Getting connected: Pakeha masculine identities in a global context

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Abstract: *This paper addresses how the experience of emigrating from the UK and settling in New Zealand stimulated my interest in masculinity, and how the comparative study of masculinities in different social and cultural contexts can enrich and broaden an understanding of pākehā masculinities and their complex association with national identity.*

It was the experience of moving from Scotland to New Zealand in 1979 which led to my present interest in gender and especially masculinity (Bannister, 2000; 2002; 2005; 2006). I should explain at the outset that I am not a trained counsellor, although I have received counselling and have also participated in men's groups that have been led by counsellors. My expertise is in media, cultural studies, and music, and as such, may seem remote from the concerns of this journal and its readers. However, I believe that it is beneficial to consider the wider cultural context in which gender operates, as this is inseparable from our lived experience and crucial to the formation of subjectivities. In a related manner, theory and practice are intertwined. A fully conscious practice is informed by theoretical reflection, and vice versa.

Media and cultural studies are highly interdisciplinary subjects which use a range of themes, approaches, and practices (During, 1993; Goode & Zuberi, 2004; Rayner, 2003). There is no one model for 'doing' these subjects. My approach in this essay is informed by a mixture of autobiographical narrative, critical theory (for example, feminism and Marxism), some psychoanalytic concepts, postcolonialism, and discourse theory (Crotty, 1998). Key, I think, to all these strands is the theme of

identity. Simplistically, autobiography is a mode of identity revealing, however partial, and critical and discourse theory are concerned with the social construction of identity by power, just as postcolonialism is concerned with national identity, and psychoanalysis with personal identity. Moreover, gender and identity formation are clearly linked. This justifies a brief excursion into the question of what we mean by identity.

Identity

In my research area, there seem to be two dominant formulations of identity, one of which basically critiques the other. The first, which seems closest to a commonsense definition, broadly follows from Descartes' formulation 'cogito ergo sum'—'I think therefore I am'. This posits identity as essentially separate and distinct—a knowing 'self' in a world of objects that is essentially independent of them: the rational, human self—a single, unique, autonomous individual, who has the power through reason to control his or her environment and self (Brennan, 2004, pp. 4 and 94; Benjamin, 1988, pp. 192-193). Freud was the first to significantly challenge this view through his discovery of the unconscious. However, Freudian models of identity development remain highly dependent on quasi-scientific discourses of objectivity and individuation. They emphasise tensions and relations within, rather than between, individuals (Benjamin, 1988, p. 29).

In contrast, postmodernism, social constructionism, and discourse analysis posit a multiple, dependent, fragmented subject. They argue that identities are not fixed, but are in a continuous process of constitution through interactions with environment, culture, and power. They are not selves but subjects, the connotative difference being that the latter implies something that is not discrete or bounded, but

is continuously impinged on and reshaped by social processes. In its most extreme form (e.g., Foucault), the human subject is primarily a product of external power relations—not a producer of discourse, but rather produced by it (Foucault, 1984, pp. 7-9). Or it is "schizoid" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983) a term that should not be understood as clinically schizophrenic but rather as anti-Oedipal (chaotic)? Bortle (2001) argues that "'self' is the residue that results from the intertwining of multiple drives that, while seeming to speak with a more or less unified voice, are actually anonymous".

Emigration and globalisation are two prominent themes in postmodern thought about identity. In a global environment where people, commodities, and media are in continuous flow, is the notion of single, individual, 'authentic' self still relevant? I offer both New Zealand and myself as examples. The former is a colony of the British Empire, with people heterogeneously and contestedly juggling European, Polynesian, and Asian heritages, surely an identity project in progress. And then there is myself, born into Scottish middle-class suburbia (although my parents were English), groomed as an intellectual/bureaucrat by the Scottish education system, but cast into an environment that was disdainful of my accomplishments, initially thinking of myself as British, but now, 30 years on, as a 'Kiwi'. How do such profound changes in our ontology occur?

Finally, gender itself is a player in this identity debate. Generally, the unitary concept of rational self is annexed to patriarchy, as implying the superiority of reason over feeling, civilisation over nature, self over nature, man over woman (Humm, 1995, p. 163). And correspondingly, poststructuralist accounts tend to conform to a feminist perspective of deconstruction of the fixed identities, universal truths, and the grand narratives of masculine, Western thought (Butler, 1990). 'Feminist theory has

... exposed the mystification inherent in the ideal of the autonomous individual ... based on the paternal ideal of separation and denial of dependency" (Benjamin, 1988, p. 187). As such, the gender researcher needs to state his or her relationship to the phenomena they describe or interpret. An objective stance is not appropriate.

