

THE LAND REMAINS

Māori youth and the politics of belonging

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Abstract

This paper extends recent work in the geography of youth and childhood with an exploration of the ways that indigenous Māori teenagers who have grown up in regional tribal environments deploy land narratives as they construct a range of fluid socio-spatial cultural identities. The discussion is based on the findings of a multi-tribal study undertaken in the aftermath of government legislation that had led to widespread Māori political protest. Data generated in the course of the study took the form of digital photographs taken by the participants coupled with their explanations about the images. It is argued that Māori young people who are immersed in these environments draw on an extensive repertoire of tropes about the land which in turn influences a territorialized politics of belonging. These politics of belonging become particularly evident during periods of heightened political tension between indigenous peoples and the Crown.

Keywords

indigenous youth, Māori, youth politics, place-based identity, visual methodology

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Introduction

This paper examines the ways in which Māori young people's relationships with tribal land contribute to a contemporary politics of belonging and sense of place. Data are drawn from a study which was conducted with Māori youth in four tribal regions in different parts of New Zealand. The aim of the study was to explore the cultural identity claims of Māori teenagers with tribal affiliations to the regions in which they live and go to school. Fieldwork was carried out in 2005 and in the summer of 2006, coinciding with a period of widespread and sustained Māori protest against the Crown's decision to assume ownership of the New Zealand foreshore and seabed. During the data collection phase of the study, many of these events were still unfolding and the implications for the Māori youth who were involved in the study were not yet clear. In retrospect, the impact of these government actions on Māori youth was more far-reaching than the research team could have envisaged at the time (see, for example, Kidman, 2007, pp. 38–40). Nor could we have predicted the way that New Zealand politics would change in the aftermath of the foreshore and seabed legislation as new political groups began to emerge from urban and tribal Māori communities. For that reason, I have returned to the original data sets and reviewed them in the light of subsequent events.

The cultural geographies of young Māori

Recent work in the geography of childhood and youth has argued for new ways of thinking about the role of place in identity making (Matthews & Limb, 1999; Holloway & Valentine, 2000). Rather than rely on adults for meaning, Smith et al. (2002) contend that young people actively engage in place-making activities in a range of cultural contexts from which multiple childhood geographies emerge. These geographies

become an important source of meaning and identity for young people. Indeed, in their exploration of physical location as an identity source, Schnell and Mishal (2008) argue that "places" act as a form of cultural "incubator" for identity formation. They contend that sociospatial expressions of selfhood can be viewed as part of a series of cultural discourses that influence identity construction. In light of these ideas, this paper focuses on the identity discourses of young Māori who have active connections to regional tribal centres and explores the extent to which land and place act as identity markers, particularly during periods of heightened political tension between Māori communities and the Crown.

Identity, place, and the politics of belonging

In the childhood geographies literature, debates about identity politics and the politics of belonging are often brought into discussions about the significance of physical territories and "spaces" and their role in the construction of shared cultural meanings (see for example, Yuval-Davis, 2006b). The nature of these debates has shifted in recent years as increasing levels of transnational migration have problematized understandings about cultural identity, national identity, citizenship, and place-attachment. This phenomenon is reflected in the growing number of people who maintain simultaneous allegiances to cultural, social, and physical territories in different parts of the world (de Bree, Davids, & de Haas, 2010). Indeed, as Sullivan (2009) contends, many Māori New Zealanders living in Australia have developed a range of split cultural and territorial allegiances as they establish identities in a new land. It is argued here, that in the course of developing a sense of self and belonging, young Māori in New Zealand also navigate their way around these allegiances.

In this paper, the notion of a territorialized *sense* of belonging has been separated

from a territorialized *politics* of belonging. Antonsich (2010) has argued that a sense of belonging relates to a symbolic space signifying the familiarity, place-attachment, and emotional investment that emerges from everyday social practices and activities. To that end, these spaces can be viewed as vernacular “storied landscapes” (Osbourne, 2001) representing particular clusters of “meaning, aesthetics, values and social prescriptions” (Trudeau, 2006, p. 421). Belonging becomes politicized, however, when these environments come under threat or when multiple or conflicting claims are laid to the control of a particular space (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). Thus, when “places” become sites of conflict between groups with competing concerns, symbolic boundaries are often drawn as a means of regaining or maintaining authority and solidarity (Trudeau, 2006). In this respect, the politics of belonging extends beyond a feeling of familiarity or affinity with particular places and centres on membership of a particular collective (Antonsich, 2010). In light of this, Trudeau (2006) has argued that the politics of belonging are central to understanding the control of social space because once boundaries come into play, belonging and place-attachment become sites of negotiation and tension.

