

Hakarongo Mai! Rapanui women and decolonisation for development

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Abstract

On the Pacific island of Rapa Nui, there are growing calls from the indigenous population for political and cultural decolonisation. This research explores and documents how some women in Rapa Nui are engaging in these struggles. It investigates their aspirations for decolonisation and the strategies they are employing to have their voices heard. It also identifies and describes some of the challenges these women have faced as well as the

successes they have had in the context of these struggles to date. Sharing the stories of women who are active participants in these efforts, this research seeks to provide space for their perspectives and their experiences, acknowledging the presence and significance of women within decolonisation efforts on Rapa Nui.

In framing and carrying out this research I draw on feminist and indigenous epistemologies, as well as Participatory Action Research (Kendon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007) and Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003). My methods include a series of unstructured and semi-structured interviews, Talanoa (Otsuka, 2006; Vaioleti, 2006) as well as participant observation.

By considering the critical issues women identify within their struggles, this study illustrates how their aspirations for decolonisation are intrinsically focused on development goals, strongly linked to and framed by their colonial resistance. Additionally, centring women in this analysis, the important role they play within these processes is highlighted. This affords a fuller understanding of the range of possibilities that exist for Rapa Nui's decolonisation and future development, pushing Development Studies to pay better attention to the voices coming from the Fourth World, as people within these contexts strive for positive development within their communities.

'Hakarongo Mai! Rapanui women and decolonisation for development' is available at
<http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/2652/thesis.pdf?sequence=2>