



A Critique of New Zealand's Exclusive Approach to Intercultural Education

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Abstract

This article examines the intercultural initiatives, programmes and strategy documents in New Zealand education to answer the following two questions: What intercultural policies and strategy documents are offered to New Zealand schools and teachers to accommodate their diverse communities? Which communities do they include and/or exclude? It explores and discusses paradigms, policies and curriculum developments that have been developed to address the growing levels of diversity in New Zealand's schools and identifies some of the current significant gaps. This article argues that within the dominant Anglo-European framework, there are increasing intercultural initiatives supporting Māori and Pasifika communities within New Zealand schools but there are very limited policies and initiatives addressing the wider diverse communities. I argue that policies and initiatives should be all-encompassing, comprehensive and inclusive; that is, they must fairly encompass *all* members of the society and not be limited solely to specific groups. Moreover, the current policy statements are implemented in an ad hoc manner i.e. they are not supported through the systematic resource banks, leadership, teacher education and training and enabling strategies required to create societies that are more inclusive, with respectful intercultural relations. This article will be of interest to policy makers at a national level, those who work in schools and centres, and teacher educators who have a concern for the inclusion of ethnocultural minorities and intercultural education.

Keywords New Zealand · Ethnic and cultural diversity · Superdiversity · Inclusion · Intercultural education · Schools · Biculturalism · COVID-19 · Parity · Policy

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Introduction

The governance of cultural diversity has become the subject of considerable debate in public policy circles and academic research (Irvine 2003; Leeman and Reid 2006). The need for this debate has risen primarily from the fact that good governance leads to cohesive and secure societies. Many countries around the world, particularly settler countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada, are experiencing increasing ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2015). This is giving rise to the important responsibility of facilitating the development of socially harmonious and cohesive societies whose members can communicate and interact positively with one another. Education is a foundational and empowering tool that can be used to foster such social harmony. Consequently, the changing cultural and religious demography in many areas is prompting a great deal of conceptual contestation regarding the optimal approaches for inclusive diversity governance in the education sector (Ainscow and Sandill 2010). Polarised debates around optimal policies on the topics of inclusive education and broader diversity governance persist as the pace and level of diversity continue to grow through increased mobility and cross-cultural encounters (Cardno et al. 2018).

In many settler-colonial societies, the need for policies fostering social harmony has become closely intertwined with mounting security-related pressures that are increasingly being felt in educational settings. However, the dearth of culturally appropriate pedagogies has exacerbated these challenges as schools continue to experience significant demographic changes (Irvine 2003; Mellor and Corrigan 2004). Many studies have reported widespread racial abuse and discrimination in schools globally and in New Zealand, which is at odds with the expected role of education to promote social inclusion, mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding (Connolly 2002; Mansouri and Jenkins, 2010; McGregor and Webber 2019).

Against this background of a shift towards more diverse societies, there has been a growing push to include intercultural perspectives in education (Coulby 2006; Mellor and Corrigan 2004) through critical and responsive pedagogy (Portera 2008; Richards et al. 2007), to address the ever-growing realities of super-diversity. This intercultural framing of the education system aims to engender the inclusion and participation of groups from diverse backgrounds in dialogic exchange, cultural transformation and respectful understanding across differences (Gorski 2008).

The importance of this article is underpinned by the fact that at the time of writing of this article, there has been a surge in inter-racial community conflict, stereotyping, hate speech and fear mongering, both in New Zealand and worldwide. In 2019, we had the Christchurch Mosque terrorist attack, which killed 51 innocent people and left our nation in shock. In 2020, as a result of the worldwide epidemic COVID-19, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission has indicated it is deeply worried about the increasing reports of racially motivated attacks against our Asian migrants and New Zealanders from Asian backgrounds (Foon 2020). A good education policy promoting inclusion and intercultural awareness and understanding would contribute significantly to promoting social cohesion at such times of crises.

This article conducts a survey of current policies, commissioned ministry reports and programmes to examine the extent to which New Zealand has pursued and successfully implemented an intercultural education approach. It examines, identifies the gaps and outlines the critical factors required to implement intercultural initiatives successfully. The article begins by providing an overview of the New Zealand context, followed by an introduction to the various cultural paradigms. It then examines the policy and practice of intercultural education in New Zealand's education system, with the aim of identifying the gaps in the current approach and concludes by highlighting the optimal conditions for the successful pursuit of intercultural education. The article argues that despite the increasing promotion of intercultural policies and initiatives through the Ministry of Education in New Zealand, these initiatives are not inclusive and focus only on certain diverse members of society, while excluding others.