In the New Zealand context, land has a ubiquitous presence in the national imagining (Panelli et al., 2008). For example, in their study of a rural New Zealand community, Panelli et al. (2008) show how ethnicity and identity come into play over time as both Māori and Pākehā engage in local “place-making” activities. In light of this, it can be argued that the landscape was deeply embedded in the national identity narratives of settler communities throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, for example, and it continues to play an important role today (Bell, 2009; Le Heron; 2004, Panelli, 2008). On the other hand, in many Māori communities, relationships with the land have been fractured over time in the wake of significant losses to the tribal land base. The long-term impact of land

loss on Māori socio-spatial identity formation has therefore been acute. As Smith (2007) notes, “recovering identities from forced removal [from the land] has been a long-term intergenerational battle for many” (p. 70).

In the past three decades, however, the identity/land discourses of both Māori and Pākehā have been disrupted, and to an extent, remodelled as successive New Zealand governments have engaged in wide ranging economic restructuring that has affected almost every facet of social and cultural life, including relationships with the land. Indeed, it was during the mid-1980s that the New Zealand economy was transformed from a highly interventionist model to one of the most open and market-based systems in the OECD (Dalziel, 2002) and this has had a profound impact on the way that land resources are perceived. In addition, the Māori political landscape has changed significantly in recent years as new protest movements have emerged since controversial government policies relating to Māori customary land use were set in place. It will be argued below that Māori have responded to these political and economic trends by redrawing symbolic boundaries around tribal communities and in the process, a new politics of belonging has begun to emerge amongst young Māori.

The Through Our Eyes Study

The *Through Our Eyes* study sought to examine the ways in which young Māori articulate cultural selfhood and belonging in the cultural and political contexts of small town and rural New Zealand. Data were collected in the aftermath of a period of intense political activism mounted by Māori communities and organizations around the country. The timing of the study with this political activity was coincidental, but in reflecting back over the data at a later date, it seems to me that a nascent politics of belonging and identity was being

expressed by Māori youth who were living in the site communities and symbolic tribal boundaries were subsequently undergoing reconfiguration.

The complexity of the relationships that young Māori have with their tribal homescapes includes abstract ideas about the centrality of physical environments in the construction of cultural belonging. In order to gauge the participants' responses, mixed methodologies were applied that allowed them to express complex concepts in ways that were accessible to adult researchers.

Methodology

The study included 24 participants aged between 14 and 16 years who had ancestral, or other family links, to the tribal regions in which they lived. Four communities located in the North and South Islands of New Zealand participated in the project, including residents of a rural coastal village, a small town in a river valley in the South Island, a seaside community located within 30 kilometres of a large urban centre, and a township on the mountainous volcanic plateau of the central North Island. We sought to engage with Māori young people located in smaller regional centres rather than in the more tribally diverse environment of the cities because as Smith et. al. (2002) have noted, "for Māori, the areas most often defined as rural represent traditional iwi [tribal] territories that are still home to places and institutions such as marae [cultural centres] that hold considerable cultural significance" (p. 171). Participants from two regions lived in reasonably close proximity to urban centres, however, and visited them regularly.

A team of Māori researchers collected data for this project and each team member had tribal affiliations or other cultural connections (such as family or marriage connections) with the particular community in which they worked. These connections proved invaluable

in establishing trusting, respectful relationships with the participating communities, many of whom would have otherwise been unwilling to admit outsiders. Moreover, while the study had university ethical approval, members of participant communities were more concerned that tikanga (tribal custom) was respected and upheld by the researchers in the course of their work with young Māori. Thus, the researchers' familiarity with tribal protocols was an important consideration for Māori community leaders as they decided whether to grant researcher access to their communities. The tribal affiliations of the researchers were also a driving factor both in the selection of participating communities and the means by which access to those communities was negotiated.