Subjective positioning

I grew up in a middle-class household in Scotland. Both my parents had university degrees in science and my father was an academic. Both came from lower-middle to working-class backgrounds. We were an 'upwardly mobile', nuclear family, living far away from our extended families. My father, a 'scholarship boy' (Hoggart, 1957, p. 238) had few male friends, worked hard, and left the emotional and practical management of family affairs to my mother. Hence I grew up with an absence of contact and interaction with men, a problem unfortunately exacerbated by my father's extended illness with cancer, which he contracted when I was seven (he recovered). At the same time, the emotional atmosphere of my home was reserved; for example, there was no discussion of my father's condition. I was encouraged to pour my energies into schoolwork, and intellectual achievement became the main index of my self-esteem, soaring or plummeting according to how I did in examinations.

A key factor in my interest in gender was the strong matriarchal streak in my family background. Certainly in my home, women (mothers) were the dominant figures, and this also seems to have been the case in my father's experience. This meant a degree of respect, and even fear, towards women, and a strong intolerance of what would now be called sexism. In the public world, things were different, and this tension between a feminised domestic and masculinised public sphere, both equal in importance, but sometimes totally in conflict with each other's values, has had a

profound impact on me (Holter, 1995, p. 110). Of course, this tension can also be seen as a problem in gender relations more generally. It is not just that the public sphere values different things—career, achievement, fame—but that men especially may find themselves having to balance two profoundly different worldviews.

'Masculinity' as such was not a subject to which I gave much thought. Discussion or experience of it was lacking in my home, and seemed similarly irrelevant in the broader social environment. When my culture thought of men, it thought mainly of the bad behaviour of the lower classes—of 'hard men' (Scottish slang for working class yobs), football hooligans, pub drunks, and the like. Masculinity had nothing to do with me, it seemed. Of course second wave feminism also often focused on precisely these stereotypes or the kinds of themes they gave rise to, especially violence (Brownmiller, 1975). Imagine my horror when I moved to New Zealand and discovered that this preoccupation with physical masculinity and its associated homosocial bonhomie (Sedgwick, 1985) was the major feature of the cultural landscape.

The Scotland I knew was a class culture, with a strong division between the middle class, which placed a premium on intellectual achievement, and working-class culture, which emphasised sport. Even though sport did interest me, it seemed obvious to me that working class people (boys) were better at it, as we were regularly reminded when our school soccer team was thrashed by teams from 'rougher' areas. Gender was not such an issue: I attended a comprehensive (co-ed) school in Scotland, so I was reasonably used to mixing with girls. Leisure activities were generally mixed (in class and gender), especially discos, which were the main focus of my teenage socialising. It was normal at these to drink soft drinks and dance to the hits of the day, waiting eagerly for the later part of the night when there were slow dances and

physical contact.

In New Zealand I went to a single-sex state school (such schools did not exist in Scotland). Although I could have gone to a co-ed school, I was told that they were intellectually ‘slack’. So I moved into an almost exclusively male domain—there was only one female teacher at the school. From the moment I entered through the Gate of Remembrance (for old boys who died in the two world wars), I felt I was moving back in time. The culture of the school was very different to Scotland. Masters wore gowns and school uniform standards were strictly enforced. Caning was common. Rugby was the measure of status among the pupils. Most of the prefects were First XV boys, and although as a seventh former I could largely ignore the school hierarchy, it was clear that junior students were regularly bullied and that the masters tacitly condoned it. There was a strong emphasis on science and against the arts. The reason for this, I came to understand, was that the school measured its prestige by the number of students it could get into the Otago University Medical School (for which high marks in science subjects were a prerequisite).

Almost every desk in the school was covered in crudely carved penises, which the headmaster at assembly euphemistically referred to as ‘Zeppelins’. The boys’ main leisure activities, as I understood it, focused around driving their parents’ cars (although many had their own) to parties, ‘sinking piss’ (drinking), vomiting (‘chundering’) and sex—‘rooting sheilas’ from the girls’ single sex school down the road. One boy told me that the Rector (headmaster) was a ‘ram’ who kept unruly (meaning liberal) teachers in line by ‘rooting their wives’ (or so he claimed).

