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“Pushing an Irritational Button”: Asian Psychologists Making Sense of Racialization in Psychology Training in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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The monocultural psychology training in Aotearoa New Zealand deliberately centers White racial framing which enables those who benefit from Whiteness to uphold an imposed hierarchy of racially inferior (Māori) and superior (Pākehā) groups. In Aotearoa, we are faced with a reality that Asian (as a diverse group from East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia) knowledge sources and the intake of Asian students into psychology training are scarcely prioritized. In this study, we utilized counter-storytelling as a critical race praxis to illuminate the various forms of Asianization (Asian racialization) as a subframe of White racial framing. Employing interpretative phenomenological analysis, we explored the subjective experiences of four Asian psychologists as they made sense of racism and the formation of their racialized identity within psychology training. Our analysis uncovered three main themes with subordinate themes: (1) the White mold of psychology (encountering White ideals of psychology and pursuing perceived benefits of Whiteness); (2) bearing the brunt of Asianization (ranging from being achievers yet forgotten to being perceived as a threat and unassimilable); and (3) relating to Māori (expressing identity validation and empathy yet experiencing lateral violence). We observed the manifestation of White racial framing across various cognitive (e.g., the prioritization of western knowledge and the promotion of colorblind norms), emotional (e.g., White fragility), and behavioral aspects (e.g., expectations placed on minoritized ethnic groups to assimilate), all of which contribute to Asianization archetypes (viz., the forgotten Asian, the irritational button, and the unassimilable foreigner).

What is the public significance of this article?


Our findings reveal the pervasive influence of the White racial frame on Asian racial identity formation in psychology. To address this, we must sensitize psychology training staff and students in Aotearoa to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the ramifications of settler colonialism and racism, which are crucial for creating a safe space for all students to explore their racial and cultural identity.


Keywords: Asian, racialization, critical race theory, AsianCrit, psychology

Internationally, there is a paucity of research focusing on the experiences of minoritized groups within the context of psychology training, with the few exceptions of ethnographic accounts offered by members of minoritized groups (González Vera et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2021). The scant attention given to the “minoritized voice” in psychology is unsurprising, given the discipline’s deep-rooted positivist paradigm, in pursuit of a singular, generalizable “truth.”

The constructed “truth” is often decontextualized, deliberately obscuring the influence of systemic oppression on individuals’ lived experiences, rather than incidentally so (Tan et al., 2023). In this study, we drew on counter-storytelling as a critical race praxis (J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022) to illuminate the different forms of Asianization (Asian racialization) and racial framing (Feagin, 2020). The aim is to center the stories and lived experiences of

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Kyle Kar Hou Tan played a lead role in conceptualization, formal analysis, methodology, project administration, writing—original draft, and writing—review and editing. Valerie Tze Yeen Tan played a supporting role in writing—original draft and writing—review and editing.

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Asian peoples in psychology to enable the identification of ways to transform unjust structures and practices within the discipline.

Asian Peoples in Aotearoa

Te Tiriti o Waitangi,¹ a constitutional document signed between the British Crown and Indigenous Māori hāpu (family collectives related through a shared ancestor) leaders, has granted the (im)migration of Pākehā (European), Pacific peoples, Asian peoples, and other tauīwi (non-Māori) to settle in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1840 (Kukutai & Rata, 2017). The two predominant Asian ethnic groups, Chinese and Indian, began settling in Aotearoa in the late 18th century, initially as low-wage laborers and seamen (Gupta, 2016; Ip, 2009). The 2023 Census estimated that about 17% of the Aotearoa population identified with at least one Asian ethnicity, including individuals with whakapapa (genealogical links) to West Asia (excluding Middle East; e.g., Afghan), East Asia (e.g., Chinese and Korean), South Asia (e.g., Indian and Pakistani), and Southeast Asia (e.g., Indonesian and Malaysian; Statistics New Zealand, 2022). The five largest Asian groups in Aotearoa are Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Korean, and Japanese. The Asian population is expanding rapidly and is projected to reach 26% of the overall Aotearoa population by 2043 (Statistics New Zealand, 2022). Asian New Zealanders, as a collective, is incredibly diverse in terms of nationality, migration history, length of residence, degree of acculturation, religion, culture, and language (Williams & Cleland, 2016). In this article, the term “Asian” is strategically deployed to offer opportunities for individuals from different Asian backgrounds to mutually connect via our shared experiences of racialization and forge solidarity to identify collective solutions to entrenched systems of oppressive power (Dam, 2023; Fu & Azarmandi, 2023).

Asianization and Racial Frame

A survey of 1,452 Asian participants in Aotearoa in 2021 found 40% had experienced racism or discrimination related to ethnic backgrounds in their lifetime (Jaung et al., 2022). Asian peoples who were younger, students, temporary visa holders, or residing in rural areas were more likely to report experiencing interpersonal racism (Jaung et al., 2022). A nationally representative survey reported that 12% of Asian adults had experienced ethnically motivated personal attacks and unfair treatment, a statistic that is 2.3 times higher than that for non-Māori, Pacific, and other Asian adults (Ministry of Health, 2023). Asian peoples in Aotearoa constitute one of the minoritized groups for being subjected to Asianization (alongside intersectional forms of oppression such as xenophobia and discrimination based on migrant status and religion) within the settler-colonial context of the country (Mok, 2022; Pearson, 2009).

As a settler-colonial tool in Aotearoa (Levy & Waitoki, 2016), mainstream psychology tends to focus on interpersonal aspects of racial oppression (e.g., bias and prejudice) that falls short of unpacking the racial hierarchy that produces differential outcomes for racialized groups. To better accentuate the systemic nature of racism in Aotearoa, as evidenced through continual Te Tiriti breaches and institutional racism (Kukutai & Rata, 2017; Levy, 2018), we employed the concept “White racial framing” (Feagin, 2020) to elucidate the dominant form of beliefs (e.g., ideologies and stereotypes), cognitive elements (e.g., interpretations and narratives), visual and auditory elements (images and language uses), and emotive reactions (feelings) that are fundamentally White-centered.

With this term, we refer to a form of racial framing that allows White peoples to collude in or rationalize a complex array of exploitative, discriminatory, and other oppressive White and colorblind practices targeting Indigenous and peoples of color (Feagin, 2020). White racial framing is not grounded in anti-White rhetoric and is not exclusive to Pākehā in the context of Aotearoa. Rather, its adoption enables any individuals who benefit from Whiteness to define, act, and conform in ways that justify, maintain, and obscure attention to everyday racist practices and the resultant systemic inequalities (Feagin, 2020).