Visual methodologies involving digital storytelling were employed in this study. However, we were less interested in constructing a documentary record of young peoples' lives than we were in investigating the manner in which Māori teenagers express their identity with reference to physical spaces. Accordingly, a methodology was developed whereby the participants were encouraged to produce visual artefacts that symbolized these understandings in ways that could be connected with other kinds of knowledge, including social and cultural knowledge. To that end, the young people used digital cameras to create electronic images that represented their ideas about a range of matters, including the relationship between land and identity.

At the outset of the study, the participants in each of the four communities compiled lists of keywords that exemplified, for them, various aspects of Māori youth identities. The research team then facilitated negotiations between participants in each tribal region about which keywords would be selected. The final list of keywords agreed upon by all the young people in each region was: "Land", "Belonging", "Journeys", "the Past", and "Mana" (prestige or authority). These keywords acted as thematic devices around which the participants

constructed photographic narratives. At this stage of the field research, each participant identified the images they felt best exemplified the key themes. It should be noted, however, that when it came to the interview and data analysis stages, it became apparent that there were significant overlaps between these themes and the way the participants conceptualized them. The photographs that appear in this paper are drawn from the “Land” theme. In this part of the study, the images that were produced were rich in symbolic detail and drew on a wide range of cultural and social narratives relating to the New Zealand tribal landscape. The participants’ rendering of these narratives, often as a series of visual tropes, gave us insight into the way in which they mobilized social and cultural symbols as tools in the construction of a territorialized politics of belonging.

The analysis of the images was framed in terms of Gillian Rose’s (2006) notions of cultural “visuality”. Visuality refers to the way in which “vision is constructed in various ways: how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see” (p. 6). Rose argues that the interpretation of images relies heavily on the cultural positioning of the viewer, suggesting that the images that people produce and to which they attach meaning are also influenced by their cultural contexts and circumstances. In this respect, and following the work of Sarah Pink (2007), the images in this study were viewed as visual “spaces” in which a number of different meanings could be invested (p. 125). To this end, we did not attempt to render all the visual evidence into verbal knowledge. Rather, we viewed photographic data primarily as a means of representing and connecting with other kinds of knowledge. Thus, where possible, we sought to understand the participants’ photographic constructions as a series of critical moments, many of which were highly symbolic in nature. In this respect, we applied Stanworth’s (2002) argument that methodology is “a negotiated process” (p. 111) and that visual experiences

are open to a wide set of interpretations and for this reason, we need to find ways of dealing ethically with pluralistic meanings in ways that pin them down and allow us to understand them. With this in mind, we invited the participants to talk about the narratives they had embedded in their photographs. The ensuing interviews began with probe questions such as “What is happening in this photo?” and “Can you talk me through this image?” Subsequently, we placed these verbal explanations alongside the photographs and drew conclusions about the more abstract or symbolic dimensions of their images from these data sets (see also Kidman, 2009).

Findings

The following images represent a small sample of the data—several hundred photographs were submitted to us by the participants. Those that appear here serve as an example of some of the iterative themes about land and belonging that emerged in the course of analysis, particularly in relation to the young people’s *sense* of belonging as well as their *politics* of belonging. The photographs in this paper are captioned with image titles that the photographers chose themselves. It should be noted that while the images were, in some cases, altered by the participants (for example, changing the format from colour to black and white), they have not been edited further.

A sense of belonging: Tūrangawaewae

Many Māori express an attachment to their tribal homelands by drawing on the notion of tūrangawaewae. This term literally means “a standing place for the feet”, although it is usually translated as “a place to stand.” It refers to the sense of belonging and connectedness with the land that is experienced when members of

hapū communities have occupied a region for several generations. For example, when people gather at their marae (gathering place), they are reminded that they are in the presence of their ancestors and together with the wairua o te whenua (spirit of the land) they will be offered protection and strength. Mead (2003) describes the concept of tūrangawaewae as “. . . one spot, one locality on planet earth where an individual can say ‘I belong here. I can stand here without challenge. My ancestors stood here before me. My children will stand tall here.’ [...] It is a place associated with the ancestors and is full of history” (p. 43). He adds that the tūranga (place to stand) is the primary locality of the hapū and therefore acts as a framing device for collective identity (p. 43).

