*HE IWI TAHI TATOU?** POLICY IN A DIVERSE NEW ZEALAND

ABSTRACT

New Zealand is one of the classic immigrant receiving societies, but the immigrant flows until the mid-20th century have been very monocultural. Nation building was historically built around social and economic connections with Great Britain. Two different dynamics have disrupted this nation building project: the articulation of indigenous (Maori) interests and the cultural diversification of immigrant flows. Maori concerns have been reflected in policy shifts by the State, and the development of biculturalism. But a multiculturalism that recognizes the arrival of significant flows of Pacific and Asian immigrants is still underdeveloped.

New Zealand's path towards a policy framework that encompasses both biculturalism and multiculturalism has been different to those of the other classic immigrant receiving countries such as Canada, the USA and Australia. In recognition of a significant indigenous population – Maori –, policy since the 1970s has focused on integrating Maori into the State and national discourses. Only since the early 1990s has there been pressure (demographic and only more recently political) to develop an approach that more adequately recognizes the interests of those other than Maori or Pakeha.[1] The resulting policy mix has been to address questions of integration for Maori in a relatively comprehensive manner but to struggle with a form of multiculturalism that seeks to recognize and encompass ethnic communities other than the two main ones. The New Zealand approach to matters of integration and recognition has been dominated by a biculturalism which has evolved in the last 30 years and which concerns Maori.

Evolving policy frameworks

With the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, sovereignty was ceded to Britain by the indigenous Maori. The Treaty was signed by representatives of the British Crown and 500 Maori chiefs, and there were three provisions in the Treaty in two languages: acceptance of Crown sovereignty; recognition of Maori as a distinct collectivity with certain rights; and the conferral of citizenship on all Crown subjects (Fleras and Spoonley 1999, 10). But the reality of colonization was that the first provision held sway and by 1852, the Treaty was declared a nullity by the Chief Justice. The development of New Zealand included outright conflict as settlers sought to gain control of Maori-owned land along with policies that were built around separate and far from equal provisions for Maori: native schools, four Maori seats in Parliament, constrained political rights and separate provision for Maori in the justice system. The assumption was that the best approach was to encourage assimilation.

This mix of a peremptory takeover of Maori resources, a dismissal of Maori culture and language and the belief that Maori would die out in the face of a more "civilized" and "superior" cultural tradition lasted well into the 20th century (Walker 1990). Maori did resist, and in some cases, successfully, and Maori control of resources, and a language and cultural tradition, were preserved in certain parts of New Zealand. Major changes came with the migration of Maori from their traditional areas of settlement to the expanding urban economies from 1945. This was encouraged by government policies that sought assimilation by "modernization" away from tribal influences and rural locations. In the wake of relocation, it was increasingly recognized that Maori were not enjoying the same rights or standard of living as other New Zealanders, and so progressive governments (especially those of the Labour Party) sought to ensure that Maori were given the rights promised as part of the third provision of the Treaty of Waitangi, equal citizenship. But this was often interpreted as special provisions for Maori to encourage parity, with the result that the Department of Maori Affairs provided significant funding for Maori housing, economic development and education to ensure modernization. By the mid-20th century, the policy of assimilation had become one of integration, built around special recognition of Maori needs and interests. Under conservative governments in the 1970s and 1980s, this special provision was increasingly under attack as inappropriate in a modern nation-state, which should not treat anyone as ethnically separate. The Prime Minister at the time, Rob Muldoon, was

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fond of quoting the statement Governor Hobson made at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, "*He iwi tahi tatou*" (We are all one people). But that was not in accord with a now largely urbanized Maori.

Maori political groups began to protest that the second provision of the Treaty of Waitangi, the recognition of Maori as a distinct people with certain rights, had not been upheld by successive governments. A land march down the length of the North Island took place in 1975 and there was occupation of land in Auckland in 1977-1978 as well as other parts of the country to protest at land loss, along with a call for more formal recognition of the importance of Maori culture and language. The 1984-1989 Labour Government moved to rectify some of these grievances, and began a more extensive process of deciding reparations for the losses associated with colonialism, the incorporation of bicultural requirements into the delivery of government services (these agencies had to acknowledge the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi, develop Maori capability and ensure that they had adequately qualified people who could respond to Maori needs), and recognize Maori culture and language in New Zealand's institutions. The effect was to significantly disrupt the nation building process which had been previously built around an assumption of British values and institutions and the assimilation/integration of Maori. Some Maori argued for *tino rangatiratanga* (Maori sovereignty) which directly challenged the notion that there was a single form of sovereignty held by the State on behalf of a unified New Zealand nation (Awatere 1984).