New Zealand, I was often told, was a ‘classless society’ with a proud history of egalitarianism. In some senses this seemed to be true. The levels of aggression and profanity and obsessive interest in sport that I would have seen in Scotland as working

class behaviour were endemic here. Yet the school in fact was hierarchical and its prestige was still based on academic excellence. Also I understood that many of the boys came from Dunedin's richest families. And indeed there were few students from South Dunedin, which was commonly designated the 'bodgie' (lower income) end of town. So there was a kind of class division. However the intellectual culture was almost purely instrumental—its sole object was to channel the bright boys into Med school, irrespective of their suitability to be doctors. Of course, it could be argued that Scottish culture was merely enforcing a subtler coercion by means of class.

In New Zealand society, I saw evidence of a distinctively masculine culture operating, for example, at the level of national politics. (I should clarify here that by New Zealand society, I basically mean pākehā society, which is the dominant culture). Although nominally a democracy, the country seemed to be run by one man, Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, who made regular pronouncements about the state of the country, excluded journalists from press conferences if he didn't like their angle, and inveighing against 'trendy lefties' (intellectuals), 'beady-eyed' feminists and 'radical' Māori. His bullying style of personal debate didn't seem to focus on issues at all,but on personal invective, especially against the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Rowling, who seemed to be universally regarded as a 'wimp'. On the face of it, pākehā New Zealand culture seemed to me to be peculiarly male-dominated and intellectually moribund. Women seemed to be virtually excluded from many areas of public life. Many of the nation's main interests, like rugby, seemed to focus on male-dominated activity. There were few mixed sex leisure activities.

New Zealand's egalitarianism seemed to apply mainly to white pākehā men. It was not so much a belief in equality as a belief in sameness: to be a bloke, you needed to act like other blokes, play sport, etc. (Sinclair, 1959, p. 274; James & Saville-

Smith, 1994, p. 10). ‘Being a man’ seemed to have a special importance in New Zealand that it didn’t have in Scotland. In New Zealand, there is one central iconography of masculinity that seemed to dominate the landscape—‘the Kiwi bloke’ (Law, Campbell, & Schick, 1999, p. 15)—whereas in Scotland, there is no comparable unified figure, probably because of the class basis of that society. Perhaps it is further possible to suggest that if in the UK, class divisions are the central ideological structure, in New Zealand, gender occupies a similar position (James & Saville-Smith, 1994). From my point of view, this was all rather difficult, because I was clearly lacking in the kinds of masculine accomplishment that NZ society valued. I felt like the ‘New Chum’, a stock figure in early colonial literature of the effete intellectual who is comically inept in frontier society (Phillips, 1987, p. 24).

But perhaps what was the most confusing for me was the encounter between the strangeness of my new position as an outsider with the familiarity of many of NZ’s cultural institutions—the school with its public school atmosphere, neo-Gothic spires, hierarchically-ranked classes and memories of British Empire, the surfeit of UK programming on the TV, the plummy voices on the radio—it was all familiar, yet strange. My British middle-class upbringing viewed intellectual power and achievement, and perhaps also to some degree artistic ability, as supreme. They were the cultural capital that gave me ‘the edge’. Certainly these abilities were still useful to me—I sailed through University with 1st class Honours, and then got a scholarship for a PhD. However, these were not qualities that were much valued in everyday NZ society.

Rock music

I also had some ambivalence about these values—for example, my father was an

academic, but he didn't seem particularly happy. I resolved not to follow him (well, not immediately), so I gave up university and became a rock musician! (in fact, I pursued both interests together for some years, as student life is not necessarily incompatible with playing rock music). I think I imagined that music would allow me to escape the strictures of New Zealand society (by becoming successful), as well as those of my family background. I was wrong. Rather it forced me to engage at closer hand with the culture I was trying to escape from. Rock music is played mainly in pubs, which are a bastion of New Zealand male culture. Secondly, the rock music world was not the carefree bohemia I had imagined. Punk rock, which was the dominant force in the music world I was engaged in, actually had a lot of similarities with NZ male culture: it was based around white males, generally valued toughness, rawness, and spontaneity, and was generally anti-intellectual as well as intolerant of effeminacy (Bannister, 2000). At the same time, the experience—of touring the country, playing to audiences that ranged from drunken University students to stoned meat workers, getting lost, having the van break down on remote country roads, sleeping on other people's sofas and floors, being chased by Christchurch bootboys—exposed me to a far wider range of NZ culture than would have been the case if I had followed the conventional academic route of going overseas to do postgraduate study. It furnished the raw material for my PhD (20 years on!) on pākehā masculinity and New Zealand rock music (Bannister, 2002).