The White racial frame can be understood as a broad overarching frame that unifies various subframes, including Asianization. The racial framing of Asian peoples in Aotearoa is comparatively less developed than that of other minoritized groups, such as Māori and Pacific peoples (Asafo & Tuiburelevu, 2022; Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016), and lags behind North America where more comprehensive theories on the racial positioning of Asian peoples have been established (e.g., Iftikar & Museus, 2018; C. J. Kim, 1999; J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022). Our reference to the racial archetypes in the Asian critical race theory (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022) in this study accounts for the Pākehā–Māori racial hierarchy in Aotearoa and early Māori activism of challenging racism (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016; Tan, 2023), to accentuate the specific nuances of Asianization and the ensuing dynamics of oppression, resilience, and resistance among Asian peoples transitioning through psychology training.

Historically, Asian populations in western countries are objectified through an orientalist lens that viewed us as inferior and our cultures as degenerate (Said, 1978). Asian peoples in Aotearoa have a long history of enduring racist rhetoric and policies since the 19th century from the introduction of poll tax to restrict immigration and preclude access to state employment, forced assimilationist policies that require conformity to a “White New Zealand” national identity, to anti-Asian sentiments of “Asian invasion” (Ip & Murphy, 2005; Pearson, 2009). It was not until 2002 when a formal apology in English was issued for the imposition of the poll tax on Chinese immigrants, followed by an apology in Cantonese (the primary language spoken within early Chinese migrants) in 2023 (Tang, 2023). Asian peoples in Aotearoa were initially vilified as “aliens” through Asianization archetypes such as “perpetual foreigner” that labels Asian peoples as distinctly different from the White New Zealand society and “yellow peril” that perceives Asian peoples as an imminent threat to White livelihood (Ip, 2009; J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022). These Asianization archetypes do not function uniformly; rather, these are underpinned by two polar threads: (a) otherness and hypervisibility (e.g., assumptions and stereotypes made on Asian peoples that lead to experiences of racial microaggressions) and (b) erasure and invisibility (e.g., ignorance of Asian peoples’ experiences as subjects of racial oppressions and resistors to injustices; J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022).

Members of minoritized groups are known to carry several perspectival frames concurrently (Feagin, 2020). Indeed, Asian

¹ Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the British Crown and Māori hāpu (family collectives with a shared ancestor). The Preamble outline the Crown’s objective to strengthen relationships with Māori while acknowledging that Māori maintain unsundered political authority. Article I grants the Crown the right to kāwanatanga to govern its settlers, while Te Tiriti reciprocates with Article II, ensuring tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) for the rangatira (chief) and hapū. Article III guarantees Māori the equal rights and privileges of British subjects (mana ōrite). Article IV, conveyed orally, pledges commitment to wairuatanga including spiritual and religious freedom (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016).

peoples are multiframe, who typically integrate elements of the White racial frame alongside those of home-culture frame (adaptation of own cultural features for social survival) and/or with an antiracist counter-frame (conceptualization and implementation of resistance strategies to racism; Feagin, 2020). The complexity of multiframe can be demonstrated through the “model minority” expectations that reinforce White proximity as aspirational for Asian peoples (Padgett et al., 2020). Described by Pearson (2009) as “a transition from alien to citizen,” the desire for social acceptance in a Pākehā-dominated society intertwines with our home cultures that emphasize a respect for the host culture and adherence to an established order deemed crucial for ensuring the long-term welfare and interests of individuals (Ip, 2009). As Asian migrants settle in Aotearoa, or as New Zealand-born Asian people engage with the dominant (Pākehā) culture, we may experience varying degrees of acculturative stress as we adopt hybrid- or multicultural identities while contending with the loss of cultural norms and support systems in broader social interactions (H. Kim, 2021). However, Asian scholars have also criticized the façade generated by the supposedly positive “Asian model minority attributes” such as a hardworking and strong work ethic, which leads to different minoritized ethnic group being pitted against each other and buttressing the oppression of our communities due to other racial archetypes (Padgett et al., 2020).

Asian Experiences in Psychology

Psychology in Aotearoa has its origin from the mass migration of American- and western-based psychological theories, concepts, models, and practices (Love, 2003). Despite the 4-decade efforts to decolonize psychology in Aotearoa (Abbott & Durie, 1987), the discipline has proven resistant to transformative changes. The imparting of Eurocentric knowledge remains the status quo in psychology curricula in Aotearoa with occasional sprinkles of Māori, Pacific, and Asian content to enhance diversity (Waitoki et al., 2023). Entry to psychology training in Aotearoa is competitive; for example, most programs only offer up to 10 places each year due to limited resources available. Further, the extended duration of training (a minimum of 3 years of undergraduate and 3 years of postgraduate) poses challenges for students from minoritized backgrounds (e.g., racialized, lower socioeconomic status or have a disability status) to traverse the pipeline of psychology.

The current student intake for psychology training program in Aotearoa is not reflective of general population demographics (Scarf et al., 2019) and the growing need of mental health services among Asian communities (Wong, 2021). Increasing representation of Asian psychologists, alongside Māori and Pacific peoples, is essential because of the in-group advantage and culturally specific knowledge required to address challenges faced by our communities (e.g., cultural stigma toward mental health and barriers to accessing culturally relevant services; Gupta, 2016; Tasker, 2023; Williams & Cleland, 2016). However, the necessity to develop Asian capacity is often overlooked within the White racial framed psychology training that leaves little room to explore racial identity, cultural strengths, and cultural competency (Liu, 2019).

A survey of psychologists and psychology training students (Waitoki et al., 2024) found more than two thirds (75%) had expressed “somewhat” or a “huge” concern on the manifestation of monocultural psychology within their professional program. Furthermore, two fifths (41%) of Asian psychologists and students

in training stated that their worldviews were “never” represented in psychology training (Waitoki et al., 2024). Overall, about half (47%) of students who had experienced microaggression in psychology training attributed it to racism. Compared to other ethnic groups, Asian students were more likely to report that their experiences of microaggression were related to their way of dressing or appearance (60%) or their accent or spoken language (30%; Waitoki et al., 2024). While these studies offer valuable insights into the patterns of racial inequalities for Asian peoples in psychology training, often at an interpersonal level, we are not aware of any in-depth qualitative studies that specifically unpack the multilevel experiences of Asianization. We also emphasized the development of antiracist counter-strategies as participants forge their Asian identity while grappling with challenges within the context of a White racial framed psychology.

