

Tea o marama? 'Cultural' solutions to Maori educational inequality: A critique

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ABSTRACT

How Maori disadvantage in society is conceptualized is obviously of critical importance in the formulation of strategies designed to ameliorate these inequalities. In section 1 this essay argues that dominant explanations of Maori inequality in the education system have significant weaknesses because they tend to ignore the fundamental underlying structural causes of Maori inequality. Section 2 provides an account of the processes of white settler colonialism and labour migration which are essential in explaining the emergence and present state of Maori disadvantage. In Section 3 it is argued, firstly, that Maori schooling has functioned structurally as a mechanism of social control to undermine Maori challenges to the dominant class and the emerging capitalist state; secondly it has functioned to reinforce trends in the wider economic context by producing labour power according to the demands of capital. It is argued in Section 4 that the devolution of education administration to the Maori community will do nothing to alter the structural inequalities in wider capitalist society that continually work against the objectives of even the most egalitarian educational systems.

Introduction

There is a wealth of official statistical data which clearly highlights the existence of disproportionately poor educational outcomes for Maori in comparison to non-Maori. It should be noted that the relative under-achievement of Maori in the education system is only one of a number of indicators that together paint a rather depressing picture of Maori disadvantage in society (New Zealand Treasury, 1987: 215). Numerous studies confirm that in addition to poor educational outcomes, Maori continue to experience: high levels of unemployment; low income levels; ill-health and thus lower life expectancy; high rates of imprisonment; low rates of home ownership; and high rates of state dependency (Ministry of Maori Development, 1992: 12; Spoonley, 1993: 23-24).

Theories of differential attainment have dominated the official discourse on Maori education. These dominant explanations for Maori educational inequality are problematic in significant respects because they tend to ignore the wider structural mechanisms of capitalist society in which the education system functions. Because of this, those strategies designed to ameliorate Maori inequality through educational or curriculum reform are based on a fundamental misconception of the historical role of the education system in Aotearoa. By contrast, a marxist approach reveals the fundamental underlying structures which have shaped both legislation and institutions. It reveals the historical and structural mechanisms of capitalism which have generated and entrenched Maori disadvantage in wider society. This essay argues that the structural inequalities

in wider capitalist society continually work against the objectives of even the most egalitarian educational systems.

It is not enough to provide purely descriptive accounts of Maori inequality nor of educational policy. Rather it is crucial in order to formulate effective strategies that the underlying structural causes of Maori inequality are revealed. New Zealand is a capitalist society with a system of production organized on the principles of profitable capital accumulation. In light of this, it should not be surprising that schooling in New Zealand has developed in ways which serve to reproduce capitalist social relations. While this is a mediated, contested and often contradictory process, the formal education system centrally involves producing a labour force with ideas, values and practices which are consistent with, and in acceptance of, existing capitalist power relations (Shuker, 1987: 21).

In performing this role the state is 'independent' of any direct or systematic control by the capitalist class. However, in a capitalist society the state is fiscally dependent on the taxation of incomes generated in the process of private capital accumulation. This means that the state is structurally dependent on the continuing profitability and expansion of capital accumulation (Goldfinch and Roper, 1993: 69). This dependence is historically contingent in the sense that the structural constraints on state policy formulation are not as fundamental during periods of economic prosperity as they are in the midst of prolonged economic crises (Roper, 1993: 22). This structural dependency means that those who exercise state power, whether politicians or bureaucrats, have a vested interest in ensuring that capital accumulation remains profitable in order that investment and economic growth is maintained (Ibid).

Any analysis of educational policy with respect to Maori, cannot therefore be divorced from the wider structural and historical context within which state education developed in New Zealand. In this way it is important to look beyond the visible evidence of educational legislation and institutions to uncover the social forces which have shaped Maori education policy. Clearly, capitalist accumulation, class inequality and conflict, and the pro-capitalist bias of state policy formulation have had a major impact on the development of the education system.

How Maori disadvantage in society is conceptualized is obviously of critical importance in the formulation of strategies designed to ameliorate these inequalities. In section 1 this essay provides a schematic overview of some of the dominant explanations of Maori inequality in the education system. It is argued that these explanations have significant weaknesses because they tend to ignore the fundamental underlying structural causes of Maori inequality.

The structural position of Maori in the productive relations of capitalism has enormous implications for levels of educational attainment. There is substantial evidence that confirms the central role that schools have in capitalist societies in reproducing social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the next (Bourdieu 1973 · 1974 · Bernstein 1975). Indeed, there is a broad consensus among researchers that the educational outcomes of individuals and certain groups within society can be directly correlated with the class position of parents and families (Ministry of Maori Development, 1991).

Educational research confirms the existence of educational inequality and the reproduction of class inequality in the Aotearoa context. The educational attainment of children from poor families is well below that of children from wealthier families (Lauder, 1985). The existence of such an inequality in Aotearoa is associated with class background (see Crothers and Jones, 1987; Lauder, Hughes and Taberner, 1988; Lauder and Hughes, 1990; Fergusson, Lloyd and Horwood, 1991; Nash, 1993). Working class students do not achieve as highly as their upper class counterparts, even when scholastic ability is taken into account (Lauder, 1985: 32-33).

Given this evidence, any strategy designed to ameliorate Maori disadvantage must be able to conceptualize the underlying social structures and social formation within which Maori have been incorporated and the specific nature of this process. It must explain how Maori have come to be located overwhelmingly in the working class. To this end, Section 2 provides an account of the

processes of white settler colonialism and labour migration which are essential in explaining the emergence and present state of Maori disadvantage. It is argued that Maori disadvantage in society has arisen principally due to their specific location within the relations of production brought about through the brutal incorporation of Maori into the capitalist mode of production.