According to the participant-photographer, Figure 1 is an expression of tūrangawaewae. A group of young people are shown standing arm in arm on a squally afternoon—their faces are reflected in a puddle of rainwater at their feet. The participant entitled this photograph, *Puddle of Faces*, and when asked about the intent of the image he explained that it represents the way he thinks about his tūrangawaewae—his sense of place and belonging. Thus, the image is a literal portrayal of the land “as a standing place for the feet”. An extract from his commentary on this photograph is, as follows: “The people are in the land [...] but the land [is] inside the people too.” In this respect, the photographer wished to portray an inseparable relationship between Māori and their physical territories. Family and friends with tribal connections to the region are depicted here as reflections of the land although the mirroring of land and people is represented as a two-way process. In other words, if people are reflected in the land, then the land is also reflected by the people in the way they behave towards the physical environment and the beliefs they hold about it. As the participant noted later in the interview, “The pollution’s really bad in some places and people might not care but then they get sick from it.”

The participant who took this photograph

was also aware that tribal connections with the land have become increasingly fragmented over time. He mentioned family members who had left the district in search of work in the cities and also expressed support for Māori land protests which, at the time the study took place, were focused on the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed Act (discussed later in this paper). Placed in context with the participant’s discussion about these matters, Figure 1 serves a dual purpose. On one level, the image is intended to represent an interdependent relationship between hapū members and the environment, but on another level, the participant also talked about how these relationships can be fractured by outside forces. In light of this, Figure 1 taken together with the participant’s commentary can be read as being as much a boundary-drawing gesture of solidarity and even defiance as it was a statement about the connection between land and people.

Trudeau (2006) has argued that landscapes are constructed through a territorialized politics of belonging and these politics of belonging were clearly at work amongst the young Māori involved with this study, most of whom remarked upon the importance of tūrangawaewae in their own lives. Indeed, the political aspects of belonging were a recurring theme that served as a marker for the participants’ expressions of tribal identity which they saw as being anchored in land and place, but equally they framed tribal identity in terms of cultural solidarity and resistance. In this respect, the concept of tūrangawaewae offered the participants a form of spatialized cultural experience that was implicit in their sense of belonging but which also served as a politicized expression of resistance to the threat of further tribal land loss.

Te ahi-kā-roa—the long-burning flame

The relationship between people and the land is represented in a slightly different manner

in Figure 2: *Land/Mana*. The participant who created this image is affiliated with a tribal community in the South Island of New Zealand where bowenite and nephrite jade, known by Māori as pounamu, is found. Pounamu is highly valued by Māori and according to the participant, in this image it represents the concept of mana that is derived from ancestral associations with a tribal area. The participant-photographer explained that his sense of who he is, is closely connected with his tribal area and the resources that can be drawn from the land. He also said: “It’s about tūrangawaewae [...] like being strong on your tūrangawaewae [...] it’s about who you are [...] what makes you tick.”

A further commentary provided about Figure 2 by the participant-photographer concerns the flash of light which glances off the carved pendant (known by Māori as hei-tiki). According to the participant, the light was intended to represent the concept of te ahi-kā-roa (the long-burning flame) or tribal land occupation. Traditionally, when a community settled in a new area, fires known as te-ahi-kā-roa (or, “te ahi kā”) were kept burning constantly to signal to outsiders that the land was occupied. These fires also had an important symbolic function—if the fires were extinguished, it was believed that the land would be lost and the people would suffer. The participant who took this photograph was familiar with the concept of te-ahi-kā-roa and made several references to it in relation to this image during the interview. This photograph can therefore be viewed as a statement about the significance of the relationship between people and the land as well as a belief that the loss of ancestral land entails a decline in the collective health and security of the community. The participant also commented on Māori protest about the foreshore and seabed legislation later in the interview and expressed his anger about Crown actions. In this respect, the traditional symbolism represented in the photograph can also be read as a metaphor for the conflict that was being waged in the present as well as a portrayal of

the marking of symbolic territories that were taking place in Māori communities around the country as a result.

The politics of belonging: The land remains

The proverb, *toitū he kāinga, whatungarongaro he tangata* (the land remains while the people disappear) attests to the endurance of the land and the fleeting nature of human concerns. Most of the participants in this study were highly aware of the significance of the land and its association with tribal histories and memories but they were equally aware of the fragility of those relationships in the face of global climate change, pollution, the destruction of habitats through corporate or multinational economic interests, and tribal deterritorialization as a consequence of Crown policies and practices. These concerns were freely expressed by the participants. For example, several took photographs of the pollution caused by local factories and habitats that had been damaged as a result of industrial and agricultural practices in their tribal areas.