Objectives

As Tseng and Lee (2021) advocated for envisioning a psychology that centers Asian voices in the multiracial pursuit of social justice, we are challenged to “reconstruct, redefine, and reformulate what it means to be Asian in a society that has been historically shaped by White supremacy, colonialism, and other systems of oppression” (pp. 694–695). This study is guided by an overarching research question: “How do Asian psychologists make sense of racism and their racial identity in psychology training?” The aim is to unmask the operation of White racially framed training programs that Asian students must undergo to register as a psychologist. Asian people’s experiences of racism are often perceived as “anecdotal” and minimized as individual experiences, maintaining the dispersion of a collective voice and reinforcing the positivism paradigm. Therefore, the utility of storytelling is important in allowing for the rich collection of nuanced and apparently isolated experiences in view of building statistical power toward the wider narrative.

Method

This study constitutes part of a larger study exploring barriers and incentives for minoritized groups to participate effectively in psychology. Ethics approval was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies, at the University of Waikato. Purposive sampling was used to reach out to psychologists with an Asian cultural background. Four psychologists were recruited between 2021 and 2023 and represented diverse Asian backgrounds including Chinese, Indian, and Southeast Asian along with varying migration histories. All participants entered psychology training within the last decade. However, we opted not to associate the quotes with the comprehensive profiles of individual interviewees to prevent the risk of deductive disclosure. Employing semistructured and narrative-based interviews featuring open-ended, nonleading questions with prompts, the process sought to extract narratives where meanings of each are collaboratively constructed by participants and interviewers. Each interview, lasting between 1 and 2 hr, covered a range of topics encompassing experiences in applying for psychology training, encounters with racism during training, internships and workplaces, as well as their aspirations for psychology. This study specifically delves into participants’ accounts of events, emotions, and relationships that relate to the operation of racism within psychology training.

Positionality

Both authors identify as first-generation immigrants to Aotearoa and have shared history of marginalization as a minoritized ethnic group in Malaysia (i.e., Malaysian Chinese). Our worldview is grounded in multiple histories (e.g., Chinese migration, colonialism, and assimilation), cultures (e.g., Southeast Asian and Chinese), and values (e.g., Confucianism and Taoism) that offers a unique lens to understanding the racial dynamics in Aotearoa. Kyle Kar Hou Tan is a researcher with a background in community psychology and interest in policy analysis, and Valerie Tze Yeen Tan is a clinical psychologist with interest in cross-cultural experiences within the health sector. We have spent a number of years reflecting on Asian racial positioning in Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a constitutional document for Aotearoa New Zealand and have initiated discussions to set up a networking and supportive space for Asian psychologists and students within the New Zealand Psychological Society. The personal pronouns “we” is used throughout this article to represent our voices as part of a wider collective of Asian psychologists in Aotearoa with shared Asianization experiences while going through a training program to becoming a registered psychologist.

Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the transcripts. IPA is a social-constructionist method of inquiry underpinned by three philosophies of knowledge: phenomenology (understand the meaning of human experiences), hermeneutics (interpretative activity involved in the analytic process), and idiography (focus at single-case studies; Shaw, 2010; Shinebourne, 2011). The unit of study in IPA research is an experiential account where the focus is on participants’ subjective experiences of making sense of racism in relation to the social world and the formation of their racialized identity in psychology training. Our social-constructionist analysis utilizes Feagin’s (2020) concept of White racial framing to illustrate how Asianization functions as a social process that legitimizes power structures and perpetuates inequality.

The analysis begins with a detailed examination of case one following the steps outlined by Shaw (2010) although the process is iterative and multidirectional. A fully worked-up analysis is completed prior to moving to other cases that involves a careful examination of similarities and differences across cases to produce detailed accounts of patterns of meaning through superordinate with subordinate themes. The interpretative phase also includes reflections on shared experience across participants and goes beyond what was written on the transcript by delving into reasons behind participants’ specific comments or lack thereof.

Findings

Our findings are derived from four case studies with names presented as pseudonyms: three psychologists (Richard, Elle, and Sarah) and an intern psychologist (Lane). All participants, except for Richard, who arrived later in Aotearoa, were either born in Aotearoa or migrated to Aotearoa at a young age. Table 1 outlines the three main themes of how participants made sense of their racialized identity in psychology training. Within each heading, subordinate themes are discussed with extracts from the transcripts.

Table 1
Group Experiential Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
The White mold of psychology	Realizing the White psychology image White proximity
Bearing the brunt of Asianization	Being part of a “idyllic” program The forgotten Asian The irritational button The unassimilable foreigners
Relating to Māori	Lateral violence Expressing empathy Identity validation

The White Mold of Psychology

This theme encapsulates the participants’ perceptions of the Eurocentric nature of psychology training that vastly deviates from their worldview. A predefined mold was imposed on Asian students, often requiring them to conform at the expense of presenting their authentic selves, with a strong expectation to assimilate to White norms.

Realizing the White Psychology Image

During the application phase, participants were made to quickly realize that they had to conform to Whiteness to secure acceptance into the program. As a stark contrast to the undergraduate study, where there was less of a need to compete for limited spots, Richard became acutely aware of a racial hierarchy within the professional program that sought candidates fitting certain set of criteria. Richard described the desirable characteristics for psychology training as White-upper and middle-classed. This observation arose from multiple rejections and reapplications to the psychology training where he constantly altered his presentation to fit the tokenistic mold of a nonthreatening Asian person. Inherent within Richard’s deliberate attempt to Whitewash himself was the dissatisfaction with his Pākehā counterparts (including peers with similar or lesser academic qualifications), who had an easier path due to naturally conforming to the White image and the motivation to pursue a career as a professional clinician.

Richard: *Every single time I applied, when I was rejected. ... I got a similar message. They were looking for a specific type of person, a specific type of presentation. In fact, I was told that they would recruit nine to ten students and they would only let one Asian in. And if they had their Asian for the year, you are not going to get in. Haha.*

Interviewer: *So, what is this type of person?*

Richard: *It’s that upper-middle White class with a specific way of expressing themselves, specific way of dressing, talking and all of that stuff, which I was not. So I spent every year becoming a different [person], changing the way I present myself, more and more into what they needed. Learning as well, someone said that they don’t like being challenged, learning to not have strong opinions, learning to be non-threatening, and not have strong ideas.*

Lane, who was born and raised in Aotearoa and had knowledge about working with Māori clients, found it less challenging to navigate through the selection process. However, she was acutely aware of the White psychology image and shared a similar narrative about Asian peoples not fitting the ideal image of psychology training. As one of the few Asian candidates who successfully secured a place in psychology training, she was approached by other prospective Asian applicants seeking advice on the selection interview process. She expressed concerns for future generations of Asian peoples who are likely to be othured by the selection panelists for not presenting enough White characteristics.