The Context

New Zealand currently has a population of more than 5 million people and maintains a unitary state system (Statistics New Zealand 2020). New Zealand is an émigré or settler-colonial society with a history of early European colonization and subsequent immigration, as well as a recent diverse immigration intake originating from non-European regions. New Zealand lives a multicultural reality. However, in terms of diversity policies, the country has pursued what is broadly conceived as biculturalism (Hill 2010). In biculturalism, the focus is generally upon the relationship between the indigenous Māori and the Crown (mostly European-derived and predominantly British and known as Pākehā¹) and is enshrined through the Treaty of Waitangi. Prior to the systematic implementation of the bicultural paradigm in New Zealand, Māori had long been seeking acceptance, participation and respect in a society that up to that point, had predominantly adopted assimilation policies and promoted Eurocentric monoculturalism (Hill 2010).

During the nineteenth century, this former British colony (still under the Commonwealth Crown) adopted migration policies that in addition to boosting its population and economy, has preserved a majority Anglo heritage. Exceptions to this were the Chinese gold miners who arrived in Otago in the South Island and in the late 1800s, Indian pedlars, hawkers and domestics (Taher 1970). Towards the end of the twentieth century, New Zealand pursued systematic immigration policies as a tool to build its population and economic resources (Salahshour 2016). The 1987 Immigration Act abolished the previous 'white New Zealand policy', which gave preference to specific source countries such as Britain (Kasper 1990, p. 33; Spoonley 2006, p. 19) and restricted immigrants coming from other countries. Prior to the implementation of the 1987 Immigration Act, selection of immigrants was based solely on nationality and race; mainly British subjects were allowed to enter freely into the country, while immigrants from Asia were restricted. Now, immigrants from

¹ *Pakeha*, which is a Māori term for the white inhabitants of New Zealand.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of New Zealand in the 2013 Census (Source: Statistics New Zealand 2018) *

ITEM	Number or percentage
Population (number)	4,699,755
Indigenous/Māori people	16.5%
European people	70.2%
Asian people	15.1%
Pasifika	8.1%
Middle Eastern, Latin American, African (MELAA)	1.5%

The ethnic breakdown adds up to more than 100%, as some people identified as being from more than one ethnic group

a range of countries are assessed and selected according to their education, profession and age (Beaglehole 2005b), as well as temporary schemes such as students wishing to study in New Zealand and sometimes choosing to stay on and establish their lives here. Between the years 2005 and 2015, permanent resident approvals increased from 40,000 to 50,000 per year, while temporary approvals increased from 162,000 to 256,000 per year (Collins and Bayliss 2020). Table 1, which summarizes New Zealand’s demographic details in 2018, shows that Asians (including Indian nationals), Pasifika, and Middle Eastern, Latin American, African (MELAA) nations were the dominant minority ethnic groups here.

This current study examines the way New Zealand’s diversity policies have been reflected in education and addresses the gaps in New Zealand’s approach to embracing diversity in education. The following sections expand on the various cultural paradigms to date.

Cultural Paradigms in Education

Systems (including education systems) exist within a social and cultural context. Over the past decades, there has been growing international debate and discussion regarding the best paradigms for managing the increasing diversity that exists within state borders (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] 2009). Scholars suggest that the difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism is not clear-cut (Casinader 2016; Mansouri and Aber 2017) and that intellectual and philosophical debates about policy usually inaccurately juxtapose interculturalism with multiculturalism and can even use them interchangeably (Mansouri and Zapata-Barrero 2017). Other studies relating specifically to education have said, “looking more widely at the problem of definitions in the bicultural education literature, there is little or no effective difference operating between the categories of biculturalism, cross-culturalism, interculturalism ... it makes little sense to argue their relative merits or try to find the ‘right’ term to use” (Stewart 2018, p. 9). Such comments are disturbing, as these terms *are* conceptually distinct and therefore it is important to understand their differences and the ways the policies and practices founded upon them influence the practices carried out by educators

in culturally diverse education settings. In the next sections, I define and expand on three paradigms: monoculturalism, biculturalism and interculturalism. A solid understanding of these paradigms is important as it sheds light on which ethnic groups are included and/or excluded by each of them.