In Aotearoa, Maori schooling did not develop solely under its own momentum or in isolation from other social phenomena. Rather Maori education and indeed state provided education as a whole, were dictated by the colonial state's vested interest in the ongoing process of colonisation and the development of capitalism (which necessitated the creation of suitable social relations). Section 3 argues firstly that Maori schooling has functioned structurally as a mechanism of social control to undermine Maori challenges to the dominant class and the emerging capitalist state; secondly it has functioned to reinforce trends in the wider economic context by producing labour power according to the demands of capital. This has had significant implications for Maori occupational placement and location within the working class. Thirdly Maori schooling has played an integral part in maintaining capitalist social and political structures over time. Finally, Maori schooling has also promoted a labour force with a system of beliefs and attitudes that are consistent with existing power relations and social arrangements.

Given the fiction of equal access to the market place and the fact that Maori schooling has functioned historically to legitimate the unequal social relations of capitalism, it is argued in Section 4 that the devolution of education administration to the Maori community will do nothing to alter the structural inequalities in wider capitalist society that continually work against the objectives of even the most egalitarian educational systems.

1. 'Cultural' explanations of Maori educational inequality.

Historically, the official explanations of Maori educational inequality in Aotearoa have been based on deficit theories (Nash, 1983: 72). These theories have placed the onus for Maori inequality in education, and indeed, inequality in capitalist society at large, on Maori themselves, ignoring the underlying structures which have generated and entrenched this disadvantage (for example see Ausubel, 1965: 24; and Department of Education, 1971: 21- 22).¹

The most recent variant of the cultural deprivation theory has articulated the view that Maori are disadvantaged in wider society because they are 'de-culturalised' in the sense that they are deprived of traditional Maori values and pride (see for example Jackson, 1992: 99; Walker, 1991: ii; 1979: 38; Mahuta, 1978: 24). Specifically in education, it is argued that the relatively low attainment of Maori children is caused by a poorly developed sense of personal identity as Maori. It is argued that negative views of Maoriness are perpetuated and reinforced by 'Pakeha' society at large. (Walker, 1991: ii; Reedy, 1975: 13) This has dominated the official and critical discussion in recent years.

The Maoritanga theory is more sophisticated than the more crude deficit explanations of Maori inequality in education. It has co-opted school inadequacy and labelling theories which provide useful insights into the way that schools operate to the detriment of Maori students. School inadequacy theories maintain that some of the differences in educational attainment are due to school resources and educational practices. Such solutions as making schools more responsive to the culture of their communities through parental management are widely supported (Nash, 1993: 15). Labelling theories or the teacher expectation theories place the onus of differential attainment on the attitudes of teachers and the practices they adopt as a result. The idea that teachers are biased against working-class students, hold ethnocentric and racist attitudes, neglect female students in their classroom interactions and so forth are widespread (Nash, 1993: 14). However, each of these theories has an implied programme of remedial action which is strictly confined to the school and the education system rather than the underlying structural context within which they operate.

It is vitally important to see such cultural explanations for Maori inequality within the context of the development of ethnic nationalist strategies for Maori empowerment (see Walker, 1984; 1987; 1990). In this regard, one of the most significant developments in the evolution of Maori political activism from the late 1960s has been the increasing use of culture and identity as a strategy for dealing with Maori collective disadvantage and powerlessness. 'Cultural Nationalism' is the emphasis on regaining identity and freedom by immersing one-self in one's traditional culture. This has been based on the idea that it is necessary to exhume the 'colonised mind' through the resurrection of Maori identity. This has become an extremely persuasive ideology since the 1980s. It has involved the selective reconstruction and renegotiation of primordial symbols and beliefs.

One of the results of this emphasis on Maori cultural solidarity is the perception that the struggle against Maori inequality and racism can be reduced to a clash of cultures; a conflict between 'races'. Moreover, one of the tendencies of movements which emphasise the identity of their members as the determining factor in their oppression is to 'personalize' the conflict for liberation. If you personalize power you tend to personalize the enemy. Hence the struggle for equality becomes reduced to a fight against prejudice; a fight against the institutions and practices, and against individuals and attitudes, not against the system that perpetuates that oppression. Maori struggles are frequently conceptualized as a conflict between 'races'; a Maori versus Pakeha struggle. Often the study of New Zealand history is likewise reduced to a study of 'race relations' and the clash of cultures. This leaves the struggle against Maori oppression to be fought out at the level of individual relationships. Moreover, since cultural nationalists explain the division between Maori and Pakeha as biologically rooted, the rupture must be permanent. The conclusion that the enemy of Maori is Pakeha is very pessimistic to say the least, and it follows logically that any strategy aimed at the liberation of Maori necessitates an apocalyptic struggle because the very existence of Pakeha compromises the cultural integrity of Maori.

Maori cultural nationalism targets Pakeha and the Pakeha need to oppress Maori as the root of Maori disadvantage in wider society. Accordingly, Maori oppression is a result of the racist attitudes of Pakeha that have become 'institutionalized' within society as a whole (see Walker, 1990: 8; Ballara, 1986: 6; Nairn and Nairn, 1981: 117). The education system was just one arena where the oppression of Maori by Pakeha takes place. Pakeha society was said to reflect inherent characteristics: it was competitive, exploitative, valued material success and it eroded or dominated traditional or radically egalitarian values. Maori on the other hand retained an emotional and spiritual link with the land. Maori were collective and communal people not individualistic. The Maori possessed an inherent integrity that had been progressively eroded since European contact. However this status could be redeemed by immersing one-self in their Maori identity or 'Maoritanga.' Because the inherent traits of Pakeha were the basic causes of an oppressive and unequal society, the virtues of Maori were critical for their resolution. Indeed, the degeneration of socially-constructed and historically-specific phenomena into genetic explanations for inequality was fundamental to the ideology of the movement as it unfolded (Greenland, 1984: 90-91).

Cultural nationalist explanations for Maori inequality assume that the conflict between Maori and Pakeha in wider society is based on the incompatibility of the underlying values of the two 'races'. This is fundamentally problematic because it is based upon the reification of an ideological notion ('race') and the abstraction of culture from its material context (Miles and Spoonley, 1985: 13 and Miles, 1982: 32). While specific, but by no means all, patterns of phenotypical difference may be attributed with social significance by particular populations, these real biological differences do not, in themselves, have any determinancy. It is the selective perception and subsequent action of individuals and groups which leads to determinate outcomes and effects. In this way, attitudes and values in and of themselves, have no determinancy. They do so only in particular material and historical contexts.

