

Ethnicity in official statistics: balancing information need & public expectations.

Paul Brown
Statistics New Zealand

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A news media view of ethnicity statistics

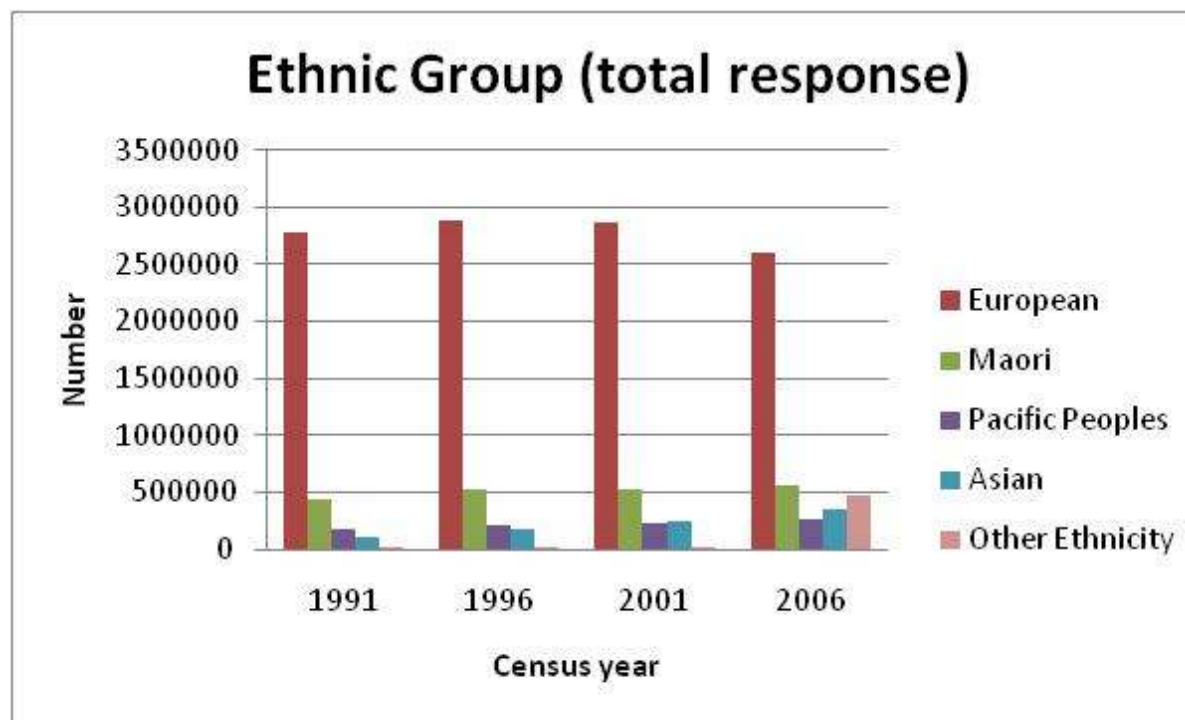
Mike Moreu, The Press, 30 April 2009, p8

Ethnicity question in the Census

11 Which ethnic group do you belong to?
Mark the space or spaces which apply to you.

- New Zealand European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Maori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Indian
- other (such as DUTCH, JAPANESE, TOKELAUAN). Please state:

Main ethnic group populations 1991- 2006



Related measures

- ◎ Ethnicity
 - common across official statistics system
- ◎ Ancestry (Maori descent)
- ◎ Maori iwi
- ◎ Country of birth
- ◎ Years lived in NZ
- ◎ Religion
- ◎ Languages spoken

Why we collect ethnicity statistics

- ◎ Purpose of official statistics (Statistics Act):
 - inform policy decisions
 - facilitate appreciation of matters of interest to government, business & the general public

- ◎ Ethnicity-related policy
 - redressing social & economic inequalities & discrimination
 - tailoring service delivery
 - migrant settlement

2009 review of measure

⊙ Findings

- public appreciate uses & rationale
- divergent views about some categories
- need consistent measurement

⊙ Decisions

- flexibility to accommodate NZer responses
- no change to question
- possibly review again after 2011 census.

Ongoing 'measurement' issues

- ⊙ Information for public debate, as well as policy?
- ⊙ Don't shoot the messenger (but do get him to explain himself)?
- ⊙ Consistency versus relevance?



Thank you