Monoculturalism

Up until the 1970s, most Commonwealth countries, including New Zealand, pursued assimilationist policies where the migrating communities (and even the indigenous communities) were expected to assimilate and blend in, eventually taking on the cultural values and norms of the host country's dominating culture. This meant that policies, including education policies, were developed within a pattern of power imbalances that favoured European culture and practices. This has often been called a monoculture paradigm, wherein the dominance and monocultural bias of the Anglo-European culture, as well as its inherent knowledge, values and modes of social interaction, pervade the education system to the extent that assimilation becomes a social norm. The monoculture paradigm is characterized by dominance, subordination and cultural superiority, with detrimental impacts for some members of the society, leading them to be disadvantaged (Ministry of Education 2006). For example, the dominance of Anglo-European knowledge, alongside monolingualism in the education system, has resulted in the near death of te reo Māori (the Māori language). Only 6% of Māori remain in the high-fluency language-speaking category, a dramatic decrease from 18% in the 1970s (Te Taura Whiri: Māori Language Commission 1995). In addition, Māori and Pasifika children have low levels of school credentials, high suspension rates and high dropout rates (Bishop 2003). The monocultural paradigm suggests that one reason for such poor achievement is that these community members are genetically and inherently inferior to the dominant group and therefore, inclined to fail (Bishop 2003). These perspectives have since been rebuked and strongly dismissed by academics and scientists. Another argument commonly used under this paradigm is that failure is the result of the limited literacy resources of this community, caused by their poor socio-economic background. These types of theories are now called 'deficit theories', in which the solution to the problem is for the subordinate group to change—that is, to assimilate into the dominant culture (Bishop 2003).

Biculturalism

From the 1980s, a shift towards multiculturalism occurred worldwide. However, race relations and diversity management in New Zealand have differed from other migrant-receiving countries in which multiculturalism has been adopted (Sibley and Ward 2013; Ward and Liu 2012). This is partly due to New Zealand's adoption of *biculturalism* as a policy within its lived *multicultural* context (Hill 2010; Sibley and Ward 2013). In other words, despite New Zealand's multi-ethnic reality, multiculturalism has never been formally adopted as a state policy (Lowe 2015, p. 496).

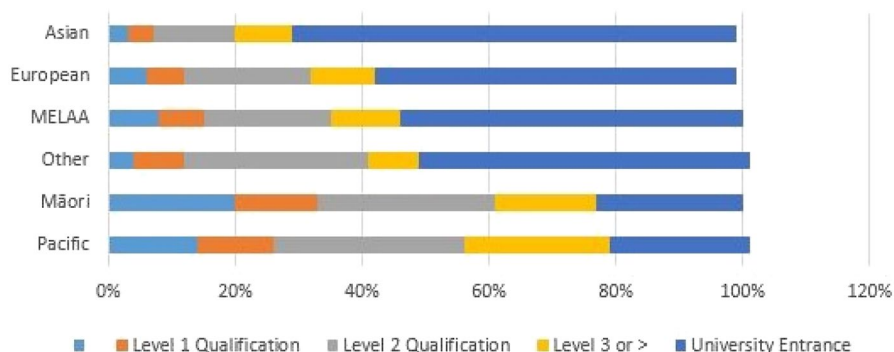


Fig. 1 2015 Academic achievement by ethnic groups (Education Review Office n.d.)

In New Zealand, bicultural policy refers to the conceptualization of two ethnically and culturally diverse people (Māori and Pākehā/European) in a relationship of social and political partnership (Lourie 2016). The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between New Zealand's indigenous Māori and the British Crown. The Māori chiefs who signed the Treaty of Waitangi acknowledged that more immigrants would be coming to New Zealand from the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia, which were named in the Treaty. Therefore, Māori have argued that as Treaty partners, they should be consulted about letting people from other countries (that were not named in the Treaty) settle in New Zealand (Beaglehole 2005a).

Despite the Treaty, the rights of Māori to participate, partner and be protected by the Crown has only recently resurfaced in public debate and later, in official policy. In fact, informed strongly by the social justice discourse regarding minority rights, it has taken more than a century for Māori to have their rights and entitlements under the Treaty acknowledged. These days, the Treaty is the basis of the country's uncodified constitution, with the Māori Language Act recognizing the Māori language as an official language. Together, the Treaty of Waitangi and the Māori Language Act are the key foundations of the country's bicultural identity. For precisely this reason, New Zealand's bicultural paradigms have been prioritized over multicultural paradigms (Lourie 2016), resulting in bicultural education policies being developed as an acknowledgement of, and response to, the historical injustices inflicted on Māori people by the European colonizers and to address the ongoing challenge of the educational underachievement of Māori students in the compulsory schooling sector. Figure 1 illustrates the academic achievement levels of the various ethnic groups in New Zealand.