By the late 1980s, the assimilation/integration approach that had prevailed had given way to a policy framework which was bicultural (recognition of Maori as a people with distinct citizenship rights). Maori now comprised 15% of New Zealand's population, were largely urban and made up an increasing proportion of younger age groups (as opposed to Pakeha who are an ageing population with low fertility). There was a constitutional recognition that Maori had group-specific rights by virtue of their status as the indigenous people, as having rights accorded to them as part of the Treaty of Waitangi and as having been unfairly treated (in a legal as well as a moral sense) by the processes of colonization. There is, once again, a separate Maori education system which provides for Maori language instruction and Maori knowledge, Maori is an official language along with English, there is a State-funded Maori television channel, social, educational and employment services for which Maori are provided either through various government agencies or as devolved schemes run by Maori organizations and Maori language and protocols are now widely used, at least in the public sector. The effect has been to marginalize policy that addresses the cultural diversity associated with immigration.

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Cultural diversity in the 21st century

For much of New Zealand's colonial history, immigration was almost exclusively British and Irish, and those non-European migrants who did make it to New Zealand, such as the Chinese, were racialized and discriminated against. In the 1960s, the census records nearly 99% of New Zealand's population as either being European (both migrants and New Zealand-born) or Maori. But this situation rapidly began to change because of two non-European migration flows. The first was labour migration from the Pacific (Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Fiji) which was prompted by the need for semi and unskilled labour in the major cities. The arrival of Pacific migrants produced a major (negative) reaction during the 1970s, and there were campaigns to identify and deport "overstayers." The second migration occurred as a result of the review of immigration policy in 1986 and a new act in 1987. This took away racial preferences in terms of the source country or culture of migrants and aligned New Zealand selection with the points system of Australia and Canada. The first period of major non-European migration involved Hong Kong Chinese, Taiwanese and Koreans. The second, from 2000 onwards, has involved mainland Chinese and Indians (including from Fiji). The effect is that the diversity of New Zealand has changed dramatically, so that the country now has more overseas-born than Canada, and Auckland – as the gateway city – has more overseas-born than any other Australasian city. A bicultural approach is insufficient as the basis for integrating immigrants and their descendants.

The move to alter New Zealand's immigration policy was in recognition that the country needed to re-align itself away from Europe and towards the Asia-Pacific region geo-politically. The emphasis since 1987 has been on immigrant selection, especially with the focus on economic immigrants (those who will contribute to New Zealand's economic development and international competitiveness). The assumption is that immigrants who were carefully selected would then face few difficulties in settling in New Zealand. Unlike Canada or Australia, New Zealand has offered relatively few post-arrival services as part of the process of settlement. There was also little public discussion of the changes to immigration policy, and both Maori and Pakeha felt somewhat aggrieved at the sudden diversification of immigrant flows. From 1993 through to the 1996 General Election, there was another period of anti-immigrant politics with Asian immigrants now racialized and the subject of discrimination. An anti-immigrant political party, New Zealand First, gained significantly from these populist sentiments.

Research on the experiences of immigrants indicated that settlement was problematic, especially for non-English

speaking background immigrants (see Boyd 2003). The irony was that the investment in selecting immigrants was not followed by positive settlement outcomes. The evidence led to a Cabinet paper in 2003 which marked an important acknowledgement that a different policy approach was called for. This paper, *The Immigration Settlement Strategy: A Programme of Action for the Settlement Outcomes That Promote Social Cohesion*, provided some of the elements for an evolving framework that addresses cultural diversity and immigrant integration. The target population, however, are permanent residents, not the very significant number of temporary workers or students, and the goal is social cohesion which is defined as a "climate of collaboration because all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy." Alongside this high level policy goal of social cohesion is an interest in strengthening national identity, maintaining trust in government and reducing inequality. The Cabinet statement recognizes that robust immigrant selection processes need to be accompanied by an investment in settlement. Early contributions to this policy debate have pointed out that immigrant settlement is important; so is the role and contribution of host communities. Various government departments and agencies are charged with developing and implementing this policy.

Immigrant selection and settlement

Immigrants are selected according to specified criteria. About 60% of the immigrants currently selected fall into the skilled and business investor categories, with points awarded for criteria such as qualifications, prior experience, a job offer and age. The points cut-off is adjusted according to the numbers applying and whether targets are being met, along with the demand for certain skills onshore. One of the more contentious elements since the early 1990s has been the English language requirements (at one point, a bond of NZ$20,000 was required), especially given the research evidence that English language competency is the most significant factor in successful settlement outcomes. This is done by a single authority and according to a national qualifications framework. There is particular concern that certain professional bodies impose additional and unfair requirements before the immigrant is allowed to practice in New Zealand, the medical profession being the most obvious example. But the issues in this regard escalate quite significantly in terms of post-arrival experiences.

