



MANU AO
Academy

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Dr Karen Fisher

Identities and subjectivities in cross-cultural research

This seminar presents my attempt to tease out how identity is negotiated and re-created in a cross-cultural context by drawing on my experiences of conducting fieldwork in the Philippines. The dominant conception of Western foreigners in the Philippines is that all Western foreigners are white, and all white people are American; however, as a New Zealander of Māori/Pākehā decent, I found the description of me as 'white' to be deeply unsettling. I draw on methodological debates and politics of research within human geography and development studies, research into Māori identities and whiteness studies to understand how our autobiographies, identity and subjectivities affect how we conduct our research and interact with people in a cross-cultural context.

Dr Fisher of Waikato-Tainui (Ngāti Mahuta), Ngāti Maniapoto (Ngāti Paretekawa) descent is a Human Geographer at the University of Auckland and received a BA and MSocSc from University of Waikato before completing a PhD at the Australian National University in 2006. Her research to date has been primarily concerned with aspects of water resource management in a developing country context. In pursuing this interest she has spent extended periods of time conducting fieldwork in the Philippines beginning in 1997. She intends to continue researching overseas but is keen to shift her focus to include research into water governance arrangements in New Zealand.