Figure 1 shows that the number of Māori and Pasifika people who hold University Entrance (UE) is significantly lower than for other ethnic groups. In New Zealand's bicultural model, the solution to marginalization lies in understanding the structural issues of power and control, using kaupapa Māori theory and practice. Instead of ignoring the indigenous culture or deeming it to be of lower value than the dominant culture, this theory builds on indigenous experiences and bodies of knowledge while also promoting new and alternative approaches to interpersonal and group

interactions (Bishop 2003). Thus, the indigenous community has the opportunity to make choices for themselves and use the opportunities that have been predominantly available only to Pākehā.

Having faced decades of systematic discrimination, Māori have a particular stake in this bicultural arrangement and therefore, are reported to have sometimes been apprehensive about multiculturalism (Hill 2010), fearing it could weaken their interests and values as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi (ibid). Sometimes, these concerns and the associated grievances have led to documented tensions between Māori and certain immigrant communities (Hill 2010; Lowe 2015; Sibley and Ward 2013; Ward and Liu 2012). However, this article argues that without detracting from the historical and systematic disadvantage that tangata whenua (people of the land) have experienced, and the need to address this issue, additional initiatives and policies should be incorporated to ensure the current paradigm does not exclude other communities who live in New Zealand. The incorporation of a more *inclusive* paradigm, such as interculturalism, can offer a solution.

Interculturalism

The philosophy underpinning an *intercultural* approach is that understanding begins through an inherent openness towards the ‘Other’ and that through exposure and interaction with diverse cultures, we can engage in successful dialogue with those who come from different backgrounds from us. The idea underlying this inherent openness is that cultures are neither superior nor inferior to one another but instead, they are of equal value as long as the cultural practices do not impinge on anyone’s human rights (Peters 2012). This open approach to other cultures can not only increase our understanding and empathy with others but also enrich our own cultural repertoires.

Intercultural education emphasizes the relational goals of interaction, participation and shared values (Gorski 2008; Holm and Ziliacus 2009). Further, the intercultural framework seeks to transform the education experience to create a supportive environment for positive cross-cultural transformation (Coulby 2006). The intercultural approach is premised on creating conditions for deep and meaningful exchange, emphasizing both the *knowing* and *doing* aspects of cross-cultural encounters (Halse et al. 2015). In addition, it seeks to overcome the perceived limitation of the politics of recognition by emphasizing the need for a new ethos of intercultural understanding, active citizenship and social engagement (Benhabib 2002; Isin 2000). By creating a space for engagement that is more deliberative, an intercultural paradigm aims to nurture and develop the skills and knowledge required to interact and engage successfully in dialogue with diverse others (Zapata-Barrero 2017). In the educational setting, this requires schools to be spaces in which teachers and students critically and reflexively engage with different cultural norms, values and heritage repertoires. According to Besley and Peters (2012, p. 5):

Intercultural education is viewed as the global forum for analysis of issues relating to education in plural societies, focusing on the “management of cultural diversity” and including such issues as multiculturalism, multilingual-

ism, intercultural communication, the maintenance and fostering of human rights, anti-racist education, pluralism within democracies, and pluralism in post-communist and post-colonial countries, conflict resolution and avoidance, international mediation, migration and problems of migrant labour, indigenous cultural and minority rights, refugee education, language policy, and perhaps and above all, the question of cultural identity and emerging global forms of identity, especially with youth cultures.

Thus, intercultural education has a broad and comprehensive scope, which could be summarized as being inclusive and all-encompassing, where all members of society are encouraged to get together on a 'level playing field' to interact with one another with an open mind. Through focusing on the commonalities of cultures and a respect for differences, a deeper awareness of, and understanding about the norms, behaviours, relationships and visions of our own and other cultures can be gained. Through this deeper understanding of diverse cultures, we can learn to not only respect and appreciate other cultures but also learn from them and use them to enrich our own lives.

This section has demonstrated that the difference between monoculturalism, biculturalism and interculturalism is more than mere terminological variation; rather, it reflects the underlying theoretical assumptions about the way cultural diversity is managed in educational settings, which then determines which ethnic minority groups are included and/or excluded. The next section justifies the shift towards embracing intercultural paradigms, on a number of grounds.

