Pacific communities, were at the very deepest level insensitive and underlined the presence of racism. They infringed civil liberties and aroused hostility among Pacific peoples.

This paper has provided the reader with a snapshot of my experiences and reflections of the embodiment of racism, alongside that of my parents' (as Pacific immigrants). Although it is unpleasant, the author is able to reflect on the impact of these situations upon herself and Pacific people. This paper also challenges the perpetuation of the “invisibility of Pacific peoples” in academia and acts as a vehicle through which our world view will be validated in the world of academia, thus making the Pacific peoples visible in academic institutions (Siata, 1998, p. 72). “The social histories, local knowledge and [I]ndigenous knowledge vital to the ‘identity’ of Pacific peoples exists on the margins of academia and wider society [in Aotearoa/New Zealand]” (p. 72). The history of Pacific peoples in New Zealand is seldom discussed by New Zealand historians because it is a recent history that is reduced to a measly paragraph or footnote in the New Zealand social landscape.

13 Helen Clark cited in *Dawn Raids* [video recording] New Zealand: Isola production Ltd. 2005. (44mins)

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Fadak Alfayadh is a former refugee from Iraq and is the Director of Advocacy and the Campaigns Manager at RISE: Refugee Survivors and Ex-detainees. She is a trainee lawyer in Melbourne, Australia. She aspires to use the law to improve and uphold human and civil rights. Fadak has been involved with Melbourne based refugee organisation RISE since 2012. RISE is the first refugee and asylum seeker welfare and advocacy organisation in Australia, entirely run and staffed by refugees, asylum seekers, and ex-detainees. Fadak has been working with different refugee community groups in helping them settle into Australia as well as assisting with their legal cases. Fadak has a great passion for human rights, especially the rights of those seeking asylum due to conflict and violence as well as the international and national rights of refugees.

Marie Laufiso

Marie is a Dunedin-born Sāmoan (also Tongan) activist and first-born of six. Although an Otago alumna, she is from Corso, her first university. Through Corso, Marie was very privileged to learn from and host tangata whenua accompanying international manuhiri visiting Dunedin. Attending national and international conferences also taught her much and she now works at community development level to “give back” and in order to build a sound legacy for the now-born second and third generations of her family.

Both Marie Laufiso and Suzanne Menzies-Culling were founding members of Te Whanau a Matariki, a Dunedin based group that was active in the Nuclear Free and independent Pacific Movement in the 1980s and 90s. They are also founding members of Freedom Roadworks, a family based community group consisting of Māori, Samoan, Tokelau/Tongan, Cook Island and Pākehā families, which is based in Dunedin and works together on issues of justice, support for tino rangatiratanga, peace and freedom for all peoples.

Crystal McKinnon

Crystal McKinnon is an Amangu woman from the Yamatji nation on the west coast of Australia. She is currently the Project Coordinator at Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women’s Service, which provides crisis support, refuge, and case management to women and children experiencing family violence. Crystal has served as a Research Officer with Native Title Services Victoria and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. She is currently on the board of Flat Out Ltd, the steering committee for the newly founded Law and Advocacy Centre for Women, and was a board member of Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Associated Ltd for over seven years.

Crystal is also a doctoral candidate in the Department of Historical and European Studies at Latrobe University. Her thesis examines Indigenous resistance to oppression through the use of the creative arts, including music and literature. In 2014, she was the course coordinator and lecturer for Australian Indigenous Politics at the University of Melbourne. Crystal is the co-editor of *History, Power and Text: Cultural Studies and Indigenous Studies* (UTS ePress, 2014), and has had several articles published addressing indigenous politics, and the intersection between gender, crime and homelessness. Her work has been published in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity* (Palgrave, 2010), the *Alternative Law Journal*, and *Parity*.

Suzanne Menzies-Culling

Suzanne is descended from settlers from Ireland, Scotland, England, Guernsey, and Antigua. An activist, she has also been working as an adult educator since the early 1980s through groups such as the Dunedin Anti-Racism Coalition, Ōtepoti Black Women’s Group and Corso. From 1982–1986 she worked as Otago/Southland Regional Coordinator for Corso Inc. and from 1993–2000 was Corso’s National Coordinator.

Both Suzanne Menzies-Culling and Marie Laufiso were founding members of Te Whanau a Matariki, a Dunedin based group that was active in the Nuclear Free and independent Pacific Movement in the 1980s and 90s. They are also founding members of Freedom Roadworks, a family based community group consisting of Māori, Sāmoan, Tokelau/Tongan, Cook Island and Pākehā families, which is based in Dunedin and works together on issues of justice, support for tino rangatiratanga, peace and freedom for all peoples.

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Emma is descended from English and Scottish settler convicts in Australia. She is currently a Lecturer in Crime, Justice and Legal Studies at La Trobe University, Melbourne. Her publications have appeared in the journals *Critical Criminology*, *Crime Media Culture* and *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*. With Bree Carlton, she is writing a book on the history of an anti-carceral feminist movement in Melbourne. She is also writing a sole-authored book about the policing of queer space and LGBT involvement with police in Melbourne. Emma has been involved in the community organisation *Flat Out* as a volunteer or Project Worker since 2011, working on different community education campaigns on women's imprisonment, decarceration, and prison abolition.

Rosaline Michelle Schaaf

Michelle was born in Auckland in 1967 and is of Tongan, Sāmoan and Scottish descent. She grew up in Dunedin where she now resides with her husband, son and step-sons. She is a Lecturer in Pacific Studies in Te Tumu, School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, at the University of Otago, where she teaches in the area of Pacific diaspora; sport, race and gender; and the politics of representation and the Pacific body. Michelle also currently holds the positions in the University of Otago as Programme Coordinator Pacific Islands Studies and Associate Dean Pacific – Humanities. She is currently researching Pacific migration experiences to Dunedin from the 1950s to the 1990s.

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Teanau Tuiono is community activist. He is a part of the Cook Islands diaspora living in Aotearoa along with being from Ngāi Takoto and Ngāpuhi. He has been active in organising on Indigenous Peoples issues at the local, national, and international levels.

Space, Race, Bodies is a research collective focused on the connections between racisms, geography, and activist and theoretical accounts of embodiment. A number of events and research projects have been hosted under this theme, including the conference and workshops from which this booklet emerged, *Space, Race, Bodies II: Sovereignty and Migration in a Carceral Age*.

Incarceration, Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty: Thoughts on Existence and Resistance in Racist Times responds to the current and ongoing histories of the incarceration of Indigenous peoples, migrants, and communities of colour. One of its key aims is to think about how prisons and their institutional operations are not marginal to everyday spaces, social relations, and politics. Rather the complex set of practices around policing, detaining, and building and maintaining prisons and detention centres are intimately connected to the way we understand space and place, how we understand ourselves and our families in relation to categories of criminal or innocent, and whether we feel secure or at home in the country we reside.



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