Lane: *Later I got into the program and she [a junior] contacted me cause she was applying. She had a really thick Asian accent ... really intelligent, really kind, and I was helping her with her application but in my head I was thinking "This person's not going to get in because her accents too thick," which is just sad because everything else about her ... in my mind she would make a good psychologist. But she's not assimilated enough.*

White Proximity

Becoming White at the expense of expressing one's Asian identity constitutes a key marker to achieve success in psychology, from being admitted to the program, viewed favorably by staff members and classmates, to passing the examination. Sarah, who grew up in Aotearoa, was mindful of the myriad "boxes" that Asian peoples must assimilate to fit in. Over time, when conforming became normalized, she ceased to challenge the institutional structure as she recognized the poor likelihood of systemic changes. During the interview phase, Sarah shared her experience of intentionally curating a self that would present her as "likeable" for the panelists. This constructed self draws her closer to the White membership of psychology but compels her to leave her culture at the door.

Sarah: *I think it was just around curating in a way that would increase your chance ... you have to come across as very likeable and easy going, and create that rapport with the people because a lot of the decision making around getting into the program is how that interview process goes and whether you're likeable, and that I guess possible even just dimming your own Asianness as well for me.*

Similarly, Richard, who applied to the program numerous times but to no fruitful avail, realized he needed to "put on a White mask" to gain an edge in the application round. Richard outlined the efforts made to achieve a closer proximity to Whiteness, which included negotiating the clash in different cultural values and adopting White norms and values that are essential to "survive" psychology training. Driven by the perceived rewards of White proximity, he made conscious attempts to become less Asian and feel comfortable with his masked self.

Richard: *Two and half years [of working in a hospitality service] and learning how to relate and talk to White people, learning how to just be different from myself. At that point, I was quite comfortable being a bit more different*

from my Asian self. For example, think about how we relate to others, where in Asian cultures a show of respect is seen here as being submissive—not respect—so putting that away and becoming a bit more comfortable with fake confidence, you know, feeling that I deserve a spot, feeling like I've earned it, I deserve being here.

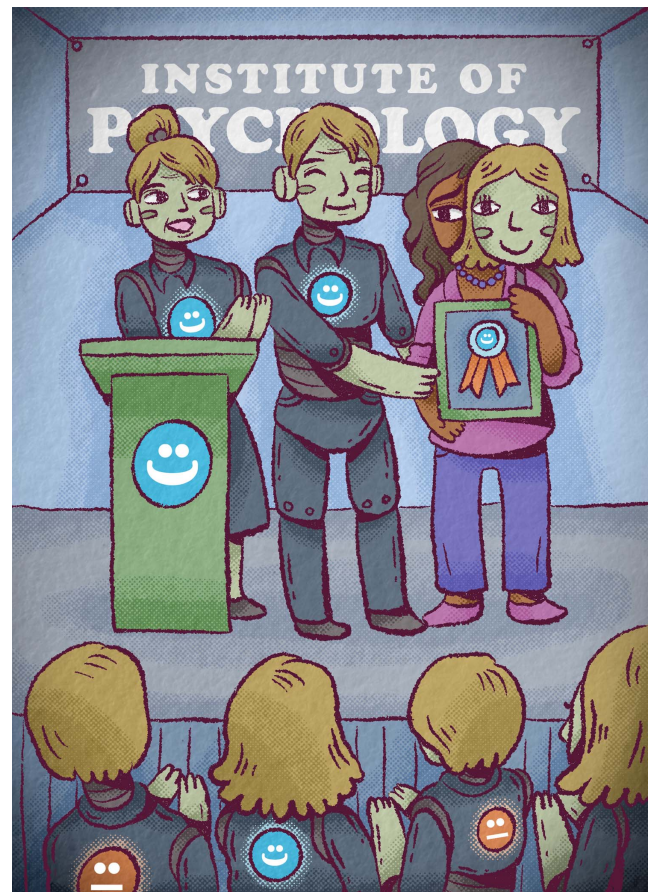
We depict the concept of "White proximity" in Figure 1, which presents an image of an Asian psychologist (portrayed as a South Asian woman) receiving an award for her contributions to the discipline. It took her considerable time to discern which aspects of her Asian identity were deemed acceptable in the predominantly White discipline, as she gradually grew comfortable concealing herself behind a White mask.

Bearing the Brunt of Racism: Asianization

All participants were questioned about their encounters with racism related to their Asian identity and were provided with opportunities to elaborate. Forms of Asianization manifested differently in all cases.

Figure 1

Wearing a White Mask as an Indicator of White Proximity to Gain Acceptance in Psychology Training



Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

Being Part of a “Idyllic” Program

Elle is a 1.5 generation psychologist who immigrated to New Zealand at an early age and has worked with other Asian mental health professionals to explore bringing culture to the forefront of therapy. Elle was particularly concerned about the absence of any training content in Asian psychology within the program. The deliberate erasure of immigrant experiences and the nuances of Asian backgrounds of varying socioeconomic status, nationality, and immigration history is an exemplar of perpetuation of Asian peoples as model minorities. This myth racializes Asian communities as a singular high-achieving population with little attention warranted by attributing our competence to cultural values that place more emphasis on marriage, parenthood, hard work, and career success (Lee & Kye, 2016).

Elle: *One form [of racism] I feel that it comes up in would be that, to me it's the erasure of a lot of other related things like being an immigrant. That's very different when we're talking about people who were accepted into the program who are immigrants as opposed to people who actually have been raised in New Zealand or who have been raised in an English-speaking background.*

The model minority myth overshadows the impacts of racism on Asian communities as Elle reflected on the absence of any teaching approaches to work with those subjected to racialization. The psychology program was described as having a tendency to portray itself as “idyllic” and avoid difficult topics, such as racism, that may cause uneasiness among predominantly Pākehā staff members and students. The emotional reactions from fear of being criticized and discomfort when participating in discussions around racial injustices are examples of White fragility (Crawford & Langridge, 2022). Elle was mindful of the White fragility among the program staff and their attempts of protecting the “idyllic” atmosphere of the class as they were not equipped to handle the resultant responses.

Elle: *I would say the absence is where the racism lies ... topics that are not being covered, or things that are not talked about, or things like racism... [or questions about] “what does racism look like in a therapy room and have you experienced it?” “what if you're a clinician and experience it?” That's not like talked about at all, right. ... I think psychology in particular, people are extremely well-intended and lovely and they don't want to bring up tougher topics. And obviously it's a very depressing topic to exist in and think about. But if I were to sort of say how it [racism] manifests, it'd be in absence of or a silencing or that aspect of it.*

Lane highlighted the challenges for breaking the model minority stereotype of “an obedient student” and attempting to address White fragility within the program. Her cohort was invited to provide feedback on the program during a student representative meeting. However, she was confronted with the defensiveness of staff members about the issues raised within the program and found herself caught in the position of needing to soothe their discomfort. The personalization of complaint about racial issues is one form of White fragility where staff members overly concentrated on clearing their own names as the

“perpetrator” of racist actions and disregard the broader context of the complaint raised by Lane and her classmates regarding the overall program. The staff positioned themselves as the experts with authority and induced students to self-doubt whether they had misinterpreted the “supposedly kind” intention of the staff to provide an opportunity for feedback. This lack of psychological safety with staff has deterred Lane and her classmates from wanting to engage with staff members to provide genuine feedback in improving the program.