Intercultural Policy and Initiatives in New Zealand Education

The most prevalent argument for shifting to and incorporating interculturalism is that in multicultural societies, the minority communities remain very discrete and socially segregated, which can create a breeding ground for violent extremism (Mansouri 2017a, b). A second argument is that the multicultural paradigm allows illiberal practices (e.g. forced marriages, honour killing) to exist under the umbrella of cultural relativism (Klein 2016). Third, the multicultural paradigm fails to account for fluid and hybrid identities and constrains people within fixed identity conceptualizations (Abdallah-Preteille 2006; UNESCO 2009). Finally, some scholars have critiqued multiculturalism for focusing on only 'knowing' about other cultures, whereas interculturalism takes on the additional element of *doing*. This focus on *knowing* rather than *doing* has been criticized for being simplistic and stereotypical (Mansouri and Aber 2017, p. 37), advocating only the superficial 'food, flags and festivals' approach (Arber 2008). Other scholars have pointed out that knowledge alone is insufficient for developing critical intercultural capabilities (Abdallah-Preteille 2006).

This article argues that New Zealand's current bicultural system could accommodate a more all-encompassing and inclusive education paradigm that acknowledges and accommodates the cultural backgrounds of all its citizens and ethnic groups. New Zealand is a multicultural society composed of people from diverse cultural

backgrounds; therefore, maintaining a bicultural identity and policy is a socio-political challenge affecting multiple societal domains (Sibley and Ward 2013), including the education system. It is important to note that there is some controversy as to whether non-European migrants are party to the Treaty of Waitangi or not (for a discussion on diversity recognition read Spoonley 2015). A cursory look at the English version of the Treaty of Waitangi given on the New Zealand government's Waitangi Tribunal website makes reference to "Her Majesty's subjects", and "rapid emigration both from Europe and Australia". A translation of the Māori version of the Treaty given on the same website indicates references to "subjects" of the Queen" as well as to "Pakeha/Europeans" (Waitangi Tribunal 2016a, b). It is unlikely that any of these references would have referred to migrants in the sense we know of today (i.e. skilled migrants from Africa, Middle East, Latin America, Asia etc.) as the majority of these would not have been and still are not British subjects/citizens and nor are they Europeans. Other scholars, however, do make reference to the term "Tāuiwi" in their work which is translated as "anybody who is non-Māori" and discuss them as being partners to Treaty (Huygens 2016) and the Ministry of Education website also makes reference to "Tāuiwi" being reflected in the Treaty as partners when specifically talking about Pasifika communities. A discussion on whether non-European migrants are party to the Treaty or not is beyond the remit of this article. However, what is pertinent is that New Zealand's education policies, its national curriculum and strategic education documents are founded upon its bicultural paradigm and the way this bicultural paradigm has been interpreted and incorporated *thus far* indicates that non-European migrants (with the exception of Pasifika communities) have been predominantly ignored. The incorporation of more inclusive paradigms would encourage augmented relational exchange and respectful dialogue that can engender transformative change across cultural differences. The following sections show that the pursuit of an inclusive intercultural agenda is minimal in New Zealand's education system. Moreover, where such agendas do exist, they have been affected by a lack of conceptual clarity and teacher education and training, leadership and support, as well as limited resourcing.

Exclusive Interpretation of Intercultural Principles

This section surveys the literature, policies and initiatives that foster cultural understanding in New Zealand schools and discusses two major challenges in New Zealand's current approach to intercultural education. The first is the exclusive interpretation of intercultural principles to include certain communities while excluding others. The second is the limited scope of interpretation of intercultural education, which means it is predominantly applied in language classrooms rather than more broadly across the curriculum.

While New Zealand's current approach to intercultural education which attempts to bring about cultural awareness about Māori and Pasifika communities is much needed, a search using relevant key words for strategy documents or reports on Education Counts and other platforms did not yield any relevant results for non-Māori and non-Pasifika communities. This indicates intercultural principles, which are

based on inclusivity, are being interpreted in very exclusive ways that exclude members groups of New Zealand society.