Initially my motive was critical. Many studies of rock and pop culture emphasise resistance—that is, the ways that they can provide alternatives to dominant social values (subcultural studies, for example; see Hebdige, 1979). In my view, New Zealand rock culture was remarkable mainly for the ways it conformed—from pub rock with its boozy camaraderie and suspicion or objectification of women, through to

punk and alternative rock, which claimed a kind of political correctness through its allegiance to groups like university students, fashionable causes like Rock Against Racism and Rock Against Sexism, but was in fact as intolerant and homophobic as any travelling rugby team. These attitudes seemed reinforced by what appeared to me was NZ provincialism—its suspicion of difference and outside influence. Its insistence on and anxiety about its own uniqueness seemed to me a crippling form of cultural cringe. And it was not difficult to link this to masculinity in the form of homosociality, which is precisely an insistence on conformity and a demonisation of Other, usually foreign or feminine influences (Sedgwick, 1985). Neither was it difficult to find evidence of these themes in other forms of New Zealand culture, from the tough masculine provincialism of the 'sons of Sargeson', those mainly male writers who had formulated a New Zealand identity based around accounts of rural working men, 'the good keen man', the 'man alone' which fed directly into the myth of the 'Kiwi Bloke', to the harsh minimalist modernism of Colin McCahon's painting (Wevers, 1991, p. 230; Crump, 1960; Mulgan, 1960; Baxter, 1955). All these ideologies seem to fit with a model of New Zealand identity that essentially viewed itself as unique, separate, impermeable to foreign influence, and isolated from the rest of the world—i.e., the very masculinised view of the self as separate and autonomous that I set out above. We all know the saying 'No man is an island' (Donne), but it seemed to me that in New Zealand we were trying hard to disprove it: as if the quest for a distinctive national identity necessitated denying the myriad ways in which it related to and was influenced by multiple cultures and peoples. Investigating these links question helped me start to understand the strange mixture of foreign-ness (especially Britishness) and the local that characterises pakeha culture.

The colonial legacy

When I researched local history, what continually struck me was how deeply dependent New Zealand had been on the UK, culturally and economically, an association that only really began to unravel when Britain joined the EEC (Perry, 1994, pp. 41-46; Belich, 2001). And this goes back to New Zealand's colonial history as a part of the British Empire, mainly useful for supplying raw materials, primary produce and manpower, that is, the functions of a working class (albeit one outside the national boundaries). Moreover, pākehā men, it seemed to me, acted the part: they exhibited the characteristics of a working-class group: taking pride in teamwork, physical and technical accomplishment, disparaging intellect, being 'matey'; suspicious of effeminacy. When there was a war, NZ supplied men to fight; in popular discourse, the memory of Gallipoli remains central to the idea of New Zealand's 'coming of age' as a nation. In peacetime, we supplied meat, wool, timber, dairy, and other agricultural products. In Marxist terms, New Zealand functioned in the British Empire as a kind of rural proletariat, and there is a body of thought—called 'world systems theory'—that sees colonisation and imperialism as precisely an extension of capitalism beyond national boundaries, a project that continues today as a major aspect of globalisation (Wallerstein, 1974). The concept seems to knock against the idea (or really ideology) that New Zealand is or was a classless society. But perhaps this was actually because the real source of power, the real ruling class, was somewhere else – i.e., in Britain. Viewed in this light, pākehā masculinity starts to look less like simply a dominant group (although they may function in that way in a local context) and more like a bit player in a global network of power relations. And the ways that pākehā men are supposed to behave show not so much 'Kiwi pride' as their acceptance of a subordinate position as the workhorses of Empire.