Lane: *We sent the memo through and then they came back and called us all into a meeting with two senior staff members and said “that made us feel really upset,” using a lot of emotional language as a crux to disregard the actual issues. “And made us feel blah, that's not something we're trying to do blah, you know our intention, you know our heart, we know your heart”, and making lots of excuses. And some of the cohort responded in a way “that wasn't our intent” and getting worked into this emotional talk. Some of us sitting there just, like I was shaking my head the whole time, basically glaring, like enough of this bullshit, you hadn't spoken about any of the points, we were so specific and just using anger and sadness as the front to not let any of the issues to actually be talked about.*

In Figure 2, we draw on the “banging against the wall” metaphor to illustrate how an Asian student's attempts to address her racialized identity—such as issues of racism, cultural safety, and Te Tiriti—are dismissed by her classmates. Her efforts are met with blame and isolation as she is perceived as upsetting the “idyllic” Whiteness of the program.

The Forgotten Asian

Participants reflected on the program's cultural insensitivity toward diverse Asian experiences following the pressure to become White and not to challenge the institutional (White) norms. When asked if there were any forms of support offered by the staff in the program, Sarah replied “I think there was cultural support for Māori students but there was no cultural support for Asian students.” Universities in Aotearoa have the legal responsibility to provide care for Māori students and achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2021). However, under the scheme of providing cultural support within psychology training, Sarah expressed disappointment that the cultural needs for Asian students frequently fell through the gaps. It perpetuates the notion that Asian students are model minorities who do not require targeted support as we are considered a negligible group in psychology training and can navigate their paths to success independently.

For Elle, the phenomenon of “forgotten Asian” manifested within content of the psychology training that predominantly reflects a singular worldview. This mode of training largely ignores the cultural, racial, intergenerational migration and socioeconomic nuances that form the basis of culturally safe care for Asian communities. Inherent within the concept of the “forgotten Asian” is the presumption that the western approach would adequately serve Asian communities along with the expectation that Asian peoples should relinquish their cultural identity and assimilate into a White New Zealand cultural context.

Figure 2

Bringing Up Difficult Topics in an “Idyllic” Program With the White Mask Off



Note. DSM = Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

Elle: *With psychology there is a certain way of being and doing things that sort of fits the certain mold. ... How do you actually support people who’ve been through more trauma or who’ve been through a kind of again growing up in lower socioeconomic backgrounds and how do you normalize that in the profession. And then you kind of just teach through the clinical knowledge and expertise from one specific European dominant lens for instance. So I feel that one aspect of that is how can the training be broadened in some ways so that it is more inclusive to different types of struggles culturally.*

The Irritational Button

Unlike other participants, Richard could recall more explicit racialization experience during the interview. This may be related to his identity as a new migrant where he grappled with recent experiences in understanding his Asian identity while navigating the dynamics of White psychology. He coined the term “irritational button” to describe everything Asian—skin color, culture, and the mannerism we speak, present, and act—that evokes conflicting

emotional responses among Pākehā. Richard outlined experiences of being “othered” through the association of stereotypical characteristics for being Asian, in addition to his conscious efforts to acculturate to the program’s norm. The conceptualization of the “irritational button” resonates with the “yellow peril” discourses that perceive Asian peoples as an imminent threat to Pākehā cultures and, hence, are not qualified for White memberships (J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022).

Richard: *One of the things that being in the program showed you, because you had to be really White, is that you are not allowed to make human mistakes ... because anything you do that is short of perfection or “neutral” stands out as “you did that because you are Asian.” Asian people trigger an irritational button in White people. And this is the button that I found as I was working through how to present myself differently. Because we are excitable, we talk in short bits of sentences, we like giggling, we like making little jokes, things like that. We are seen as less professional.*

Figure 3 illustrates the spectrum of emotions (e.g., perplexed, annoyed, and concerned) displayed by students from dominant backgrounds toward the Asian student. We used the symbol on the

Figure 3
Asian Peoples Triggering an Irritational Button



Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

button on their chest to represent varying levels of “irritation” directed at racialized students. This figure also highlights opportunities for forming solidarity among minoritized students to support each other within a predominantly White racial framed psychology training.

The coining of the term “irritational button” helps Richard in understanding and explaining the reactions of White people toward discriminating against Asian peoples. Richard also outlined the benefit of sensitizing White counterparts with this term to help them make sense of their immediate response to feeling uneasy (or annoyed) around Asian peoples and emphasizes the need for them to work on unpacking it. He further described the need to reframe his words when speaking out about racist behavior in order to circumvent triggering White fragility, such as by using terms like “unconscious,” or indicating that it is Asian people who are triggering.

Richard: *What tends to happen, and I pointed this out to a lot of people around me when I notice bullying of Asian peoples. I said “People who are Asian push an irritational button and it’s not their fault. It’s the way we look and we speak that make White peoples irritated for no reason.” You know, when you were in high school, you just don’t like someone and then everything they do pisses you off. That’s what Asian people are to White people. ... That’s how I tried to explain people’s [mindset]. Because again, it is about awareness. People don’t know what they don’t know.*

The Unassimilable Foreigners

In the second year of training, Richard grew more confident in presenting his “Whitewashed” self. However, the feedback for his first ever written placement report from her supervisor triggered a strong response in him. He was anticipating receiving constructive feedback to enhance the content of the report which would better prepare him for the next assignment. Despite English being Richard’s first language, a stereotypical comment from his placement supervisor about his English language ability made him realize that “the box that [he] never thought [he] had [stored away his Asian self], fully burst opened.” The reminder that he still displayed characteristics associated with an “irritational button” led to the realization that he would never truly become a “New Zealander.” The notion of “unassimilable” Asian peoples to New Zealand culture is core to the “perpetual foreigners” archetype that maintains Asian identity as “alien” regardless of the length of (im)migration, immigration status, or efforts to assimilate to the host country.

Richard: *I guess one part that triggered me was I thought up to this point that I have been seen for who I am not how I look like. I would be seen as a health professional, as a psychologist, as someone with a PhD, all these things that I have worked so hard to make of myself that I can control. But suddenly out of nowhere, here I am again being identified by how I look. ... So I think the biggest thing at that point that really hit me was identification. That no matter how hard I work, no matter what I did, I look Asian and I am always going to be identified as an Asian.*

Richard further added that:

In terms of that experience, what happened was being Asian means you are not allowed to make mistakes. I noticed every mistake that I made was seen as a function of my race, not the fact that I was just making a mistake.

