

MĀORI EDUCATION AND PRINCIPLES OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

DOMINIC O'SULLIVAN¹

Centre for Foundation Studies
University of Waikato

ABSTRACT This paper argues that self-determination to the greatest extent possible is a legitimate aspiration for Māori people. It is argued that in education this requires a philosophical and policy response more focused on Māori autonomy than can be provided within the bicultural framework that has lately informed Māori relationships with other actors in the education arena. The paper considers the place of kohanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori and wananga in relation to broader Māori aspirations for self-determination and discusses proposals that these aspirations be furthered through the establishment of a Māori Education Authority. It is also argued that opportunities for self-determination in New Zealand are compromised by the government's unwillingness to alter a tightly controlled centralised education market to provide genuine Māori autonomy over what type of education might be available and to what end.

INTRODUCTION

Self-determination is an indigenous response to contestations of power between states and indigenous peoples in the postcolonial pluralist democracy. Self-determination for indigenous peoples received international political support in 1993 through the *Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This paper discusses the meaning of self-determination in the New Zealand context and argues that self-determination to the greatest extent possible is a legitimate aspiration for Māori people. It is argued that in education this requires developments beyond biculturalism's limiting focus on relationships between people in an institutional setting and between institutions in a bureaucratic sense.

Biculturalism's tendency to see Māori as a politically homogenous whole can divert attention from the self-determination belonging to iwi (tribe), hapu (sub-tribe) and whanau (family) which, it is argued, have the right to manage their affairs, including their educational interests as autonomously as possible. In a general sense, and in education, that autonomy is properly limited only by the right of government to govern in the interests of all citizens, and by the interests of the common good of the whole community. Against these criteria the paper points out a number of illegitimate systemic impediments to the realisation of Māori self-determination in education. In New Zealand Māori opportunities for self-determination are limited by the bureaucratic tendency towards centralised

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decision-making and the totalitarian nature of a closed education market (Benton in Grace, 1990, p. 177).

The paper also considers the relationship to self-determination of Māori initiatives in education, for example, kohanga reo (Māori medium pre-schools) and kura kaupapa Māori (Māori medium primary schools). It is argued that a further Māori proposal, that of a Māori Education Authority, could enhance self-determination, provided that it is structured in genuinely independent fashion from the state, transparently accountable to all Māori, and concerned with the education of all Māori people not just those who elect Māori schooling.

While the merits of a Māori Education Authority are acknowledged, it is argued that self-determination in education cannot be isolated from self-determination in every facet of life. It is therefore proposed that in the interests of cohesion and to avoid duplicity a Māori Assembly of the kind put forward by Mason Durie (Durie, 2001, p. 12) may more effectively allow the pursuit of Māori self-determination.

SELF-DETERMINATION

In New Zealand self-determination is a political and jurisprudential response to the contestation of power between the state and indigenous peoples in the postcolonial pluralist democracy

From the side of the ruling peoples, this Goliath-versus-David relation is a political system that underlies and provides the foundation for the constitutional democracies of Canada, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. The aim of the system is to ensure that the territory on which the settler societies is built is effectively and legitimately under their exclusive jurisdiction and open to settlement and capitalist development. The means to this end are twofold, the ongoing usurpation, dispossession, incorporation and infringement of the rights of indigenous peoples coupled with various long-term strategies of extinguishment and accommodation that would eventually capture their rights, dissolve the contradiction and legitimise the settlement.

From the side of indigenous peoples, it is a political system that overlies and is illegitimately based on making use of their pre-existing governments and territories. It is a system established and continuously modified in response to two distinct types of . . . resistance and freedom, against the structure of domination as a whole in the name of the freedom of self-determination, and within it, by compliance and internal contestation of the strategies and techniques in the name of the freedom of insubordination and dissent (Tully, 2000, p. 41-42).

New Zealand's ratification of the United Nations' *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* has provided a possible mediating framework for contemporary contestations of power between the descendents of colonising and colonised peoples.