Figure 3: *Oil and Land* represents one participant’s concern about damage to the local environment by industrial manufactories. Her photograph shows a warning sign at the gates of an oil refinery in her region. The refinery in question was opened in 1964 as a government initiative and its operations were significantly expanded during the oil shocks of the 1970s. When the fourth Labour government deregulated the petroleum industry in 1984 as part of its programme of economic restructuring, the refinery was privatized. While the facility has provided local employment for several decades, hapū and other community members have long-held concerns about air and land pollution. The research participants in this particular community had been active in community protests over the impact of the refinery on the local environment and this was the subject of many



FIGURE 1: Puddle of Faces



FIGURE 2: Land/Mana



FIGURE 3: Oil and Land



FIGURE 4: Our Land!



FIGURE 5: Tribunal



FIGURE 6: Shadows

of their photographic sequences. The image of hazard warning at the oil refinery was intended to represent these tensions (Figure 3).

Nairn and Higgins (2007) argue that young people who have grown up immersed in the discourses of competition and globalization in New Zealand continue to craft agentic cultural identities despite the political and economic constraints placed upon their communities. A key concern for all the participants was the ongoing well-being of the land and to that end they frequently equated the health of the land with the growth of healthy Māori identities. One participant commented, “We [Māori] can’t be healthy if the land is sick.” The participants involved with this study linked cultural identity to their sense of place but when they felt the land was under threat or about to be lost to the tribe, they also mobilized expressions of belonging that were centred on resistance and cultural memory.

These concerns are also articulated in Figure 4: *Our Land!* Shortly before the study took place, Māori communities around New Zealand had organized nationwide protests against the Crown appropriation of the foreshore and seabed following the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed Act. Several of the research participants were involved with this protest action and their anger over the legislation formed a framework for several photographic sequences.

Figure 4: *Our Land!* shows a protest sticker attached to a bus window. The words “Māori Seabed For Shore!” relate to the foreshore and seabed legislation. At the time the Act was passed the Crown argued that the legislation would preserve the New Zealand foreshore and seabed in perpetuity as the common heritage of *all* New Zealanders and that it would serve as recognition of the rights and interests of individuals and groups in those areas (Ministry of Justice, 2004). The subsequent legislation vested full and beneficial ownership of the public foreshore and seabed in the Crown (2004). However, many of the areas designated in the Act are integral to Māori customary use and occupation. Thus, when the Crown took

ownership of the foreshore and seabed, Māori customary title over these areas was effectively extinguished and many New Zealanders, both Māori and Pākehā, considered this to be a serious breach of the Treaty of Waitangi (Murton, 2006). In the months before the legislation was passed and as Māori anger mounted about losing the right to legal redress in the wake of this legislation, the Crown began a rapid, last minute consultation with Māori beginning in September 2003 (Harris, 2004). Despite overwhelming rejection of the legislation by Māori around the country, the government decided to continue with the Bill.

As the Bill passed through its committee stages, Māori around the country launched mass protest action culminating in a hīkoi (march) on Parliament in April 2004. The hīkoi drew between 30,000–50,000 people in a show of unity against the government’s actions (United Nations, 2006). The Crown response to the protest came from the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, who framed the government as the champion of “decency and rational, ethical justice for all New Zealanders”, while memorably describing Māori who spoke against the legislation as “haters and wreckers” (Television One News, 2004; for a fuller discussion, see Kidman, 2007, p. 38ff). Figure 4 represents the participant’s anger about Crown actions in respect of Māori customary practice in coastal regions. This anger was forcefully expressed during the course of the interview when the participant commented, “Yeah, well, it’s just another way of fucking us over.”

The negative response to the Foreshore and Seabed Act was strongest amongst participants living in coastal regions, but the legislation and subsequent hīkoi framed many of the discussions that took place in each of the research sites. The young people involved with this study supported the protest action, believing that the Crown was attempting to erase Māori customary practice. In this respect, their responses to the legislation drew, in equal measure, on traditional understandings about the customary

significance of coastal and marine environments, and contemporary expressions of resistance.