Under the country's bicultural paradigm, New Zealand education policies uphold a dual system. Kura kaupapa Māori provide a primary school education system that immerses children in Māori language and culture (Tocker 2015). Corresponding to this, two curricula make up the national curriculum, making New Zealand the first country to produce two national curricula that are not merely a direct translation of each other (Powell 2012). While English medium schools are still significantly more attended, Kura Kaupapa Māori, or Māori medium schools, are vital for New Zealand's Māori learners in particular, as research continues to indicate significant disparities in educational achievement between the descendants of Europeans (Pākehā) and Māori (Bishop et al. 2009). Māori are reported to be more likely than Pākehā to be suspended from school or enrolled in special education programmes because of behavioural issues and they have poorer literacy and numeracy (Hall et al. 2015). Historically, the underlying reasons for Māori underachievement have been understood in terms of deficit theorizing models (Bishop et al. 2009). However, educators and policy makers have recently acknowledged the impact of hegemonic Western perspectives and the enduring absence of genuinely inclusive education practices (Bishop et al. 2009; Macfarlane et al. 2007). This has led to the advocacy of culturally safe (that is, for Māori) schools while simultaneously criticizing them for not being inclusive of the voices, values and cultures of all learners from diverse backgrounds (Macfarlane et al. 2007).

To address such disparities, the national curriculum was revised in 2007, with the incorporation of a substantial section on values and key guiding principles (Bailey et al. 2015; Ministry of Education 2015). Four of these principles have direct implications for schools: (1) acknowledgement of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand; (2) recognition of New Zealand's cultural diversity and the histories and traditions of all its people; (3) social inclusion for all social groups; and (4) encouragement of community engagement. These principles provide broad direction to schools while making them responsible for independently interpreting, designing and reviewing their curricula (Bailey et al. 2015). However, small-scale studies from two multi-ethnic schools in Auckland have indicated that in reality, schools have faced numerous challenges as a result of the general nature of the document, with no clear conceptualizations of the key terms and concepts, minimal guiding strategies and lack of professional development opportunities (Cardno et al. 2018).

The four guiding principles are intended to ensure people from diverse backgrounds are acknowledged by, and fully engaged with, the school curriculum. However, most policy, strategy documents and reports/publications released by the Ministry of Education have focused only on Māori and Pasifika, giving no guidance regarding other ethnic communities. For example, two strategy documents, *Tapasā: Cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pasifika learners* and *Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners* have been created by the Ministry of Education (2018, 2011) to support teachers in acquiring the intercultural competencies needed to engage with Māori and Pasifika youth, their families and broader community members. These documents stress the significance of identity,

language and culture, as well as the need for teachers to build upon the students' linguistic and cultural foundations. In addition, the documents highlight the need to promote productive partnerships with key stakeholders, including teachers, Māori learners, whānau (family) and iwi (tribe). Tātaiako provides some useful professional development resources for teachers, with information, prompts and questions to stimulate thinking and discussions about their current practices regarding their responsiveness to the specific learning and cultural needs of Māori learners. Strategy documents such as the Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success 2008–2012 (Ministry of Education 2009) and its updated strategy Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017 encourage all stakeholders to incorporate education practices that reflect Māori values, identities, language and culture (Ministry of Education 2013). Other projects funded by the Ministry of Education such as the *Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Whānaungatana: Establishing a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations in mainstream secondary school classrooms* focus on ways to create and then implement culturally responsive pedagogy in mainstream secondary classrooms, defining culture within a Mātauranga Māori framework, such as Manaakitanga (students are culturally located), Mana motuhake (care for student performance), whakapiringatanga (pedagogical knowledge is drawn on), wananga (interact with Māori as Māori), Ako (learning is reciprocal), and Kotahitanga (share a common vision) (Bishop et al. 2007).

Similar strategic directions have been set for achieving parity for Pasifika learners under the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017*. These reports have reviewed the literature on effective engagement of Pasifika parents and communities and explored the conceptual and research-based literature relating to the home–school relationship in Pasifika communities. They have identified language need and deficiencies, strained economic circumstances, parental uncertainties and schools' preconceptions as being barriers to successful relationships (Gorinski and Fraser 2006).

In spite of all these strategy documents and reports, independent reviews have suggested that the policies underpinning these strategic documents have not been translated into practice on the ground. A 2010 report by the New Zealand Education Review Office noted that many schools had not worked in partnership with whānau (communities), nor had they conducted rigorous analysis of achievement data nor set strategic targets to increase Māori achievement (Education Review Office 2010). The small number of schools with the highest success rate in establishing positive relationships with Māori and Pasifika communities were those with strong leadership, as well as those that had committed to reviewing and improving their practices. Overall, the majority of schools had not fully adhered to the strategic directions that had been set out. The Education Review Office was very concerned about Pasifika and Māori achievement and advocated for more in-depth understanding of the diverse interests and needs of these communities.