The Draft Declaration's working definition of the right to self-determination was:

Indigenous people have the right to self-determination. By virtue of this right, they freely determine their relationship with the states in which they live, in a spirit of co-existence with other citizens, and freely pursue their economic, social, cultural and spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity (United Nations, 1993).

In the New Zealand context the Declaration's principles have been developed by Mason Durie into broad aims of self-determination, which are:

the advancement of Māori people as Māori and the protection of the environment for future generations. Economic self-sufficiency, social equity, cultural affirmation, and political power, stand alongside a firm Māori identity strengthened by access to whanau, hapu, and iwi and confirmation that future generations of Māori will be able to enjoy their lands and forests, rivers and lakes, harbours and the sea and the air. These goals underlie the significance of Māori self-determination (Durie, 1998, p. 239).

Another understanding of self-determination suggests that it is:

the responsibility of indigenous people to reproduce their social order with the responsibility of governments to assist them (Rowse, 1998, p. 95).

Frank Brennan's summary of how self-determination might operate in Australia offers an informative comparative contrast:

. . . self-determination subject to the constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Australia ought now be seen as a non controversial statement of the legitimate and recognisable aspirations of aborigines seeking maximum community independence while remaining part of the nation state (Brennan, 1992, p. 49).

Brennan has further argued that for Australia's indigenous peoples self-determination establishes the right to manage their communities on their own land "as autonomously as possible" (Brennan, 1993, p. 95). He suggested that this right is properly qualified only by the requirement that indigenous peoples manage their affairs in a fashion that does not disturb the rights of others, or obstruct the common good. Brennan's further argument is equally applicable in the New Zealand context – self-determination is a legitimate indigenous aspiration because:

the evils of assimilation and discrimination will be overcome only by indigenous people determining their future, even if it be inevitably as a part of a nation state in which they are a minority (Brennan, 1993, p. 95).

When these broad principles and aspirations for self-determination are applied to the New Zealand educational context two overarching themes are particularly important. Brennan's contention that indigenous peoples should manage their own affairs as "autonomously as possible" coupled with Rowse's argument that such is a "responsibility" and that the state has a duty to ensure that indigenous peoples are equipped to fulfil that responsibility.

Nevertheless, opportunities for self-determination for minority indigenous groups within the democratic pluralist nation state are limited by the right of the state to govern on behalf of all citizens, by the requirements of the common good and by democracy's tendency to see the community as an homogenous whole (Mulgan, 1989, p. 50). Minority indigenous groups do not fit easily into that assumed whole and the extent to which they may be self-determining is an outcome of the power relationship they have with the state.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE LIMITS OF BICULTURALISM

Self-determination contrasts markedly with biculturalism, which emerged during the 1980s and 1990s as a preferred philosophical framework for policy development across the public sector. During this time biculturalism also became fashionable among both Māori and pakeha educational elites.

Biculturalism in a general sense and noticeably in education seems primarily concerned with relationships between people in an institutional setting and between institutions in a bureaucratic sense. Self-determination, however, is concerned primarily with creating independence and autonomy for groups, not necessarily in isolation from wider society, but certainly apart from controls and regulations imposed from outside the would-be self-determining community.

The philosophical premises which underlie biculturalism and self-determination are quite different and lead to different conclusions about where power properly resides within Māori society and what the power relationship between Māori and the state might be. Political self-determination gives effect to Thomas Aquinas' notion of subsidiarity. Although Aquinas placed the state at the top of the social order he argued that lower communities or social units were required to have as much autonomy as possible. Further, in accordance with the complementary notion of supplementarity the state should ensure a political framework in which subsidiarity – that is the maximum possible level of autonomy – is possible (Cornish, 1994, p. 15). Subsidiarity should enhance the common good, the "primary tenet" of which is that "everyone in a society should be able to share in its growing quality of life" (Vaney, 1998, p. 1). In Māori society an iwi should be expected to take a central role in ensuring the common good of its people. However, through policies that have undermined and reduced the effective functioning of iwi the state has compromised iwi's ability to meet this responsibility. The common good can only be realised when intentional impediments to indigenous autonomy are removed by the state. The principle of subsidiarity protects against state barriers to Māori contributing to their wellbeing, because it ensures that iwi, hapu, whanau and individuals are not subject to negative state control. It also protects against iwi being absorbed by the modern construction "Māori", hapu being absorbed by iwi, and against whanau being absorbed by hapu, because subsidiarity requires that no community or structure should interfere with the affairs of a lower community unless that lower community is hindering the wider common good.