There is relatively little that an immigrant can expect by way of automatic post-arrival support (unless they fall into a humanitarian category such as refugees). Access to benefits is subject to a period of residency, English language tuition is at the immigrant's inclination and there are relatively few programs to help acclimatize to a New Zealand business environment. If difficulties are encountered, then some services are available. The Language Line (offered by the Office Ethnic Affairs) can be accessed in the case of medical situations or the courts system, for example. This low level of support compared to Canada or Australia is compounded by the attitudes of key gatekeepers. The research literature demonstrates that employers tend to see immigrants as a least preferred labour option, although there are some important exceptions (Trlin, Spoonley and Watts 2005). Surname or accent discrimination, an undervaluing of overseas qualifications and experience (despite a robust evaluation of credential qualifications prior to arrival) and stereotypes remain significant barriers in immigrants obtaining appropriate forms of employment.

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In recent years, both private and public sectors agencies have sought to respond to these settlement issues and to contribute to the goal of social cohesion. The Office of Ethnic Affairs is charged with the promotion of diversity. The Human Rights Commission has both an educative and regulatory role, and seeks to reduce prejudice and discrimination and a complaints-based process. The Department of Labour and Ministry of Social Development provide advice and help in terms of employment and welfare benefits for immigrants. In the private sphere, some of the employer representative groups such as the Auckland Chamber of Commerce and Employers and Manufacturers Association have proactively sought to encourage employers to view immigrants in a more positive light. Politically, the government has emphasized the value of diversity and has offered apologies for past mistreatment to the Chinese and Samoan communities, an act, which was emotionally accepted by leaders of the communities, concerned.

The successful settlement of immigrants has become an important policy consideration, although much of the investment remains in recruiting and selecting immigrants. The 2006 *Immigration Act Review* emphasizes border security, despite the Cabinet paper and its concern with social cohesion. This situation is compounded by the policy dominance of biculturalism and the lack of a systematic and publicly endorsed multicultural framework. The multiculturalism that does exist tends to operate in the public sector as a requirement to recognize cultural difference but there is minimal resourcing (with the

possible exception of Pacific peoples) and it is secondary to biculturalism. Moreover, Maori and some others regard multiculturalism as a threat given that conservatives see it as a way of re-allocating resources away from Maori or regarding them as yet another ethnic minority. Elsewhere, multiculturalism is often reduced to festivals and food, and the degree of diversity in New Zealand and its political and economic significance is still widely underestimated. The immigrant communities themselves have proven to be the most adaptive and innovative, and have been active in setting up their own networks and ethnic sub-economies, and in promoting and resourcing those institutions and activities (such as language maintenance) that are important to them.

In all of this, one element has helped in an unanticipated way. When the New Zealand Government passed the 1977 *Citizenship Act*, along with the legislation and policy that followed, a soft form of citizenship was established. The awarding of Permanent Residence virtually grants all the same rights as full citizenship, New Zealand has a large number of visa waiver and dual citizenship arrangements with other countries, and the pressure to become a New Zealand citizen is low key. Recently, the difference between Australia and its hard line policies on refugees and immigrants and New Zealand's more relaxed approach has become more pronounced.

Integration and social cohesion

There is an unresolved tension between the major attempt to include the indigenous Maori in the modern New Zealand State and society – biculturalism – and the need to recognize the cultural diversity associated with immigration, via a locally relevant form of multiculturalism. The challenge in the next decade will be to construct a policy framework which makes it clear what immigrant and ethnic communities might expect by way of recognition and resourcing, as well as indicating those values and practices which mark a common and inclusive national identity. The present government is aware of these issues, hence the Cabinet statement on immigrant settlement and the various initiatives that have been taken by government departments. But there are also aspects of biculturalism which might help. A number of bicultural initiatives provide models for other communities and a rationale for government and public support. For example, the language nests (*kohanga reo* or pre-schools) for Maori and the bilingual units/schools in the State school system have been imitated by ethnic communities looking to maintain their own languages. Further, the reform of public institutions has provided an opportunity for ethnic and immigrant communities to become more involved in national institutions. The introduction of Mixed Member Proportional Representation in the New Zealand Parliament in the late 1990s has encouraged a wider range of ethnicities to be politically represented. But the challenge is to develop a more appropriate and extensive multicultural framework, which, as biculturalism has done, recognizes and resources minority and immigrant ethnic communities.

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Notes

* "We are one people," Captain William Hobson, British Government representative at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840. The question mark is the author's.

[1] *Pakeha* refers to members of the majority group who are of European descent. This use of the term is contested by some (see Fleras and Spoonley 1999).