Many Maori have fought fiercely to demolish the significance given to the biological in determining the social inequalities between Maori and Pakeha. It is somewhat ironic that since the

late 1970s and early 1980s, that some cultural nationalists have done precisely the opposite. Indeed, for an explanation and strategy which sought to reject the ethnocentric theories which identified disadvantage as arising from being Maori, the assumption that Maori pupils fail in education because of a lack of Maoritanga maintains many of the key concepts of such deficit theories. Indeed, the tenor of many of the assumptions made about Maori pupils were strikingly similar in their content. Maori pupils are described by cultural imperialism as lacking security, identity, motivation, pride, Maori values, cultural heritage and so on. They are similarly described in deficit theories as being disinherited individuals, alienated, bitter, resentful and possessing a negative self-image (see Salmond, 1976: 212).

Such 'cultural' or 'ethnic' explanations for Maori inequality tend to assume that the underlying values, attitudes and cultural phenomena that underpin 'ethnic' groups are fixed or primordial. Early studies of ethnicity and ethnic groups also assumed that identities were primordial, that they originated in the unknowable past, and that they were relatively unchanging. However, evidence now confirms that individuals and/or collectivities manipulated their ethnic identities to fit different social situations (see Barth, 1969; Cohen, 1974; Lyman and Douglas, 1973; Kendis and Kendis, 1976: 1-18; Hechter, 1975, 1987; Hechter and Levi, 1979; Smith, 1981, 1986, 1988).

This has important implications for the study of 'ethnic' conflict because it means that what it is to identify as Maori or Pakeha at any given point in time is socially constructed and therefore historically contingent. Therefore, such cultural approaches may tell us more about contemporary Maori attempts at the renegotiation and selective regeneration of primordial symbols and beliefs than explanations for Maori inequality (Openshaw, Lee and Lee, 1993: 25).

If Maoritanga is promoted as the only acceptable theory of Maori identity, and there are good reasons for doubting that it should, then it follows that those Maori who do not possess the characteristics and selectively chosen features defined as 'Maori culture' are culturally deprived (Nash, 1983: 56). As a consequence of this deprivation the so called 'disinherited' must be provided with kaupapa Maori through educational programmes. The total commitment to such theories and strategies in educational philosophy has made it increasingly more difficult to accept the validity of other markers of ethnicity or patterns of Maori culture, which, in essence, have emerged as a result of the Maori experience of urban life as an oppressed ethnic minority within the working class (Nash, 1983: 56).

The emphasis on ethnic solidarity has emerged at the expense of a number of serious misconceptions not only in relation to Maori differential attainment in the education system, but also in relation to Maori disadvantage in wider society.² It has meant that there is little recognition of the wide range of social and economic differentiation within both Pakeha and Maori ethnic groups (Miles and Spoonley, 1985: 8). Maori are all too frequently discussed as if forming one homogeneous entity, its members possessing exactly the same experiences of oppression, and exactly the same political aspirations. However, this assumed unanimity is far from reality. 'Maori' is essentially a contrived term, in the sense that it covers not only significant cultural differences at both inter-hapu and inter-iwi level in terms of tikanga, kawa (protocol), language dialect and so forth, but also significant internal political variation. Indeed, there exists a dynamic range of aspirations and political strategies within so called 'Maoridom.' Moreover, these aspirations often conflict with one another and are not divorced from the influence of the wider social and economic environment. It is clear that the location of Maori in a range of different class positions contributes to fundamental conflicts of interest within such ethnic communities (Loomis, 1990: 4). Moreover, the fact is Maori do not have a monopoly on social and economic disadvantage in society. This is the weakness of a cultural approach to Maori inequality: it cannot explain why some Maori quite clearly do well in the education system while others do not; nor can it explain the existence of differential attainment for working class Pakeha children. If 'Pakeha' culture and attitudes are the root of the problem then it follows logically that no Pakeha should be disadvantaged in Aotearoa. But this is obviously not the case.

The emphasis on Maori solidarity conceals the historical reality of social class stratification within both 'traditional' and contemporary Maori society. Indeed, sometimes the interests of Maori in contemporary capitalist society are presented as similar. Thus the interests of affluent right-wing individuals, such individuals as Donna Awatere, (Maori affairs spokesperson for the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers (ACT)) right through to the interests of the Maori unemployed, homeless and hungry of South Auckland's 'ghettoes' can be presented as philosophically and culturally the same. As such, cultural nationalism and the politics of Maori identity have been the perfect social theory for the upwardly mobile Maori middle class.

Within the Maoritanga theory is also an implicit assumption of a unitary, homogenous Pakeha society that confronts Maori and in doing so is fundamentally hostile to what is rather loosely termed 'Maori interests'. This concept of cultural homogeneity is an assumption without an empirical basis, and the frequent references to a 'Pakeha culture', 'majority culture', 'dominant white culture' and so on, are testament to its currency (Ibid). They may be useful as rhetorical devices to focus blame and attention, and to motivate action, but as Loomis notes, they are not useful concepts for explaining social reality (Ibid). Although these claims do have some foundation in reality in the sense that the ruling class culture is eurocentric, such concepts tend to distract attention from the underlying structures in capitalist society that have generated and entrenched Maori inequality.

Explanations for the differential attainment of Maori students in the education system that identify the underlying social structures of capitalist productive relations that have entrenched class inequality have generally found little favour in the dominant liberal discourse. Consequently, the state has more readily grasped theories of relative underachievement based on the ethnic background of students. Indeed, evidence of any administrative action based on a fundamental acknowledgement of the structural position occupied by the majority of Maori within capitalist social relations is negligible.