It is the potential for biculturalism to undermine iwi, hapu and whanau that makes it a problematic philosophy if one's objective is self-determination. Biculturalism is an idea based on the more recent assumption that Māori have developed a single homogenous identity and that the Crown, although representing the New Zealand population as a whole, does so from a single unchanging cultural perspective. As the once largely homogenous non-Māori New Zealand population becomes increasingly diverse this assumption becomes less

credible. Treating Māori as one entity overlooks the importance of iwi and hapu as political units in Māori society to whom self-determination belongs.

Andrew Sharp has argued that there are two types of biculturalism, bicultural reformism and bicultural distributivism (Sharp, 1997, p. 234-235). Bicultural reformism has been government policy since the acceptance of the Puao-te-atatu report in 1986, which recommended strategies to overcome institutional racism, and to incorporate a Māori cultural dimension into the operations of the Department of Social Welfare. Bicultural reformism accepts the institutions and regulations of the majority culture and assumes that reforms to these can make them responsive to Māori, while surrendering little in the way of the cultural practices and values of the majority. In education, bicultural reformism could mean little more than children singing Māori songs at school, or the use of Māori signposts in universities. In contrast, the emergence of kohanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori and wananga extend bicultural reformism in a more comprehensive fashion. Nevertheless, while these institutions remain ultimately under strict state control they are not examples of self-determination. A self-determining Māori educational institution would not be bicultural; it would be monocultural – monoculturally Māori.

Bicultural distributivism is different again and has very little political support. While bicultural distributivism would enhance opportunities for self-determination, it is an unlikely philosophical framework around which a self-determining Māori society might emerge. Sharp explained that bicultural distributivism arose out of a rejection of the principle of multicultural distributivism that "suggested distribution of things according to the membership size of the group in question" (Sharp, 1997, p. 230). This would have provided Māori with access to a percentage of the nation's resources, political influence and positions in the public sector equal to the Māori percentage of the total population.

In contrast bicultural distributivism argues that there is a:

need to restore the principle of one people, one vote in the major institutions of Aotearoa to give recognition to a bicultural heritage . . . (Sharp, 1997, p. 234-235).

The practical application of this proposition was explained by a Māori Consultative Group's report on Māori participation in local government in 1988:

In accordance with the principle of rangatiratanga, there should be equal representation of tangata whenua [indigenous people] and tauwiwi [non-Māori people] on all units of local government . . . on the same principles there should also be a Māori local government commission working in parallel with the Pakeha one (quoted in Sharp, p. 234-235).

The Minister of Local Government at the time, Michael Bassett, rejected this idea out of hand, largely on the grounds that it was inconsistent with the democratic principle of one person one vote of equal value (Sharp, p. 234-235). As well as being politically unlikely, bicultural distributivism, if it involves Māori structures working in parallel with pakeha ones, seemingly envisages a Māori mirroring of pakeha bureaucracy. A more likely basis for an advancing of Māori self-

determination in New Zealand might be a "relative yet relational autonomy between peoples, each of which is autonomous in their jurisdiction" (Maaka and Fleras, 2000, p. 97), meaning that Māori determine their own social and political structures, rather than copy pakeha ones. Self-determination therefore offers more to Māori if it is a Māori desire to manage their affairs as autonomously as possible, and construct relationships with the Crown and wider society as far as possible on their own terms.

SELF-DETERMINATION IN EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand Māori opportunities for self-determination have been limited, among other things, by the bureaucratic tradition's tendency towards centralisation of decision-making. In education this has meant that decisions about school administration, school curriculum and pedagogy have historically been the preserve of usually non-Māori bureaucrats, teachers and academics. Even where Māori have been involved in such decision-making it has been as bureaucrats, teachers or academics rather than as mandated representatives of their own communities.