One might object at this point that there is little point in taking such a negative line. However, it could equally be argued that pākehā need to gain some cultural self-knowledge in order to move forward—because, I think, there is also a dark side to New Zealand identity: in Jungian terms, a shadow. The shadow comes from those parts of our socialisation that didn't work. And it is worth considering here that the history of NZ/UK relations has also been one of exploitation. In a colonial network, manpower and natural resources are exported and transformed into high end products, which are then exported back to the colonies at a profit. Chief among these products is culture, which cements the grip of the ruling group by reminding the colonials who's best, and also has the bonus of discouraging the idea that culture (which is essential to identity) is something we can do ourselves. This in turn was confirmed to some degree by my own cultural prejudices—the British middle class typically think of colonials as stupid and uncultured and of colonial life as dull. Hence the cultural cringe—that continual anxiety that pākehā culture is inauthentic, that it doesn't measure up on the world stage. This is the dark undercurrent to bold pronouncements about 'Kiwi world beaters' (usually in sport). And of course, all this is cemented by the masculine ideology that holds artistic expression and creativity as effeminate and inappropriate for real men.

At the aural examination for my doctorate I had to field questions from two examiners. The latter was absent, but her questions were read out. One was about how I located my subjectivity in relation to the subject matter. 'I don't know what that means myself!' said the other (present) examiner, a local academic. Grateful as I was to him for this truly 'matey' let-off, I had to admit that this question had stumped me. Perhaps I was as guilty of isolating myself as is the culture I was critiquing; I, too, was 'involved in mankind' (Donne). It struck me that if I simply blamed pākehā

masculinity for its perceived shortcomings, I was ignoring the fact that I was myself a white, heterosexual man. So who was I to point to supposed masculinity in others while disavowing it in myself? This would be to fall into the old Cartesian dualism which says you can separate yourself from the thing you study. An important stage in my change was my involvement in a men's group in Auckland. Although the group was not overtly political or ideological in its aims, it had an implicit ideology of dissatisfaction with the dominant modes of masculinity in pākehā society, and a recognition that they forced men into positions of isolation and mistrust. The main activity of the group was basically to talk about one's emotional life and to foster feelings of connection between men on an emotional level. I found the non-intellectual nature of the group did help me get in touch with my feelings and feel closer to men, something of which I had little previous experience. On a personal level, it helped me to interpret my own experience of coming to New Zealand in a wider frame of reference.

Men's group

The reason I had joined the group was because I felt depressed and isolated from other men. Of course, my own upbringing had not encouraged me to feel close to men, and depression is endemic in the male side of my family—both my father and his grandfather—as well as arguably among men in general (Real, 1997, p. 22; Clare, 2000, pp. 23-24). It seemed to me that at the root of this depression was a sense of disconnection. Now clearly the modern world is full of disconnection—from family members, from homes (shifting house was considered the norm for academics); from work (Marxian alienation); through TV and mass media—all these can disconnect us, men and women. But I think the problem can be particularly acute for (some) men

because for them, quite simply, to be male is to be disconnected.

Connection to me means not whether you have broadband or Sky TV or whether you read the *Guardian*, how much you know, or even how many friends you have, but rather the sense of being in touch emotionally with yourself and the people around you, and of having a place that you belong. Connection is something that relates precisely to the 'feminine' domestic sphere that is so undervalued in modern life.

There is a large body of theory that deals with the alienating tendencies of modernity. Max Weber, for example, identified 'instrumental rationality', which values efficient process and systematisation above and beyond any social end (Weber, 1970; Horkheimer, 1994, p. vii; Benjamin, 1978, p. 36). Weber's main example was capitalism—'an economic system based, not on custom or tradition, but on the deliberate and systematic adjustment of economic means to the attainment of the objective of pecuniary profit' (Tawney, 1970, p. 1e). But this idea, when thought of more broadly as the most efficient means to an end, can also be applied to other modern discourses such as industrialisation, science, and globalisation, and is implicit in the dominant achievement rhetoric of our age: 'go for your goals', 'target-setting', 'rationalisation', etc. Such an approach reduces the complexity of lived social relations and experience to a flat plane marked by straight lines leading to various goals and aims, conflicts and conquests. It concentrates entirely on the public sphere to the exclusion of the private. It has no place for the here and now, but only the past and future. It reduces the world to a kind of phantasm (Benjamin, 1988, p. 190).

Now it might be argued that this has very little to do with masculinity as we encounter it in our everyday experience. But this is no more than to say that masculinity is highly ideological—that is, it seems natural and normal, but in fact it

embodies a set of assumptions that work in favour of the most powerful groups.