In this regard labelling theories, school inadequacy theories and other 'ethnic' explanations for Maori under achievement may provide valuable insights into the nature of Maori disadvantage. However, such explanations are problematic in significant respects because they tend to focus on the institutional level of education and the official rhetoric of policymakers, largely neglecting the social and economic structures within which the education system operates (Bowles and Gintis, 1976: 53). Because of this, there is a failure to adequately conceptualize the social structures or the social formation within which Maori are incorporated (Miles and Spoonley, 1985: 8). This means there is a silence concerning the nature of Aotearoa as a capitalist society and the role of the state in reproducing conditions which are conducive to the maintenance of capital accumulation. These are questions which quite clearly cannot be discussed and resolved solely by reference to the characteristics of Maori themselves, but necessitate a fundamental consideration of capitalist development in Aotearoa.

2. White settler colonialism and labour migration

Essential in explaining the emergence and present state of Maori disadvantage in capitalist society, are the processes of white settler colonialism and labour migration. These are two distinct, though interlocking, processes, the first of which concerns the colonial land grab which dispossessed Maori, the second of which concerns the Maori labour recruitment, migration and settlement, necessary to provide a work-force for an emerging capitalist society (Miles and Spoonley, 1985: 11). The first process is one of destruction and partial exclusion from the developing capitalist society; the second is one of incorporation into an emerging working class.

It is important to place the white settlement of Aotearoa within its overall historical context of the extension and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production on a world wide scale. The period between 1789 and 1848 in European history has been called the epoch of the 'dual revolutions'. This historical period was characterized by tremendous social, economic and political

upheaval which had an enormous impact on the political economy of both settler and extractive colonies around the world. In particular, the period corresponds with the transition from the early phase of white settlement in Aotearoa (from 1791-2 to the late 1830s) which saw the establishment of commercial relations between the traders and Maori to the systematic colonization of the country from the early 1840s onwards.

Nineteenth century Britain at the time of the colonization of Aotearoa was suffering a prolonged economic crisis coupled with rising political discontent. The cyclical bouts of capitalist crises had entrenched serious economic and social inequality. Over-crowding and widespread poverty were endemic to a system that despite the outward form of political equality contained vast differences in wealth and economic power. Historian, Clive Church, has argued that Europe as a whole was in deep crisis by 1829-30 (Church, 1983). Other historians share this view. Artz has written that the situation in Europe was so serious that, "[by] 1830, the whole political order was so unstable that a serious disturbance in any of the capitals of western Europe would almost certainly lead to outbreaks in a number of other states" (1950: 263).

There was a growing tension felt amongst members of the ruling class about the likely threat of revolution in Britain. In the climate of poverty and unemployment, many figured that the working class was particularly susceptible to political agitation. Indeed, the widespread working class rebellion in Europe had intensified the feeling of alarm. The threat of revolution in Britain itself was fuelled by the activities of the chartists, one of the first mass working class movements. In the wake of the 1832 Reform Act, which had extended the franchise predominantly to the urban middle class, there was widespread radical feeling that the working class had been politically betrayed. There was also intense opposition to the harshness of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Chartism harnessed such widespread resentment, building a mass working class movement which flourished throughout England, Scotland and Wales in the period from 1838 to 1850. The Chartists occasionally moved beyond constitutional agitation, working under the slogan, "Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must". Indeed, abortive insurrections occurred in 1839-40 and 1848. In 1842 activists transformed a series of industrial strikes. In 1839, 1840, 1842 and 1848 the movement saw mass arrests and imprisonment of many local and national leaders. As British historian Hobsbawm notes, "No period of British history has been as tense, as politically and socially disturbed, as the 1830s and early 1840s" (1968: 58).

With no known means of reviving economic growth and prosperity and the very real threat of revolution on the horizon, the exportation of 'surplus' population to newly developing colonies was a strategy favoured by many officials throughout the late eighteenth century. However, the British state was facing severe financial constraints and the government was determined not to get embroiled in a colonial venture which necessitated the increased taxation of the British ruling class. In order to entice emigration, the venture required that the new colony offer the conditions necessary for the rapid accumulation of capital which surpassed that in Britain. Since it promised no prospect of future wealth (being a colony for settlement as opposed to an 'extractive' colony) it had to involve as little expense as possible. In Aotearoa the most distinctive economic characteristic was land of especially high quality which required few resources to produce profit. Acquiring this land proved the driving force behind settler society (Steven, 1989: 26). This in turn involved the systematic expropriation of Maori land.

For Marx, 'primitive accumulation', that is the point of departure for the development of capital accumulation, is " ... nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production" (1976: 874-875). He noted that in England the creation of a working class involved an often brutal dispossession of subsistence and petty-commodity producers, leaving them with no other alternative but to sell their labour power for a wage (Ibid.). Moreover, as Marx wrote: "[the] history of this expropriation assumes different aspects in different countries, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different historical epochs" (Ibid.: 876).

In this way, many of the specific features of the development of capitalism in Aotearoa may be distinct to this region. Nevertheless, the process of primitive accumulation is strikingly similar on a global scale. Historically, the penetration of the capitalist mode of production in Aotearoa necessitated the separation of a growing proportion of the Maori population from the means of production, which had previously provided them with their subsistence. This process was essential because the emergence of an 'unfree' labour market is the key to the rise of capitalism. This process was not gradual or harmonious, rather it involved brute force and suffering (McNally, 1993: 6-7). However, Aotearoa contained a Maori population that was relatively large and militarily organised enough to provide powerful resistance to the masses of settlers who wanted land for their own economy. At this time the British state was unwilling to meet the costs of the military power required to neutralise this resistance. As Steven notes, Te Tiriti o Waitangi effectively provided an inexpensive means of ensuring that Maori would not obstruct the mass influx of settlers, at least not until the mass was large enough to constitute a greater military power than Maori (1989: 26).

However, in the first decade following the signing of the treaty, Maori were generally caught up in the surge of economic activity that went with the establishment of a British colony (Orange, 1987: 114). Although there was a range of conflicts between Maori and the settlers, the early period of the 1840s was relatively harmonious until the rise of pastoralism and the discovery of pastoral wealth which necessitated large amounts of land (Steven, 1989: 27).