In 1987 Richard Benton identified that the bureaucratic structure of education in New Zealand created an important systemic barrier to self-determination:

One of the problems with the present closed educational market is that it is essentially totalitarian in nature, absorbing and where possible destroying, alternative structures . . . A more open market may allow more opportunity for diversity and in this way benefit Māori families and individuals by giving them a better chance to take control of the education of their children (Benton, 1987, p. 71).

The ultimate realisation of self-determination is the ability of Māori families and individuals to take control of the education of their children. Brian Picot envisaged a move towards this objective; through the creation of school charters in his report *Administering for Excellence* in 1988. However, the ensuing government policy, *Tomorrow's Schools*, advanced Māori self-determination only superficially because:

the whole charter exercise, has not, in practice, been a joint exercise between the government and the boards [of trustees]. The national guidelines and objectives referred to in the reports are, in fact, the charter . . . The job done for them before they were even allowed to think (Sexton, 1990, p. 25).

So Māori dissatisfaction with the education system can be attributed to a relative Māori exclusion from the system and arguably even more so to the system's inability to produce satisfactory educational outcome for Māori people.

Māori disquiet has been given expression through increasing attempts to maximise the degree of Māori influence over Māori education and to have the legitimacy of self-determination recognised by the Crown. Self-determination challenges the Crown's assumption that it alone is the font of educational knowledge. In education self-determination is more than the right to choose an education exclusively in Māori, exclusively in English, or in whatever combination

of both. The right to determine and develop pedagogy and a curriculum or indeed to accept that of the state must also be considered. The absence of a freedom to choose creates a systemic barrier to Māori self-determination in education. The extent to which the state's *New Zealand Curriculum* makes concessions to Māori culture is immaterial when that curriculum is given the mantle of the one indisputable legally mandated model that all New Zealanders of whatever culture, whatever class and whatever circumstance must make fit their requirements. Even in kura kaupapa Māori this series of documents with unidentified authors and unestablished theoretical foundations determines what schools must do and determines the criteria against which their performance will be narrowly evaluated by a methodologically rigid Education Review Office (O'Sullivan, 2000). Even in kura kaupapa Māori which are the best example of Māori self-determination in education, the state alone presumes to know what should be taught and how it should be taught. Although there is flexibility in the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum* the notion that Māori cannot determine even the broad parameters of educational practice is the antithesis of genuine, albeit still necessarily limited self-determination. Self-determination would be enhanced by a genuinely flexible but rigorous, theoretically transparent approach to curriculum and pedagogy.

The state, however, still retains a legitimate interest in educational outcome for Māori. Both its fiduciary duty to Māori, and the suggestion that continued Māori alienation from the education system is injurious to the common good, give the state an indisputably important and prominent role. A critical part of that role is to ensure that a system is not so flexible that individual communities are beyond scrutiny or susceptible to capture by factional interest groups within communities. However, these factors do not give the state, regardless of the degree of consultation with Māori professionals or with Māori communities, an indisputable expertise in Māori education that justifies imposing a uniform set of requirements. If self-determination is to be maximised within New Zealand's contemporary political, social and educational context, then Māori communities must have the opportunity to establish clear educational goals for themselves. Given the reasons for Māori disquiet with state schooling it is unlikely that those goals will conflict with or compromise the state's identified goals of enhancing Māori educational achievement (Ministry of Education, 2001) as Durie's analysis suggests:

[There is a] wide expectation that education should open doors to technology, to the economy, to the arts and sciences, to understanding others, and to making a contribution to a greater good . . . Access to music, sport, travel, and the international disciplines of commerce, law and science will be increasingly important for all Māori over the next 25 years (Durie, 2001, p. 4).