There is minimal leeway for Asian students to make mistakes if we desire to be perceived as competent and fulfill the impression of the (White) program standard. The constant viewing of Asian peoples as “foreign” can create a tension with the expectation to conform as a model minority through his attempts at Whitewashing Asianness (as undesirable markings); yet, the investment in becoming “less Asian” does not save Richard from being stereotyped as such.

Sarah outlined examples of hypervisibility of racial identity in her class on those rare occasions when cultural issues were brought up. Sarah shared the uncomfortable experiences when her identity was reduced to the “cultural self.” It is ironic that Māori, Pacific, and Asian students are presumed to be adept at their cultural knowledge based on their personal experience when there has been little support for these groups to enhance their cultural expertise in psychology.

Sarah: *There were one Māori and two Asian students in my class and once we had to present on different chapters of a book. I got given the chapter of how to work with [a specific group of Asian peoples], and my other Asian friend got given how to work with peoples of her cultural background, whatever that means! I just present on that.*

Relating to Māori

There is a specific theme centered on our relationship as Asian peoples with Māori as tangata whenua (the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand). While different initiatives to enhance Māori staff capacity and increase Māori content have been undertaken over the years, these efforts still fall short of meeting the aspirations outlined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Waitoki et al., 2023). As Te Tiriti partners, Asian psychologists are obligated to demonstrate cultural safety when working with Māori. However, as alluded to earlier, this expectation can engender relationship strain between Māori and Asian peoples as the shared experiences as minoritized ethnic groups are rarely acknowledged while existing equity effort has typically excluded Asian peoples.

Lateral Violence

Richard recounted an incident in a class on Māori health models where a Māori staff displayed hostility toward non-White and non-Māori students. He felt his presence was perceived as a threat during a class discussion about biculturalism and reflected on the experience of exclusion as an Asian person who is not historically reflected in Te Tiriti that outlines the relationship between Pākehā and Māori. The “othering” of Asian peoples and the categorization of Asian within a broad non-Māori (predominantly White) group can reinforce lateral violence exemplified through minoritized ethnic groups (in this instance, Māori and Asian peoples) taking their frustrations out on each other because they feel powerless to confront the system (Whyman et al., 2021). It perpetuates the “zero sum game” notion that compels minoritized groups to compete against each other to access the already limited resources.

Richard: *A Māori psychologist gave us a seminar in our trainee or internship year. She started the conversation then she looked at me and she was like “I want to be very clear that NZ is a bicultural country not multicultural. I don’t care what anyone else says. It is bicultural and it is not multicultural.” That, for me, summed up how I felt about being culturally trained. ... The staff came to our group’s table and gave this sense like she felt “we are there to claim our space from White people and educate White people about our land and take back what’s ours and you [Asian peoples] are just a competition to the limited resources that we have. We [Māori] already have trouble getting equity and partnership, and here you are trying to claim some of that.”*

Richard employed a “pie analogy” to illustrate how equitable resource distribution can benefit all minoritized ethnic groups. This analogy is useful to mobilize collective solidarity to confront institutional racism that upholds Whiteness as a property (e.g., as decision-makers in resource allocation) but also intentionally pits minoritized ethnic groups against each other.

Richard: *I go back to that space where I always say ... it’s not the issue of limited resources, we are not fighting each other for 25% of the pie [percentage of non-Pākehā in Aotearoa], we are fighting for part of the whole pie. It is a divide and conquer strategy by Pākehā sometimes. You know ... it’s like here is your 25% of the pie [handed over by Pākehā] and go! We keep fighting between ourselves but what we should be doing is considering that we are all fighting for 100% of the pie.*

Expressing Empathy

Participants acknowledge the importance of training to be culturally competent in caring for Māori and the prioritization of support for Māori in the psychology discipline. Richard expressed empathy toward the “thin ice” position of Māori students in psychology training who frequently have to spearhead dialogues addressing monoculturalism. The leadership of Māori in such a discussion facilitates the development of responses in diversifying psychology, cultural safety, and antiracism from other minoritized ethnic groups.

Richard: *During that time, there’s been a bit of shift between my trainee and intern year. Quite a big shift to be honest. There was a lot more discussion around Māori values. There was a Māori in my group and she was quite outspoken. But she was also very White so she couldn’t make a lot of noise. And there were also a couple of others [who made noise] and they [the program] started to shift a little bit at that time.*

When asked about opportunities to train in cultural safety, Lane reflected on the limited number of Māori staff in psychology which restricted the delivery of training on Māori content. She was able to comprehend the undesirable conditions of the school of psychology

and universities that make it a less appealing employment place for Māori psychologists.

Lane: *The issue is because there’s so few of them [Māori psychologists], many of them want to be practicing in the field where they feel like they’re making actual, real change as opposed to being in a training capacity in an institution that may not be supportive, that maybe won’t get it, that maybe they’ll have to do more than their contract says and teaching other staff and experiencing racism, there’s lots of cons to being a staff member. So it’s difficult to find the best people for the job.*

Similarly, Elle, who was interested in enhancing competency in working with Māori clients during the placement period, was mindful of not placing cultural labor on the few Māori staff who are already burdened with multiple responsibilities. She had to find a way of striking a balance between demonstrating eagerness to learn through cultural supervision and avoiding placing undue additional demands on Māori supervisors.

Elle: *I think this might be some of my own personal dilemmas around it. There were times I’d seek out culture services and I’d consult with them [Māori clinicians] around what do they think about the case and things like that. At the same time I was always very aware of the demand on Māori supervisors and Māori clinicians ... you know not taking a lot of their time knowing that it’s already really tough and the focus is on them working and supporting Māori people and Māori population. So I think there was a balance for me there.*

Identity Validation

In contrast to western psychology, which suppresses the expression of subjective selves and could lead minoritized ethnic groups astray in the assumed objectivity of Whiteness, Elle who discovered opportunities to learn about Māori psychology found it affirming of her experiences as an Asian person. This is because Māori psychology offers resonances with Asian collective being and for the exploration of identities grounded in one’s cultural root and whakapapa (genealogy). Whakapapa is central to the Māori worldview, connecting individuals to their whānau (family) and wider networks through a common genealogy (Webber & O’Connor, 2019). It determines personal, collective, and whānau identities by establishing connections with others. For Elle, the emphasis of whakapapa in Māori psychology models helps her stand stronger on her cultural ground and promotes reflexivity of her identity when working with people from diverse backgrounds.