During the late 1840s and early 1850s settlers in Te Wai Pounamu began to invest heavily in wool production which required relatively few resources and yielded greater profits than the moderate incomes earned in the production of foodstuffs. However, profitable pastoralism required huge land-holdings and their acquisition at not too great a cost. Hence, the period 1840-1870 was an era of rampant land acquisition culminating in the New Zealand Wars. These were more than a contest for land per se, but a clash between those capitalist landowners and pastoralists for whom economic development was based on the use of land as a source of individual ownership for profit, and those Maori who were dependent on the land for their subsistence (Pearson, 1984: 209 and Sorrenson, 1981: 175).³ It was a contest which, in the first instance, involved the emerging ruling class of white settlers taking control of Maori land, more often than not through destructive and violent means. In the second instance, the assertion of economic power, and the political, ideological and cultural hegemony that went with it, necessitated the increasing 'peripheralization' of Maori from the developing infrastructure of capitalist society (Pearson, 1990: 27).

Maori were not passive respondents to this expansion, rather there was substantial and sustained resistance to incursions. It should be noted that this process did not involve the complete destruction of the political and ideological relations of traditional Maori society, which continued to be reproduced albeit in an increasingly modified form (Miles and Spoonley, 1985: 16-17). However, the wars enabled the imperial state to use 'legal' force in the confiscation of further Maori land. In the intervention to pacify 'rebellion', the colonial state introduced by force the conditions for capitalist production (Bedggood, 1978: 287).

In the abolition of the provincial councils and the creation of a centralised state, Maori were peripheralized. Access to parliament was safeguarded by the male property franchise which carefully excluded Maori participation by recognising only individual title. Territorial and regional-separation encouraged the maintenance of a peripheral Maori culture that remained relatively insulated from the white settler institutions. It also allowed the state to further develop an infrastructure suitable for capitalism without formidable opposition. State and foreign investment contributed to the development of a national economic infrastructure. By the turn of the century most Maori were relegated to a precarious existence on the edge of a rapidly expanding capitalist society dominated by a Pakeha ruling class and state (Pearson, 1984: 209).

The development of capitalist production necessitated the geographical concentration of the means of production, and hence the urbanization of a proletariat (Miles and Spoonley, 1985: 15). Initially Maori had only a marginal relationship with the capitalist mode of production by providing

cheap seasonal wage labour primarily for the agricultural sector in order to supplement their declining subsistence economy. The retention of less than one-sixth of the land, most of it unproductive, meant that iwi were growing scarcely enough crops to feed themselves, hence the reliance on seasonal labour. By the time the process of alienation of Maori land had been completed by the mid-twentieth century, Maori no longer possessed their traditional means of production and this had significant economic and cultural consequences. The subsistence economy had been shattered.

The period 1945 to 1973 was one of sustained economic growth coupled with a gradual rise in the standards of living in most advanced capitalist countries. New Zealand's economic fortunes were no exception. The long boom was a product of historically high levels of profitability and productive investment, accompanied by full employment, low inflation, rising real wages, and the absence of prolonged balance of payment difficulties due to the historically favourable terms of trade (Roper, 1993: 2). From 1945, there was a significant expansion of the manufacturing sector which generated an absolute and relative increase in size of the working class (Ibid.). The prolonged period of economic expansion further accelerated the centralization of industrial production in the larger cities, particularly the greater region of Auckland.

The compulsion for Maori to sell their labour power for a wage (induced by the destruction of the traditional economy) combined with the demand for labour from the expanding manufacturing sector, and led to a massive rural to urban migration of Maori. Acute Maori overpopulation in relation to limited economic and natural resources, and high rural unemployment reinforced this rural exodus (Butterworth 1967: 19). Indeed, the urbanization and proletarianization were rapid: in 1926, 8% of the total Maori population were located in the 'defined urban areas'.⁴ By 1966 41.1 % of the total Maori population lived in those same defined urban areas as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Maori Population In Defined Urban Areas	
Census Year	Percentage of Total Maori Population
1926	8.0
1936	9.2
1945	15.1
1951	17.6
1956	21.1
1961	28.7
1966	41.1

Source: 'Maori Population and Dwellings', 1966 Census

The occupational structure of the Maori population actively engaged in the workforce is also revealing: at the 1936 census, 36.86% of Maori were classified under the category 'Craftsmen, production process workers and labourers.' By the 1966 census, 50.3% of Maori actively engaged in the labourforce were classified as such. By the mid-1970s, just under 60% of the employed Maori population was engaged in manual labour in manufacturing, mining, transport and construction.

The capital accumulation in manufacturing was so swift, that the Maori rural population was not a sufficient source of semi and unskilled manual labour to keep pace with the long boom which continued until the mid-1970s (see Pearson, 1984). Indeed, the demand for labour was such, that

the New Zealand government implemented schemes to aid not only Maori migration but international migration to those urban areas where industry was located. Thus, labour migration was not confined to the Maori and Pakeha population. As Pearson notes, net immigration to New Zealand was close to 250,000 between 1945 and 1968, a substantial inward flow in a country of fewer than three million people (Pearson, 1990: 114). Many migrants were skilled and semi-skilled workers recruited from Britain (between 1947 and 1958 85% of immigrants were British). But the labour shortages created by the expansion of capital were such that workers were encouraged to emigrate from other parts of Europe such as Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Austria, and Switzerland (Ibid.). 25,000 Dutch migrants arrived from the Netherlands and Indonesia between 1950 and 1968.

The gaps in the lower end of the labour market were largely filled by Maori and Pacific Island migrant workers. In 1945 the census recorded just over 2,000 Pacific Islanders in New Zealand; by 1956 this figure had quadrupled to 8,103. By 1976 there were almost 66,000 Pacific Islanders born or settled in New Zealand and by 1986 the numbers had almost doubled to 128,000 (Ibid.).