Once goals have been established through a reconciliation of Māori and state expectations, a self-determining people will establish the means by which to achieve those expectations. They may well select the *New Zealand Curriculum* as the preferred means. However, they may choose to develop their own or to adopt procedures developed elsewhere. Self-determination requires that opportunity. In a framework of genuine self-determination, it is only legitimate for the state to object if the selected procedures do not produce desirable outcomes. Therefore there must be a credible and rigorous system of evaluation acceptable to both

Māori communities and the state. It must be a system of evaluation concerned with outcome. The traditional Education Review Office assumption that there is an unquestionable causal link between input and output (O'Sullivan, 2001), that justifies an obsessive evaluative concentration on administrative nicety rather than educational achievement, is a practice that will continue to hinder Māori educational advancement. It will particularly hinder Māori educational advancement in Māori terms.

Māori challenges to the state's competence in Māori education gained momentum throughout the 1980s and 1990s during which time modest but significant incremental developments occurred. In 1981 the establishment of kura kaupapa Māori was endorsed by a Hui Whakatauirā on the basis that:

the existing system of education is failing the Māori people and modifications have not helped the situation, nor will they. Therefore we urge Māori withdrawal and the establishment of alternative schooling modeled on the principles underlying kohanga reo (Walker, 1985, p. 4).

The extension of the principles behind kohanga reo to the school sector can be seen as a development towards self-determination if:

the ultimate objective of Te Kohanga Reo is nothing less than the rebirth of the Māori nation as an equal but separate element contributing to the common good of New Zealand society (Wetere in Irwin, 1990, p. 117).

However, an alternative explanation antithetical to self-determination has been offered by Jenkins with Ka'ai:

waiting for the benefits of a national education from the state was not only a lost cause . . . but was also disastrous in terms of the near extinction of the Māori language. A do-it-yourself campaign seemingly offered the only solution. However, the do-it-yourself approach should not be viewed as an attempt by Māori to operate in competition with the state or to try to fulfil the state's curriculum in another way. Rather, it should be viewed as a desperate drive to save the Māori language. Associated with that drive are cultural imperatives (Jenkins with Ka'ai, 1994, p. 162).

It is legitimate to condemn state attempts to weaken and even eliminate Māori language, and by implication and extension, Māori culture. However, expecting in contrast that the state should or even could preserve and develop Māori language and culture except in a peripheral fashion within mainstream schooling is effectively a challenge to the desirability of self-determination. The bemoaning of a "do it yourself" approach leaves the transferring of cultural ownership and responsibility for cultural preservation to an institutional structure based on a completely different cultural framework as the only alternative.

The development of kohanga reo and, later, kura kaupapa can fairly be appraised as a desperate drive to save the Māori language, a drive made desperate largely as a result of state hostility then negligence. But to carry on to dismiss the possibility that this might also have been an attempt by Māori to operate in competition with the state or to try to fulfil the state's curriculum in another way,

dismisses the possibility that self-determination was an informing and proper principle motivating the initiators of kohanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. Instead, if self-determination is to have substantive meaning, the legitimacy and desirability of a "do it yourself" approach is inescapable.

It has been argued that the development of kura kaupapa Māori outside the mainstream of the state system indicates "a manifest criticism of state schooling structures" (Jones et al, 1995, p. 197). The right to make "manifest criticisms" or to avoid passive acceptance of an undesirable situation is an essential element of the right to self-determination. However, more importantly self-determination establishes a right to address the causes of those criticisms, which has been a major feature of kura kaupapa Māori education. Kura kaupapa Māori have also reasserted the "legitimacy and validity of Māori language and culture" (Jones et al., 1995, p. 197). The legitimacy and validity of Māori language and culture is the underpinning legitimacy and validity of the right to self-determination. Self-determination legitimises cultural frameworks adopted by Māori. It is not concerned with making those frameworks conform with those of the state unless that is the preferred Māori option. Yet by imposing its curriculum on Māori institutions the state retains unto itself considerable control over the limits to those cultural frameworks. It continues to demand control even though by its own measure of success its restrictions have not improved Māori educational achievement. The extent to which kohanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori and wananga can be seen as examples of self-determination is dependent on the extent to which the state, in matters of substance, is prepared to relax the notion that it is the indisputable incontestable font of all knowledge about what should be taught, how it should be taught, by whom and to whom.