Elle: *I’ll also say that even just that getting more knowledge of Māori psychology was really validating and identity enhancing. For me I’d say that was really beneficial. I never think of it as competition between one cultural group or another. I think actually what Māori psychology develops is incredibly amazing and helpful in covering these gaps that traditional and clinical western psychology has. In terms of me talking about how important it is to work*

with difference and diversity and people from different backgrounds in psychology. Like for me I think Māori psychology offers a lot of models that actually helps with considering these differences and enhancing people's identities and where they come from.

Discussion

In this study, we utilized an IPA to examine the subjective experiences of four Asian psychologists in making sense of racism, racialization, and their Asian identity while going through psychology training in the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. The participants' narratives uncover the pervasive influence of White racial frames within the operation of "White mold" psychology and the "othering" of Asian peoples through racial archetypes of Asianization. We observed the manifestation of such racial framing across various cognitive (e.g., the prioritization of western knowledge and the promotion of colorblind norms), emotional (e.g., White fragility), and behavioral aspects (e.g., expectations placed on minoritized ethnic groups to assimilate), all of which contribute to the erasure of Asian experiences within the imposed hierarchy of racially "inferior" and "superior" (Pākehā) groups.

The tendency of predominantly White staff members to portray psychology training as "idyllic" is an exemplar of White racial framing (Feagin, 2020) wherein a Pākehā lens is used to interpret and make decisions regarding the desirable state of psychology. Our participants shared that psychology training tends to centralize White norms and knowledge, while the realities of minoritized groups such as racism, oppression, and cultural trauma are rarely addressed as they are deemed "tough" or "irrelevant" topics. Further, the current psychology training lacks the capacity to deliver content on these crucial topics (Waitoki et al., 2023), and our participants observed that staff members frequently employ invalidation or deflection strategies to downplay complaints of racism, insufficient attention to racial equity, and inadequate discussion on issues pertinent to Asian communities. The deliberate avoidance of these key topics, which are essential for all students to develop cultural awareness, examine power differentials between service providers and clients, and explore the historical, social, and political influences on mental health, contradicts the programs' commitment to improving its cultural safety delivery (New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2009).

In a White racially framed psychology training setting, Asian students are compelled to internalize core elements of such a frame, as described by our participants, through Asianization archetypes such as "the forgotten Asian," "the irritational button," and "the unassimilable foreigners." While these archetypes bear resemblance to those outlined in Asian critical race theory (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022), there are specific differences in the racial order of Asian peoples in Aotearoa compared to the North America (C. J. Kim, 1999). In Aotearoa, the focus of a triangulated relationship is on Pākehā–Asian–Māori (Rata & Al-Asaad, 2019), where Asian peoples are often subsumed as "tauiwi"² or "non-Indigenous" alongside Pākehā counterparts that may erase our "minoritized" experiences and further reinforce model minority expectations on Asian peoples (Tan, 2023). These expectations include conscious (and unconscious) pressure for Asian students to whitewash themselves to gain a foothold in the elitist psychology program, to excel academically and socially in a colorblind environment, and to refrain from questioning the content delivery and structure of the training.

The operations of Asianization archetypes are not necessarily distinct from each other. J. Kim and Hsieh (2022) have written about the tenuous racial positioning of Asian Americans that can fluctuate from being viewed as model minorities to being portrayed as "yellow peril" or threatening to American jobs and democracy and being courted for political gain against Black peoples. Likewise, our participants discussed the complexity of navigating Asianization by working hard to conform to model minority expectations to gain White membership in psychology, walking the fine line of not triggering the "irrational button," and eventually realizing that they will be judged based on their race and that they may be complicit in the current unjust system if they remain silent.

The psychological conflict experienced by Asian students can be profound as elements of the dominant White racial frame can be internalized while simultaneously maintaining elements of the home-culture frame and/or an antiracist counter-frames that have been a part of our communities for generations. Our participants had to comprehend the prescribed White rules of psychology training and carefully navigate the "institutional game" by strategically presenting White characteristics to be perceived favorably by classmates and staff members. To stay under the "White racial radar" is a common strategy for Asian peoples, which may relate to our cultural values of respecting and fitting into the structure of the host country (Ip, 2009) and the socializing force for conformity to White norms as a mechanism to maintain the "face" and "honor" of our collective identity (Gupta, 2016; Williams & Cleland, 2016). However, the assimilation of Asian students is often taken for granted, and psychology training seldom acknowledges the decade-long endeavors of Asian scholars to incorporate diverse Asian content into psychology (Gupta, 2016; Williams & Cleland, 2016), thus perpetuating the "yellow peril" archetype through the erasure of positive contributions of Asian New Zealanders to the Aotearoa society.

Systemic Asianizations have excluded Asian health professionals (including psychologists) and researchers from securing national health funding to develop health and care models for our communities (Wong, 2021). The lack of Asian-focused content and specific placement opportunities in psychology training, coupled with the scarcity of localized literature, compels psychologists interested in working with Asian communities to upskill themselves elsewhere. For Asian students and psychologists, this lack of representation can result in the perception that psychology lacks cultural safety for Asian peoples, as well as feelings of bitterness or exclusion especially when psychology training includes Indigenous or other cultural content but omits Asian perspectives.

The rewards for adopting the White racial frame may be necessary or tempting for Asian psychologists, despite the intense journey that one ought to go through to approach White proximity. The stereotyping of Asian students as model minorities underlies the lack of visible institutional support for Asian students and can result in social isolation when navigating our (often invisibilized) Asian identity in psychology (Liu, 2019). However, with more Asian psychologists completing the training and serving as role models for

² "Tauiwi" is a Māori term that literally translates to "foreigner" and is now widely understood to refer to New Zealanders who are not Indigenous in Aotearoa and of Māori descent. Other terms such as "tauiwi of color" have emerged to highlight the differential racialized and oppressed experiences (compared to Pākehā or European) within settler colonial states and the potential to form solidarities with Māori toward transformative change (Rata & Al-Asaad, 2019).

aspiring Asian students, we are witnessing the emergence of more platforms to expanding Asian capacity in psychology. For example, workshops are organized by Chinese psychologists to work with Chinese communities, and there is a proposal to establish the Asian Psychology Collective (a network for Asian peoples in Psychology) within the New Zealand Psychological Society.