Schnell (2003) has argued that new forms of ethnicity need to be understood on their own terms instead of in contrast to older forms of ethnicity. He contends that modern ethnicity incorporates a degree of choice—a level of conscious, voluntary, and deliberate association. The young people involved with this study made active choices about what constituted indigenous identity and ethnicity as they understood it within the shifting political and economic contexts of 21st century New Zealand and many of them were beginning to incorporate a vocabulary of resistance into their narratives of belonging. To a large extent, they blended their interpretations of “tradition” (especially their understandings of traditional tribal and hapū relationships with the land) with contemporary cultural dilemmas and situations, such as land loss and environmental damage, and in doing so they generated new understandings and relationships with the land and new expressions of territorialized belonging. Indigenous cultural identity then, is not a static creation locked in a frozen embrace with the past, rather it can be seen as an agentic articulation of selfhood that aids Māori young people in their navigation of an uncertain future.

Several participants also raised questions about the future of tribal land and Māori relationships with the Crown in relation to Māori land claims. These grievances are heard by a commission of inquiry known as the Waitangi Tribunal. The Tribunal’s role is to make recommendations relating to historical breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi—the pact made between Māori peoples and the Crown in 1840. Treaty claims are the subject of much debate in New Zealand and at the time the study took place, a Tribunal hearing was underway in one of the research sites, and in another site community, a land claim was in the process of being mounted. Research participants in both these regions had varying levels of involvement in the claims process. In some cases they had listened to family and hapū members debating the land issues

relating to the claims at hapū gatherings, while other participants were involved in the formal proceedings; for example, as the Tribunal was officially welcomed into the region.

Figure 5: *Tribunal* shows a kapa haka (traditional performing arts) group of young Māori performing before the Waitangi Tribunal. Kapa haka groups are a means by which young Māori can articulate cultural heritage and identity through the enactment of traditional forms of song and dance and in the past 30 years their popularity has grown enormously. The involvement of young Māori in these land claims (either as actors or observers) has provided them with new forums for the transmission of tribal histories and heightened their awareness of both historical and contemporary hapū relationships with the Crown, particularly in relation to the loss of land.

As multi-generational land claims are debated between Crown representatives and various hapū during these hearings, the complexities of establishing and maintaining distinct place-based cultural identities are often revealed in dramatic ways. Tribal story arcs do not often dovetail neatly and there is usually more than one hapū or tribal history under investigation within a given region. This complex network of place relationships amongst hapū with different claims to the land are closely examined during Treaty hearings, highlighting that place identities, far from being set in historical cement, are contested cultural domains in the present. The participants in one region were members of a school group that had sat in on some of these debates at a Waitangi Tribunal hearing and had followed them closely. This experience had increased their historical knowledge about the area and provided them with detailed information about particular sites that were contested by various hapū.

In situations where relationships between people and the land have been disrupted over time (as highlighted in Tribunal hearings, for example), tribal “places” were imagined variously by the participants as a complex series

of junctures and ambiguities in time and space. While the participants were establishing place-based cultural identities, they also expressed frustration or dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their physical environments. Rather than idealize these environments, they were aware of the problems associated with developing cultural identities that were so closely tied to the land. This was particularly evident in areas where land alienation claims against the Crown were being debated at the time of data collection. These claims heightened participants' awareness of just how much land had been lost over time and evinced a corresponding sorrow or anger about elements of cultural practice that had disappeared, possibly forever, along with it. Nor were they reconciled to the small town and rural realities of job shortages, limited employment prospects, or the economic uncertainty they would face if they chose to remain in these homescapes.

One participant described the effect of these dilemmas in a photograph she entitled *Shadows*. "Sometimes," she said, "it's [...] like we're just shadows" (see Figure 6: *Shadows*). When prompted further, the participant talked about her conflicting feelings about the decision she had recently made to leave the area when she left school to get a job in the city. The decision had been a difficult one not only because it entailed living away from her extended family but also because she would miss the freedom that she had living in the country. "Cities are suffocating," she said, "they're just really dirty places."