In an education system that provides for Māori self-determination it is not the role of the state to be the custodian of Māori culture, but nor is it necessary for Māori to seek complete state withdrawal from Māori education. Māori require and can properly seek government financial support, which the complete withdrawal of the state would preclude. However, if self-determination is to be a guiding principle for the development of Māori education the price for state support need not be state control. Durie, for example, has in mind a complimentary role for the state and Māori in the development of self-determining Māori education.

. . . while it would be unreasonable, and unwise, to expect that the education sector should be the sole determinant of access into the Māori world, - indeed it could be argued that access to te ao Māori is not the business of the state since it sits squarely with whanau and hapu - it is equally unreasonable to assume that the education sector shall ignore the meaning of being Māori and not accept some obligation to prepare students for active lives within Māori society, not simply to learn about Māori but to live as Māori (Durie, 2001).

Durie's distinctions between the role of the state and the role of whanau and hapu in the education of Māori people allow whanau and hapu to recover from the state the primary responsibility for making decisions about what should be taught when, to whom and by whom. When this elementary principle is absent from the practice of schooling then opportunities for self-determination are seriously compromised.

If self-determination is to become more than just a notion of political and legal theory for the entertainment of academics and jurists, it must have practical implications and practical benefits giving rise to a Māori right and duty to be responsible for themselves not merely for its own sake, but so that tangible benefits as defined by Māori communities may occur. In this way Māori communities may be enhanced against their own criteria, and self-determination may become a self-perpetuating cycle. In education there is a pronounced lack of objective data against which a Māori determined definition of progress could be measured.

There is considerable work to be done before appropriate measures of progress can be developed:

Achieving best outcomes means focusing more on the product and perhaps less on the packaging; it also means making sure that the measures of progress actually quantify an outcome and not simply compliance with a programme (Durie, 2001, p. 6).

If an outcome can be quantified then there must also be a predetermined understanding of how the degree of success that the outcome represents can be measured:

Measuring outcomes also brings into focus the question of benchmarks. What is the benchmark against which Māori should gauge progress? The tendency has been to compare Māori with non-Māori but that approach presupposes Māori are aiming to be as good as Pakeha – when they might well aspire to be better, or different, or even markedly superior. Sometimes more relevant benchmarks may be found with other iwi, or in other Māori schools, or in other indigenous communities, or in the best schools of Asia. Disparities are totally unacceptable in a modern society and inequalities between Māori and Pakeha should not be tolerated. But it is misleading to use crude comparisons with non-Māori as a type of shorthand for best outcomes or to assume that Māori/non-Māori comparisons always provide useful information about Māori progress (Durie, 2001, p. 6).

THE MATAWAIA DECLARATION: A MĀORI EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR A MĀORI ASSEMBLY?

The establishment of an independent Māori Education Authority to create “an alternative education system from pre-school to adult education based on kaupapa Māori principles” (*Matawaia Declaration*, 1988) has gained currency as a vehicle for the pursuance of Māori self-determination in education (Wetere in Benton, 1990, p. 197; NZEI/Te Riu Roa, 2000).

The *Matawaia Declaration* was a positive attempt by Māori to take back from the state primary responsibility for determining the nature of the schooling Māori children would receive. The Declaration was a reaction to prevailing circumstances but not reactionary or desperate in the way that Jenkins with Ka'ai (1994, p. 163) suggested was the motivating force behind the development of kohanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. A strength of the Declaration was that it

focused on a framework for establishing solutions to Māori educational failure, not out of desperation but out of a sense of purpose, a sense of right and a sense of responsibility. Self-determination is the right to be responsible, the right to develop solutions in one's own terms to problems defined in one's own terms. It is the right to make desperation unnecessary. It is the opportunity to "empower Māori people to determine their own destiny" (*Matawaia Declaration*, 1988, Objective 2). Self-determination is also the right to put in place measures that will "guarantee the maintenance of Māori language and culture" (*Matawaia Declaration*, 1988, Objective 4).