In the mid-1970s the long boom that had fuelled the rapid labour migration collapsed. This occurred because the dynamic of capitalist accumulation results in the constant replacement of labour power in the production process by mechanization in order to increase the extraction of surplus value. However, this constant investment in the means of production itself contributes to a long-term tendency for the average rate of profit to fall (see Shaikh 1989; 1991: 185-186). In the period after 1973, the need to restructure capital brought on by the long-term tendency in capitalist economies for the rates of profit to decline led to high levels of unemployment. Indeed, the New Zealand economy was in crises. As Roper notes:

For much of the period after 1973 the New Zealand economy has suffered from economic stagnation, high inflation, declining profitability, insufficient and poorly allocated levels of productive investment, historically low terms of trade recurrent balance of payments deficits, increasing public and private indebtedness, the cessation of real wage growth, the highest level of unemployment since the 1930s, and the most widespread and intense strike activity experienced since the 1951 waterfront dispute (1993: 2).

As we have seen, the process by which Maori were incorporated into the economic structures of capitalism has had dramatic implications for the location of Maori within the wider social structure. White settler colonialism and labour migration have functioned structurally to place the majority of Maori whanau in the working class.

The economic restructuring necessitated by the collapse of the long boom has had a dramatic and disproportionate impact on the majority of Maori because of their location within the working class. With the decline of the manufacturing sector at the end of the economic boom, a surplus of labour developed as a result of the deepening recession and the restructuring of capital that followed with the consequence that a great proportion of Maori workers in the sector were laid-off and compelled by their new circumstances to survive on unemployment and welfare benefits (Ministry of Maori Development, 1992: 24). Despite the gradual improvement over the course of the twentieth century, the material position of Maori in the economy has been consistently worse than non-Maori because the current economic recession and government policies to ameliorate it have reinforced patterns of inequality by eroding the employment base of lower skilled workers in primary and manufacturing sectors, those industries predominantly dominated by Maori and Pacific Islanders.

3. Maori education policy

The education system is not a finely tuned instrument of manipulation in the hands of the capitalist class. Nor does it exist in a vacuum: key educational decisions reflect the constitution of social relations of production within the wider society. To this end, the early work of Bowles and Gintis

convincingly shows that historically, education has functioned structurally in the interests of profit and political stability in capitalist societies (1976: 11- 12).

Assimilation

From this perspective successive policies in relation to Maori can be seen as determined by historically specific resource needs of capitalist development. Thus, up to the 1930s, the appropriation of Maori land and the commodification of Maori labour were actively encouraged by the state. Assimilation was the key official state policy toward Maori until the 1960s. Education was regarded as the most effective and cheap way to assimilate Maori into capitalist class culture.

The policy of assimilation in its various guises, dominates the historical experience for Maori in the state education system (Barrington, 1971: 4). It has significant implications for the study of Maori inequality in education precisely because education was not intended as an equalising force in society, rather it was built on a legacy of crude social control (Openshaw, Lee and Lee, 1993: 40; Harker, 1980: 8).⁵ A predominantly technical education functioned to reinforce trends in the wider economic context by producing labour power according to the demands of capital (Barrington, 1985: 45-58; Shuker, 1987: 199). The relentless process of Europeanization provided the ruling class a means of containing potential Maori resistance by promoting a labour force with a system of beliefs and attitudes that were consistent with existing power relations and social arrangements (see Gramsci, 1971; and Shuker, 1987: 21). In this way Maori education functioned to reproduce the existing capitalist class structure, characterized by socio-economic and ethnic hierarchy, exclusion and inequality (Shuker, 1987: 18).

Integration

By the early 1950s the rural areas in which the majority of the Maori resided, could no longer support the increasing population, leaving young Maori families with little option but to move to urban centres in search of employment and the promised advantages of a progressive capitalist society (Pearson and Thoms, 1983: 203). In reaction to this rural exodus of Maori, strategies had to be found that dealt with the problems of urbanisation.

The Hunn Report of 1960 surveyed the fields of education, employment, crime, health, housing and welfare in much statistical detail, and concluded that Maori society and Maori education were in a state of crisis. Education was believed to have a major role to play in the social and economic advancement of Maori. The report ushered in a new phase of social policy based on the ideal that only the best features of both cultures would be integrated into one singular New Zealand culture. In educational policy 'integration' promoted the idea that the 'cultural superiority' of the assimilation model be replaced by the " ... more liberal concept of cultural tolerance" (Mullard, 1982: 125). It presumed each group to be equal in terms of power, which it had to presume if it was to integrate Maori fully and equally (Tait, 1988: 75). However, while there remained compulsion for Maori students to be fully immersed in the modes of behaviour of ruling class capitalist culture the relationship was not reciprocal. Because policy prescriptions promoted strategies in strictly educational terms, not in terms of the real power base in society, integration was essentially to be integration for Maori into capitalist society dominated by Pakeha ruling class values. Thus the reality for Maori people was that there was very little difference between the policy of assimilation and integration (Jones, 1990: 137).

Despite its recognition of Maori disadvantage, the Hunn Report continued to pursue the standard school curriculum of basic technical skills-based learning as the legitimate curriculum for Maori. In doing so it helped to maintain the historical and structural role of Maori schooling with associated implications for occupational placement (Ibid: 140).

From multi-culturalism to biculturalism

Multiculturalism developed as the third phase in the official objectives of education policy. This grew out of recognition that there were significant cultural groups in New Zealand who continued to practice different behaviours and contribute to society in culturally distinct ways (Ibid: 138). It promoted cultural diversity as a central aspect of society (Tait, 1988: 76). However, multiculturalism as a concept failed to adequately address the special relationship between the Tangata Whenua and the crown espoused in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It also did nothing to challenge the supremacy of the dominant culture, rather it enhanced the power of the state by allowing it the privilege of 'selecting' and deciding upon the validity of a diverse range of minority groups. Furthermore, what was implemented in the name of multicultural education tended to be done so only with the "permission, approval and encouragement... of white dominant power groups" (Mullard, 1982: 130).