This current article identifies a lack of government research and pedagogic strategies to guide schools in developing intercultural competencies for non-Māori and non-Pasifika immigrant groups. Attending to the needs of Māori and Pasifika students is much needed and should be commended. However, the exclusive approach to these minorities gives rise to significant concerns. Intercultural initiatives such as the ones discussed are meant to encompass *all* ethnic and diverse communities,

the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘diversity’ in the guiding principles have been interpreted exclusively and predominantly to refer to only Māori and Pasifika groups, ignoring other ethnic communities within New Zealand, such as the Asian community. New Zealand’s Asian community is a good example to discuss as it is one of the largest minority groups in the country and a community who has experienced racial abuse and attacks since the arrival of Covid-19 (Foon 2020). The term ‘Asian’ is rather vague, referring to a pan-ethnic group that includes populations who have ancestral origins in East Asia (e.g. Chinese, Korean and Japanese New Zealanders), Southeast Asia (e.g. Filipino and Vietnamese New Zealanders) and South Asia (e.g. Indian and Pakistani New Zealanders). Given the size and hence prominence of this community, this article asks why New Zealand policy documents and initiatives, which promote intercultural understanding and awareness, tend to exclude them. Further, the March 2019 Christchurch mosque shootings indicated the need for understanding and awareness regarding the Muslim population, who are often misunderstood and misrepresented, particularly since 9/11. Thus, the discussion presented leads to a notion of ‘selective inclusion’ which confirms the existence of structural hierarchies across the institutional and interpersonal fields in New Zealand (including in the education system) and is predicated on the state’s image as an Anglo-country that predominately recognizes the Anglo-European community and its culture. More recently, there have been efforts to include Māori and Pasifika communities, although the author acknowledges that some members of these communities would argue that current policies and initiatives are mere tokenistic gestures with few successful tangible outcomes.

Intercultural Practices Restricted to Language Lessons

The second challenge posed by New Zealand’s current approach to intercultural education is its narrow scope. The principles laid out in the New Zealand Curriculum are intended to be the guiding frameworks for all schools, across *all* subject areas. However, the focus on language in the national curriculum confines the practice of intercultural learning in schools to language programmes known as Intercultural Language Learning (IcLL). The latest New Zealand Curriculum and IcLL perceive culture and language as being intrinsically intertwined and encourage an in-depth reflective approach to cultural understanding. IcLL aims to equip learners with the skills and intercultural competencies necessary to accommodate and negotiate intercultural relationships, as well as instil values associated with global citizenship (Newton 2009).

Consequently, the majority of practices designed to foster cross-cultural understanding occur mainly within language lessons, rather than across subject areas (Oranje and Smith 2018). The national curriculum views this positively, maintaining that language lessons allow learners to negotiate between languages and cultures, thereby equipping them with competencies for living in a culturally diverse environment. Some existing research supports the view that language classrooms provide the best conditions for intercultural understanding, as they offer extensive opportunities for engagement across cultural diversity (Moeller and Nugent 2014).

However, a key challenge is the non-compulsory nature of the language component, which implies that opportunities for creating intercultural learning becomes limited, depending on the schools' language policies (Oranje and Smith 2018). Additional issues are the lack of adequate support for teachers and negligible opportunities for professional development in this area (Oranje and Smith 2018). Pre-service teacher-training courses vary in the depth of preparation for cultural diversity and a conceptual development of socio-cultural competence (Maged 2014). As a result, studies of teachers' practices in classrooms have shown there is a mismatch between teachers' conceptualizations of intercultural language teaching and their actual practices, and that teachers need targeted professional development on intercultural teaching to realize their full potential in the delivery of IcLL (Conway et al. 2010; Oranje and Smith 2018).

Interculturalism: The Way Forward

The education sector is directly affected by society's growing diversity and the policies that seek to address the tensions that arise from this (Gurin et al. 2002). New Zealand's approach has largely emphasized the strong European and more recently the Māori cultural traditions, with implications that go beyond governance to a range of social, economic and cultural outcomes (Bishop et al. 2009; Ward and Liu 2012). Many international empirical studies have shown that systematic pedagogic interventions within coherent curricula can have a significant effect on intercultural attitudes and race relations, transcending the school boundaries (Chang 2002; Greco et al. 2010; Halse et al. 2015). Systematic approaches to intercultural perspectives in education have the potential to disrupt racial attitudes and engender social milieus that are more inclusive and respectful, enabling all learners to achieve optimal educational outcomes in a culturally supportive environment.