In Aotearoa, there have been some efforts by Asian communities in academia (Dam, 2023) and within the community (Fu & Azarmandi, 2023) to amplify counter-racist perspectives by fostering solidarity with Māori in upholding the Te Tiriti o Waitangi articles that warrant Māori self-determination (tino rangatiratanga) and equality of privilege and outcome (mana ōrite). However, the potential for collective action with Māori to challenge injustices in psychology and decolonize the discipline remains largely unexplored and underutilized (Tan, 2023). Our participants expressed empathy toward the precarious position of Māori in psychology who are often burdened with cultural labor and tasked with leading discussions on cultural safety. Participants also resonated with Māori psychology to validate their identities as a member of minoritized ethnic groups. A Te Tiriti-inspired psychology would ensure that Māori knowledge (mātauranga) and western paradigms are given equal consideration as well as fostering meaningful connections and a sense of belonging for students from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016). The inclusion of content on Māori and Asian psychologies is not only essential for transcending lateral violence between Māori and Asian communities but also for enhancing the competency of all psychologists to provide culturally safe services to Māori (who constitute a large proportion of end service users due to the impacts of social injustices; Levy & Waitoki, 2016), as well as Asian peoples (particularly migrants and refugees) who encounter barriers in accessing services.

Limitation

The findings of our study should be interpreted in light of its limitations. First, it may be oversimplified to suggest that all psychology programs within Aotearoa operate to the same extent within a White racial frame as some have progressed ahead of others in honoring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. However, the manifestation of the Asianization archetype as a subframe of the White racial frame is likely consistent across programs with minimal Asian representation and lacking expansion of Asian capacity in course content, staff, and institutional support (Waitoki et al., 2023). Further, the narratives obtained through interviews with only four Asian participants may not fully represent the experiences of all Asian psychologists. The main objective of an idiographic analysis is to provide insights specific to the experiences of the individuals being studied. For instance, understanding Richard's immigrant history allows us to empathize with his trajectory of understanding his racial positioning in psychology and eventually figuring Asian characteristics as triggering an "irritational button" in the dominant groups. That being said, our multiple case study analyses allowed us to capture nuances of Asianization that are not only specific to each participant but also illustrate the breadth of the issues that Asian students encounter in psychology training.

However, we are mindful that Asians, as a collective, are often amalgamated for essentialist expediency, which risks erasing the inherent cultural, migration, linguistic, privilege, and acculturation differences that we have had limited opportunities to explore in this

study (Mok, 2022). Future studies are also required to examine the intersections of other forms of oppression, such as classism, cisheterosexism, misogyny, and ableism, alongside Asianization, to comprehensively explore Asian students' experiences of racialization in psychology training. We also encourage future research to explore the ways in which Asian psychologists exercise their agency including how this group draws on family, community, and culturally specific group resources to resist Asianizations in the discipline.

Implications for Practice

Our findings shed light on the pervasive influence of the White racial frame that shapes how staff and students define, interpret, conform to, and act within the discipline of psychology. These insights carry crucial implications for ourselves as Asian psychology practitioners and program directors and staff involved in psychology training who hold responsibility of ensuring the program's compliance with Te Tiriti and regulatory forces that ensure safety of the public (Ministry of Education, 2021; New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2009).

First, staff and students within psychology training must be sensitized to the mechanisms of settler colonialism, racism, and the White racial frame, which are crucial for understanding the sociocultural backgrounds of clients from Indigenous and minoritized ethnic backgrounds (Levy & Waitoki, 2016) and for creating a safe space for all students to explore their racial and cultural identity. Staff and program directors can take leadership in implementing antiracist policies, initiatives, and training in psychology. The benefits of antiracist training for mental health professionals have been summarized in a scoping review (Cénat et al., 2024), including addressing the perpetuation of racism and colorblindness (which ignores experiences of racialization) and preparing clinicians to tackle racial trauma and deliver culturally safe care. In Aotearoa, Te Tiriti and cultural safety should be foundational in psychology training to introduce students to the sociopolitical and culturally grounded dimensions of psychological issues while offering opportunities to reflect on their positionality and the power dynamics present in both the classroom and wider society (New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2009).

In the context of the operations of White racial frame on Asian peoples in Aotearoa, including its subframe of Asianizations, these need to be understood through the histories of orientalism, poll tax, and "Asian invasion" that racialize Asian peoples as "yellow peril" and undeserving of White membership (Ip, 2009; Tang, 2023). This frame is instrumental in illuminating the Whiteness ingrained in the structure of psychology, which permeates individuals' mindsets and give rise to racialized cognition, emotions, and behaviors that include inclinations to "other" Asian peoples and maintain the status quo. Students of minoritized ethnic groups ought to be at the forefront of counter-storytelling their experiences of racialization and leading discussion on antiracism in psychology while being facilitated by staff members. Being aware of the White racial frame and one's privilege derived from it is a preliminary step toward becoming a racial justice ally (Williams & Sharif, 2021) as we engage in a continual process of self-reflection about our positionality and identify and implement solutions to intervene in racism.

Second, as the White racial frame continues to persist in the delivery of psychology training, we need to actively build a collective of Asian psychologists who are confident in their cultural heritage, astute about the mechanisms of Asianization archetypes, and are

dedicated to supporting psychologists from minoritized ethnic backgrounds in navigating the psychology pipeline. Some institutional initiatives that can grow the capacity of Asian in psychology include provision of scholarship, cultural mentorship and supervision, funding for expanding Asian-centered research program, and creating safe pathways to report racism.

While different psychology bodies (under the influence of ongoing Māori advocacy) work toward growing a critical mass of future psychologists committed to advancing Te Tiriti vision, we cannot afford to be complicit in institutional racism and passively await transformative changes. It is imperative that Asian psychologists proactively equip ourselves with antiracist frameworks to effectively challenge the White racial frame and create an environment conducive to the flourishing of Asian psychologies. Asian psychologists, staff, and students are encouraged to join the Asian Psychology Collective by contacting the authors. The collective serves as a forum for learning about engaging with Asian communities, developing Te Tiriti-inspired and culturally informed psychology practices, mentoring Asian psychology students, and contributing to policy and advocacy submissions for Asian communities.

Third, Asian psychologists ought to comprehend the mechanism of the “divide, divert, and conquer” (Louie & Viladrich, 2021) strategy used to maintain division and competition between minoritized ethnic groups and Māori, which divert the attention away from addressing Pākehā privilege. Asian psychologists are under heavy pressure from White peoples to adopt the White framing of racial matters, and if we do not act to some degree out of that White frame, we risk reinforcing this country’s systemic racism and its continuing racialized advantages for Whites. As a racialized group, we need to actively decolonize the colonial structures and policies around the implied position in which resources are distributed by Pākehā to Indigenous peoples and minoritized ethnic groups. It should be treated as priority in different psychological bodies to build trust and learning within all racialized groups (including Indigenous peoples), to realize the non-zero-sum game of equitable resourcing and to invest continuously in each other’s growth and success as part of decolonizing Aotearoa New Zealand.

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