The official policy of biculturalism which followed, essentially represented a concession in the face of growing Maori political activism. It was argued that until the relationship between Maori, as Tangata Whenua, and Pakeha as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners, was resolved, multiculturalism was an unrealistic target. Many Maori perceived the emphasis on multiculturalism as an unrealistic attempt by predominantly Pakeha policy-makers and teachers to deal with a diversity of cultures when, the evidence showed that this group had neither the skills nor the credibility to deal with *one* cultural group they had been dealing with for over one hundred years (Jones, 1990: 142). However the bicultural policy that was adopted retained many of the policy prescriptions of the integration model. It was fundamentally problematic because it ignored the fact that only those conforming to the dominant social structure are integrated and in doing so are more likely to maintain existing structures (Tait, 1988: 76). It also failed to address the partnership aspect of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to the level of government rhetoric, but it did raise Maori expectations thus risking further confrontation.

4. Towards the free market: The panacea for Maori inequality?

Since 1984, economic policy-making in Aotearoa has been underpinned by a theoretical agenda based almost exclusively on the analytical assumptions, ideological values and policy prescriptions of the schools of economic thought associated with the New Right (Goldfinch and Roper, 1993: 51). The transition to New Right neo-classicalism took place against a background of prolonged economic crisis and a crisis of political legitimation (see Roper, 1991 a; 1991b). This was the product of steadily worsening conditions of economic decline and fiscal instability brought on by the inherent tendency in capitalist systems for the general rate of profit to fall which inhibits investment and undermines capital accumulation (Roper, 1993: 11-21). In addition to declining profitability the recession in the 1970s and 1980s was characterized by economic stagnation, high inflation, recurrent balance of payment deficits and rising unemployment. This crisis was coupled with the politicization of ethnic and gender inequalities, an upsurge in class struggle and other signs of social unrest.

In particular, the fourth Labour Government had to respond to a rising level of Maori struggle which had rapidly gathered momentum throughout the 1970s. Maori anger reached breaking point with the continual theft of Maori land; the denial of tino rangatiratanga as expressed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi; the widening economic and social gap between Maori and Pakeha; and the hostility of the state to the Maori language and cultures. This fuelled a challenge that went to the heart of the system.

It was clear that an education system which failed Maori in such a dramatic and obvious way was highly vulnerable to both internal and external ideological attack. It was a cruel twist of fate that many of the educational principles coopted by successive governments since 1984 have appeared to relate to the aspirations of Maori self-determination while pursuing a very different and narrow agenda. Indeed, educational reform since 1987 have been primarily motivated by the overriding

objective of reducing government expenditure against the backdrop of economic and fiscal crisis (see New Zealand Treasury, 1987). The Picot Report and Tomorrow's Schools fundamentally challenged the principles of the liberal educational consensus concerning the role of the state in education and the relationship between educational provision and its participants (see Lauder, 1987; 1988; Grace 1990; Codd, Harker, and Nash, 1990). The idea that the community be empowered to make its own educational arrangements, in order to reflect better the particular needs of the community, appeared to reflect the desire of Maori for self-determination. It was argued that the quality of decision-making would be improved the nearer the point of decision-making is to those affected by it. "Local decision-makers, it is argued, having access to more accurate and current information, can respond to citizens' preferences more effectively than can authorities in a distant capital" (Martin, 1991: 269).

The low level of participation and achievement of Maori in education and employment structures of New Zealand society was widely interpreted as the result of social alienation caused by the loss of cultural identity. Maori were believed to be unable to identify with mainstream society because of major cultural differences. This was exacerbated by the fact that pressures to conform to Pakeha society had caused Maori to lose their own cultural identity. This analysis provided an acceptable explanation for continuing poor educational achievement, lack of work commitment and increasing anti-social behaviour. The solution was to enhance the status of Maori culture, attract the commitment of Maori to the established institutions and satisfy Maori demands for self-determination in their own affairs. The policy of 'multiculturalism' and the 'bi-culturalism' involved the incorporation of Maori personnel, Maori models of organization and Maori social practices and cultural symbolism within the institutions of the state. The result has meant that incremental and superficial strategies will be preferred over more radical propositions. In this regard the devolution process appears to be transformative, but the shifts in resource allocation and the moves toward iwi autonomy are more illusory. The partial adoption of ethnic rhetoric by the state and the cooption of elites into state institutions gives the illusion of a 'partnership' as espoused under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, while marginalizing more radical demands and inhibiting the alliance between ethnic and class interests.

Such rhetoric as 'power-sharing', 'consultation', 'empowerment', and 'community' tended to conceal the fact that they were also clearly associated with a strong preferences for confining the role of government to a very small range of functions. Indeed, the officials guiding the reform programme (particularly those in Treasury) based their policy advice on an analytical framework immersed in public choice theory, managerialism, agency theory, and transaction-cost analysis (Boston, 1991: 2).

The reforms to educational administration have had a twofold effect of strengthening state control in certain essential areas, including fiscal and labour management, while devolving the responsibility for the most contested issues of educational and schooling to parent-elected school boards (Nash, 1989: 113). Moreover, this process of devolution actually serves the requirements of a government confronted with a serious crisis of political legitimation in two major respects: firstly, it allows central government departments to focus entirely on the 'essential functions' of policy-making and fiscal and managerial control; secondly, it provides a check on popular demands on the state by lowering (or redirecting demands to the local community level) expectations about the capacity of the state to satisfy them (Ibid: 114). Thus, in the restructuring of educational administration, the state can relinquish certain spheres of control, such as staffing and discretionary expenditure, and greatly enhance its control over others. That is, the state can abandon 'no win' areas and consolidate its control of vital areas where the loss of control would threaten its very ability to manage the system. In this way strategic withdrawal is an attractive response to crises of legitimation because:

The essential machinery of control is strengthened while new institutions take responsibility for the most contested frontal sites and buffer the central state apparatus from whole areas of

criticism. The rationale for lobbying is weakened and the potential of state institutions themselves to become internally contested arenas (Ibid: 117).

This of course has serious implications for the resolution of Maori inequality in society because as the state relinquishes its role it throws the most intractable problems of social equity onto local communities which lack the political and economic resources to resolve them.