I offer three concluding insights. First, the growing literature around education initiatives and practices in New Zealand indicates there is a strong focus on bicultural education programmes that usually favour the dominant Pākehā worldview. More recently, there has been increased focus on Māori and Pasifika communities. While these are all valid and much-needed initiatives, the sole focus on these two communities precludes the development of practices and policies to support the growing diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand. In other words, intercultural programmes that encompass other minority groups, such as Asians, Middle Eastern, Latin American or African communities, are absent. Top-down diversity management initiatives are either non-existent or exclusively target a limited number of ethnocultural groups, with no attempt to address the needs of other ethnic communities who add significantly to the diversity levels within schools. We cannot claim to offer *inclusive* education when our policies and strategies focus on including only certain communities. Students of all backgrounds should feel included and have access to curricula that are inclusive and interculturally oriented.

Second, the discourse on intercultural education is mainly confined to language-teaching classrooms and the incorporation of indigenous and Pasifika cultures in the national curriculum (Oranje and Smith 2018). This is a limiting interpretation of the

national curriculum that severely narrows the window of opportunity for fostering intercultural understanding.

Third, it is important to note that adequate resourcing, leadership and professional development opportunities for leaders and educators, as well as enabling strategies, should accompany and augment these policy statements if they are to yield the desired transformative outcomes. If we are to offer truly inclusive education, we need extensive investment in teacher education and professional development training, as well as intercultural leadership programmes and specially developed resource banks. Without these enabling resources and capabilities, teachers will find it difficult to be truly intercultural in their practices.

Although there are some policy statements and educational policies in New Zealand that encourage and support inclusion, they remain insufficient to ensure broad uptake of a policy paradigm shift that could effectively nurture interculturality and inclusivity.

Conclusion

This article has examined policies and curricula in New Zealand's education settings. The discussion has indicated that policy statements and educational initiatives within specific disciplines (e.g. language lessons) or for specific communities (e.g. Māori and Pasifika) are very important and needed given the failure of the current system to achieve good educational outcomes for these two communities. However, these alone are insufficient to ensure broad uptake of the required policy paradigm shift. It is important to reiterate here that the author acknowledges the significant obligation to honour and support Māori communities to redress centuries of systematic racism and oppression that tangata whenua have experienced. The current socio-economic disparity and low education achievement rates of this community clearly indicates that continued efforts are needed to bridge this gap. However, having said this, the author does not view the proposed opportunities i.e. increased policies and initiative supporting better intercultural understanding of other minority communities while maintaining the attention given to Māori and Pasifika as being mutually exclusive. These can co-exist. Intercultural policies and initiatives need to be all-encompassing and inclusive to *all* communities residing within a country and ideally, should be adhered to in all school disciplines. Adequate resourcing and enabling strategies that can foster effective and sustained transformative changes should accompany and augment existing and new policies. Such initiatives have the potential to improve school standards, ameliorate racial attitudes and create inclusive and respectful social milieus in the schoolyard and beyond. New Zealand has engaged to varying degrees with the intercultural paradigm as a key instrument in the diversity governance toolbox. However, the current challenges facing race relations and the emerging global geostrategic imperatives suggest that a more systematic and robust commitment to intercultural understanding is urgently needed.

Interculturalism has emerged as an important interlocutor informing broader debates around social cohesion, migrant integration and diversity governance (Mansouri 2017a, b; Zapata-Barrero 2017). This article has examined the intercultural

framework as a supportive influence within New Zealand's education settings. The importance of an intercultural framing in education is captured by Coulby (2006, p. 246), who observed:

If education is not intercultural, it is probably not education, but rather the inculcation of nationalist or religious fundamentalism. The theorization of intercultural education, then, is not simply a matter of normative exhortation, of spotting good practice in one area and helping to implement it in another. It involves the reconceptualization of what schools and universities have done in the past and what they are capable of doing in the present and the future.

Therefore, research on inclusive education should consider the value of an intercultural approach that focuses on facilitating dialogue, cross-cultural understanding and transformative engagement. This is particularly important during a time when the world is experiencing COVID-19, a global pandemic that has unfortunately provoked racially and culturally loaded hate speech among members of societies, revealing the gaps in intercultural understanding and social cohesion. To this end, systematic approaches to the introduction of intercultural perspectives in education have the potential to disrupt long-standing racist attitudes and engender intercultural relations that are more inclusive and respectful, transcending the boundaries of the schoolyard and extending into mainstream society.

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