

## Fact-checking the elitist associate professor

By Mike Butler

An current attempt by an academic to ridicule what he calls “scaremongering about the Maori elite coming to take over the country” requires a bit of fact-checking.

Anaru Eketone, who is Associate Professor of Social Work at Otago University, had a piece titled “There’s a lot of scaremongering about the Maori elite but how about the pakeha elite?” published in the New Zealand Herald.

It’s not unusual for the Herald to publish articles denigrating those who criticise co-governance but you can be sure they will never allow a right of reply.

Therefore, this piece is written exclusively for Julian’s Stop Co-governance blog.

Eketone’s expertise, as detailed on his page on the university’s website, is in youth work, community development, social work and health promotion. His primary research interests are in contemporary Māori economic and social development, he also has an interest on the impact of religious movements in his tribal area.

More than 400 words of his 801-word article detail the “worry by some Pākehā that Māori may become more successful in the Pakeha world than they will”.

Yet the examples he gives are from 1874, 1905, and 1912.

Can he not provide any current examples of some Pākehā worrying that Maori may become more successful in the Pakeha world?

Eketone laments that: “By 1905, Maori had lost more than 58 million acres of the original 66 million in our possession”.

He does not say that most of the land (more than 90 percent) was sold, to the government, as agreed in the treaty, with much of it going through the Native Land Court which involved a detailed process to verify ownership.

He says that “the complaints I hear today about so-called Maori elites have a real whiff of racism about them”. He gives as an example the limited uproar about an IRD report that said “New Zealand’s 311 wealthiest families pay 8.8 per cent tax on their income compared to the 10.5 per cent paid by those on the minimum wage”.

On that point, I was surprised that Eketone, with expertise in economic development, ignored both the political intent and glaring flaw in that report, in that it included gerrymandered calculations that included capital gains from properties and businesses as taxable assets, and presented a percentage figure

that had not taxed those assets, which of course presented a lower overall tax percentage.

Eketone steps on to thin ice when he criticises those who he says “complain that Maori elites shouldn’t even exist”.

Criticism of that elite, which is strictly forbidden, actually comes from two directions – from those criticising co-governance, and from non-elite Maori who wonder where all the money for their iwi has disappeared to.

“The thinking behind this (criticism from the Stop Co-governance crowd) is the belief that Maori are too undeserving to have members who take advantage of education, business and investments, who end up having the skills and experience desired by business and government, because the system should not be set up to benefit Maori people at the expense of Pakeha people”.

Eketone uses the term “Maori elite” while describing a Maori middle class.

The iwi elite may include some but is different from the Maori middle class.

The iwi elite targeted by Stop Co-governance refers more to the Iwi Leaders Group, which is a political-economic alliance that has grown from groups of claimants who have received multi-million dollar compensation payouts as well additional political rights through the treaty settlement process.

This alliance, in conjunction with the Waitangi Tribunal, uses the tribunal’s re-translated and reinterpreted treaty as an authoritative sacred text to present themselves as “treaty partners” to co-govern New Zealand.

The *He Puapua* blueprint for a co-governed New Zealand, which was commissioned by the Ardern government, envisages two governments, one “by Maori for Maori”, the other, a fully bicultural version of what we already have, with both subject to a monitoring committee consisting of iwi elite. See <https://www.nzcpr.com/he-puapua/>.

Eketone says nothing about *He Puapua*. Neither does he say anything that the iwi elite may trade as tax-exempt charities. See <https://www.nzcpr.com/ngai-tahus-tax-exempt-charitable-status/>

Eketone writes that his point “is the hypocrisy of those who would attack Maori elites and ignore Pakeha who are far wealthier, have far more power, far more influence, sometimes for generation after generation”.

He either fails to see or doesn't want you to know that successive governments, which have spent forever creating laws preventing the formation of private cartels that could become richer and more powerful than the government, have foolishly created an iwi cartel that is a heartbeat away from having the wealth and political power to assume control of us.

In fact, for a couple of months before Jacinda Ardern quit, it looked like the iwi cartel had seized control.

Here's a new term for you. A "nudger" is a trendy opinion leader who presents him or herself as not-so-obvious establishment.

Eketone is using his position as an associate professor at New Zealand's oldest university to "nudge" us away from criticising co-governance.

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Mike Butler wrote *The Treaty: Basic Facts, Tribes Treaty Money Power, The First Colonist, 24 Years: The Trials of Allan Titford*, and *Innocent Nil Debit*. His research on treaty settlements may be viewed at <https://www.nzcpr.com/treaty-transparency-settlements-1989-to-2013-revised-and-updated/>