> The idea of rationalization forms a bridge between intellectual history and the history of social and economic relations. It describes the essence of modern social practice and thought. It is, in Foucault's sense, a discourse. My argument is that it is a *gendered* discourse, that the instrumental orientation and impersonality that govern modern social organization and thought should be understood as masculine ... Thus regardless of woman's increasing participation in the public, productive sphere ... it remains ... a man's world (Benjamin, 1988, pp. 186–187).

The implication is that masculinity in modernity has ceased to be only about the behaviour of men. Through its association with discourses of instrumental rationality, it has become apparently objective and universal. 'Ultimately, the large historical context, the big picture, is essential for understanding ... ethnographic detail' (Connell, 2000, p. 39). 'We must pay attention to very large scale structures ... the world gender order ... hegemony ... connected with patterns of trade, investment and communication, and a transnational business masculinity, institutionally based in multinational corporations and global finance markets', all these in turn historically related to Western Imperialist expansion (Connell, 2000, pp. 40-41; see also Wallerstein, 1974).

Masculinity is a very powerful discourse precisely because it is in some respects invisible. It is hard to study then, because it is not an object, but rather a way of seeing. 'Most of what has been perceived as universal in the observed system (gender or sex) may in fact have been part of the observing system' (Holter, 1995, p.

102). Conventional empirical scientific studies are not going to tell us much about masculinity because it is part of the methodology employed. Similarly then, one can start to suspect that studies of men that focus only on 'how men behave'--issues like men and violence, sport, gay men, male bodies—are only showing part of the picture, because they focus on the visible. Secondly, such studies tend to be selective. They look at groups who are relatively disempowered: working class, Maori, gays. The one group that doesn't get examined are those conducting the study, that is, the ones who have the power in the first place.

This is relevant to New Zealand because our history and our lives have been shaped by these forces, starting from our early history as a colony of the British Empire. Many of the reasons why we see ourselves the way we do, and even the very idea of, say. 'the Kiwi bloke' as a dominant stereotype in our society, can be traced back to the kinds of global and institutional forces of money and power that were at work historically in shaping our nation. It could be argued that we are no longer a colony, and no longer have such close links with, say, the UK, in which case we might expect the dominant ideologies of our nation to change. But this has not occurred. In a 2004 ethnographic and semiotic study comparing concepts of national identity in the US, Australia ,and New Zealand for advertising agency Foote Cone & Belding, researchers noted the continuing 'blokiness' of Kiwi culture: 'When we looked at all the symbols for what is New Zealand ... men and women all bought the same ... symbols: rugby, All Blacks, barbecues ... gumboots, tractors ... In America ... the female symbols ... apple pie, friendship diaries, are different to the men's' (Jacqueline Smart of FCB, quoted on *Campbell Live*). 'Local' culture—TV programmes, advertising, sport, and writing—continues to identify the local with a discourse of white masculinity, even though most New Zealanders live in cities, come

from increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds, are not necessarily male, and therefore have little in common with this national archetype (Perry, 1994, p. 41; Longhurst and Wilson, 1999, p. 218).

One possible reason for this strange persistence is that the colonial ties of Empire have been replaced by those of global capitalism. For example, when we look at advertising (which is ironically the most ubiquitous source of representations of national identity), we still see the same kinds of images and ideas, the difference being that the products being advertised generally come from multinationals: Toyota ('Welcome to our World'), Adidas (Sponsors of the All Blacks), McDonald's, TV3 (which is owned by CanWest). Sky TV's aggressive targeting of a male demographic for its sport channels (and its possible effects on Kiwi households) is an example of how global finance continually influences the local, often in a retrograde manner. Most of our media outlets—newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV—are foreign-owned. Again it can be objected that this has little to do with counselling issues of emotional dysfunction and personal relationships. But if you accept that everybody is affected to some degree by their environment, and especially the mass media, for models of how to live and who to be, and that we live in an increasingly globalised world, then it is no longer possible to isolate counselling issues from the wider context of our lived realities.

Conclusion

I hope that in this article I have placed men's issues in New Zealand in a larger cultural and historical framework. While I acknowledge that it may not be particularly applicable in the more interpersonal or counselling situation, I believe that the broadening of context that I have attempted is a useful step towards developing

research and theorisation of our local context, which is essential for the long term growth of counselling and its status in New Zealand.

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