Discussion

The *Through Our Eyes* participants drew on a range of sociospatial devices in their construction of place identities and their cultural frames of reference were frequently couched in terms of resistance to state rhetoric about indigeneity, culture, and place. For many of these young people, the mountains, lakes, and

rivers act as their cultural meridians of place and genealogy and for the most part they were familiar with associated forms of traditional land/identity enactment (for example, *mihimihi* [speech of greeting], *mōteatea* [lament]). Some of these traditional enactments, however, had been reworked in the tense political environment of the time to create what Olund (2002) has described as an "anti-conquest" narrative—a narrative which seeks the reappropriation of tribal space (p. 147). In this respect, when young Māori construct place-based cultural identity discourses, they are not merely mapping their identity in relation to a physical space or transposing the land onto a common set of cultural identity markers, they are also recording a complex series of political, ideological, and spatial relationships that link indigenous landscapes with cultural survival (Thom, 2009; Sletto, 2009). Thom (2009) suggests that this method of crafting a landscape is "a way of knowing the world through relationships" (p. 179) that involves a weaving together of disparate historical, tribal, and cultural threads.

In blending the narratives of tradition and modernity, the young people involved with this study were directly engaged in place-making activities—creating new places and boundaries for the articulation of a contemporary indigenous identity. Sletto (2009) contends that this fusion of traditional and modern boundary discourses can be seen as the performance of a "complex repertoire of resistance" (p. 272). These discourses, he suggests, frame a series of "symbolic contests over the meanings of indigeneity, traditionality, modernity, and development that underpin the production of counter-narratives to state power" (p. 256). In relation to the participants then, the land acts as a symbolic "hinge" (Tamisari, 1998, p. 250) between the self and the ancestral and modern worlds that is incorporated into the ways that the young people both enact knowledge of their tribal regions and respond to Crown incursions on Māori "places" in the present.

Conclusion

When local places are under threat or when tribal groups witness the large scale loss of ancestral land, cosmopolitan and local identity orientations often become disconnected. The Māori teenagers that we met in the course of this study, however, were able to move relatively freely between many different identity discourses without necessarily foregoing a sense of cohesion. For the most part, they were aware of the contradictory and oppositional nature of various tribal, cultural, and political worldviews and deployed these perspectives in their expressions of cultural belonging. These politics of belonging were framed by the tensions and conflicts that surrounded the participants' communities which, at the time the study took place, had coalesced around Treaty claims and community anger about the foreshore and seabed legislation. The passing of this legislation into law had brought other longer standing tensions about Māori-Crown relationships to the surface and this had heightened a sense of uncertainty about the future. In light of this, the young people's active, everyday relationships with the land reinforced their ability to manipulate uncertainty in constructive ways and embed it into a territorialized politics of belonging. Furthermore, while many of the participants perceived the Foreshore and Seabed Act as being a threat to all Māori communities, the protests had also served to reinforce the symbolic boundaries around their own tribal communities and affiliations. Indeed, their politics of belonging, tribal allegiances, and identification with the physical environment appeared to be further augmented.

The land and the human histories, memories, and relationships associated with it provide a structure for indigenous identity formation in the present. It gives young people a means of stabilizing and anchoring a sense of belonging. However, the tensions and conflict that surround the land also underpin the youthful Māori identities that emerge in response to

those conflicts. The participants in our study drew heavily on the land and its associated contradictions for meaning, identity, and sense of place, and incorporated a range of narratives into the construction of their cultural storylines. Many of these storylines were beginning to shape a territorialized politics of belonging, and in the tense political environment of the time, many of the young people involved in this study were in the process of evolving vocabularies of resistance and solidarity. These storylines, and the understanding that contemporary narratives of indigeneity are rooted in the unresolved tensions of the past, opened up new spaces for many of these young people to enact these sociospatial identities in their tribal locations. Their geographical imagination was therefore inflected, but not limited, by the fractures within the cultural landscape of New Zealand where "place" continues to matter.

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Glossary

hapū	primary socio-political kinship grouping; cluster of extended families
hei-tiki	carved pendant regarded as an heirloom
hīkoi	march
iwi	broad kinship grouping
kapa haka	traditional performing arts
mana	prestige or authority
marae	cultural centre; gathering place
mihimihi	speech of greeting
mōteatea	lament
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
pounamu	Bowenite and nephrite jade
te ahi-kā-roa	the long-burning flame
tikanga	tribal custom
tūranga	place to stand
tūrangawaewae	sense of belonging and connectedness with the land
wairua o te whenua	spirit of the land

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