The redesign of the education system and indeed the welfare state has been based on the assumption that the economy is an ordered, self-regulating mechanism that tends 'spontaneously' and predictably toward an optimum point (Whitwell, 1986: 27). Successive governments have fostered the ideology that a market place free of government intervention would work to the benefit of all, and the related proposition that excessive government spending was the prime cause of the economic crisis because it distorted the self-steering mechanism of the market. Hence, in social policy both the fourth Labour Government and the current National Government have been guided by a faith in a self-regulating economy, methodological individualism, the invisible hand, private property rights, a disinflationary macroeconomic strategy and market liberalism (Goldfinch and Roper, 1993: 55-64). Such an ideology obscures the fact that capitalism's own failure is triggered by its own exploitative processes (Offe, 1984: 51-61).⁶

This ideology has become articles of faith for such powerful individuals as Donna Awatere-Huata together with her ACT counterparts and a string of corporate warriors in the business world. The free market has been upheld as the panacea for Maori inequality, based on the assumption that the market is the one mechanism which maximizes individual choice. They insist on the fiction that all people enter markets equally free to choose and that state intervention to restore equality in the market place is an unwarranted interference in the individual's freedom to choose.

However, the claim that the free market will somehow provide simultaneously compatible solutions to all of society's different individual maximizing problems, through the operation of the law of supply and demand, only retains plausibility at a high level of abstraction (Nell, 1980: 19). It ignores the very context in which exchange takes place. The neoclassical free market model assumes that exchange and choice is exercised in a context in which individuals are classless, ungendered, free of ethnic characteristics, and without limiting cultural assumptions. Markets in capitalist society are quite obviously segmented by ethnicity, gender and class and the capitalist mode of production which generates the 'free market' also generates a class structure. This means that people do not enter markets on free and equal terms; the working class, women and ethnic minorities do not enter the labour market voluntarily, and it is absurd to propose that they do so other than out of socio-economic necessity.

Given the fiction of equal access to the market place, equity as a matter of informed educational choice is a fundamentally inadequate concept which will exacerbate Maori disadvantage in society and Maori inequality in education. The devolution of educational administration does little to alter the fundamentally unequal distribution of wealth and power within a capitalist society.

Conclusion

The disadvantages experienced by Maori within the education system have existed since the inception of formal state schooling. A variety of strategies have been implemented at the policy level to ameliorate this inequality. Throughout one feature has remained ominously constant. Maori inequality with respect to wider society has its origins in the structural dynamics of capitalism which have tended to entrench inequality through the divisions of social class, gender and ethnicity. The vast proportion of Maori occupy locations in the working class as a result of a historical process which involved the brutal and destructive establishment of capitalism in Aotearoa, centrally entailing the commodification of labour. These structural mechanisms have not been subject to critical reappraisal at an official level.

The substantial empirical evidence regarding differential attainment in the education system convincingly shows that class position even when ethnicity and gender are taken into account is a major determinant in the levels of educational attainment. Cultural explanations for Maori disadvantage fail to address the structural role capitalism has played in perpetuating this educational inequality through the creation of a class system. The devolution of educational administration to the level of the local community changes nothing about the class, gender, and ethnic divisions within those communities. On the surface, working class Maori and Maori women may have new opportunities through the creation of Maori alternatives, but fundamentally the structures that have created and perpetuated Maori disadvantage remain unchallenged.

Notes

1. Explanations for the relatively poor attainment of Maori in the education system have therefore tended to focus on a range of features exhibited in Maori society that have been deemed at one time or another as inadequate and deficient. In this way it has been argued that Maori family structures and organizations, are fundamentally deficient and that children brought up in such an environment possess a pattern of deficient attitudes which prevented their educational development. These assumptions were of course highly ethnocentric, underpinned by a belief that European family structures were inherently superior forms of social organisation (see D.P. Ausubel, 1965 :24). Maori students have also been said to be suffering from a overdose of cultural deprivation and linguistic deficit. This was based on the idea that certain cultures and dialects or styles of language use were limited and restricted in themselves and as a result would produce limited and restricted modes of cognition (see Bernstein, 1975). Maori pupils failed in the education system because their 'culture' and language forms were fundamentally restrictive and inhibiting. The rhetoric of 'restricted language' or 'restricted code' appeared in official statements from around the mid-1960s and dominated explanations of Maori differential attainment (see Department of Education, 1971: 21-22). The ethnocentricity of the research again dominated the analysis.
2. The rejection of 'ethnic' explanations for Maori disadvantage however, should not be interpreted as a total rejection of the concept of ethnicity in so far as it is necessary to recognise the existence of a sense of common identity amongst groups of people who wish to recognise and maintain their cultural difference *vis-a-vis* others. But it is crucial however, to recognise that the persons who constitute a group which is formed and identified on this basis also have a position in material relations of production. That is, they have a position in production (and, thereby class) relations. It is this fact that 'ethnic relations' research fails to comprehend, account for and assess the significance of (See Miles: 1982).
3. M.P.K. Sorreson, notes that the wars were also a contest for mana and the question of whose law would prevail.
4. According to the 1926, 1936, 1945, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966 census, the eighteen 'defined urban areas' are: Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua, Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, New Plymouth, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Hutt, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Timaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill.
5. The parliamentary debates that preceded the 1867 Native Schools Act and its amendment in 1871, reveal that contemporary attitudes towards Maori education were characterized by a strong social control component, and what Harker calls "a strong universal desire for 'Europeanisation' of Maori (Harker, 1980: 8). The New Zealand Wars no doubt enhanced this interest in social control. For instance, Major Charles Heaphy, the member for Parnell, perceived state provided Maori education as a pragmatic form of social insurance: " ... the more the natives were educated, the less would be the future expenditure on police and gaols" (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 1867: 863). Hugh Carleton noted that " ... things had now come to pass that it was necessary either to exterminate the Natives or to civilize them" (Ibid: 862). He reasoned that assimilation through education was far cheaper and more effective than attempts to "exterminate the natives" by the long drawn out process of warfare (Ibid).

6. The self-paralysing and disorganizing tendencies of the capitalist economy necessitate regulatory state policies, which at the same time, threaten the very effectiveness and fiscal viability of these policies (see Otte, 1984; 1985).

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