The principles of the *Matawaia Declaration* would enhance self-determination, however the suggestion that the Authority be at once fully funded (presumably by the Crown) and independent' (presumably of the Crown) creates problems of dual, if not multiple, accountabilities. The Crown has a right and a duty to satisfy itself that its financial interests are protected, and to satisfy the public that those monies are being prudently managed, and that the expected output from allocations of public monies is being realised. Māori taxpayers have the right to be satisfied that funds allocated for Māori educational purposes are meeting Māori expectations. An Authority must itself be accountable to Māori communities because self-determination is ultimately the preserve of communities. An Authority cannot be self-determining in its own right because its legitimacy is in its potential role as the facilitator of community self-determination. The *Matawaia Declaration* envisaged that the national Authority would be supplemented by a number of regional authorities "responsible to the people in their region who opt for kaupapa Māori education" (*Matawaia Declaration*, 1988). In what ways would these authorities be responsible to such people? Would they also be responsible to the national authority, their funder the Crown, the majority of Māori who elect mainstream education, and the wider New Zealand community whose common good is compromised by continuing Māori under-achievement?

The most fundamental weakness in the model proposed by the *Matawaia Declaration* is that it does not accept responsibility for the majority of Māori people who do not wish for kaupapa Māori education. Self-determination includes the right to be educated in the system of the dominant culture and, other than in the case of those who choose complete assimilation into the dominant culture, a rejection of kaupapa Māori education does not imply a rejection of a Māori cultural identity. A self-determining family that adopts a Māori identity, even if not an exclusive Māori identity, would necessarily have a relationship with a Māori Education Authority concerned with Māori self-determination. If a Māori Education Authority focussed exclusively on kaupapa Māori education it would not have any relationship to the notion of self-determination. It would only be concerned with those who had taken one of the many options open to self-determining peoples.

The *Matawaia Declaration's* assertion that its model is a "legitimate alternative to the state system and as such Māori communities shall retain the right to decide whether their schools remain in the present system or opt for the Māori alternative" (*Matawaia Declaration*, 1988) does not sit easily alongside any broader aspiration for comprehensive Māori self-determination in education, because the concern is only with that sector of the Māori population whose schools are the community schools of an almost exclusively Māori population. While that is the sector of the population that by its concentration and community cohesiveness is

better placed in the first instance to be self-determining, self-determination is just as legitimate an aspiration for Māori people in predominantly or significantly non-Māori communities. A broadening of focus towards the whole Māori population is required because self-determination belongs to Māori individuals, whanau and hapu in whatever community. A Māori Education Authority needs to be more than an administrative body responsible for kura kaupapa Māori, it also needs to be more than just another organ of state, and requires structuring in a way that allows an ongoing long-term planning and policy focus. That kind of administrative arrangement will be more conducive to enhancing Māori self-determination in education.

Durie has argued that a weakness of a Māori Education Authority would be its duplication of "the sectoral approach of the State" (Durie, 2001, p. 12). He has proposed a more far-reaching and, arguably in the long run, simpler alternative:

Māori achievement would be better served by a holistic approach to policy development, and an approach that celebrated Māori consensus, and Māori commonalities. The prospect of that approach was favourably considered at Turangi in 1989. And before that at Waipatu in 1892. Is the beginning of the 21st century a time to re-examine the notion of an independent Māori Assembly for formulating policy and planning well into the future? (Durie, 2001, p. 12).

The advantage of a Māori Assembly over a Māori Education Authority is that an Assembly would have a wide overview and a policy and planning ability conducive to the consideration of each aspect of Māori political, social, cultural and economic development in relation to all other aspects. It would integrate rather than isolate education from its wider context.

Durie's proposition that a Māori Assembly, and indeed the same might apply to a Māori Education Authority, might best celebrate Māori consensus and Māori commonalities is, however, a little hopeful and points to a significant impediment to a collective advancing of self-determination. The difficulties in achieving consensus and building on commonalities among Māori communities has been graphically illustrated in recent times through, for example, the inability of the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission to make proposals for the allocation of fishing resources without attracting costly and time-consuming litigation which has delayed progress of any sort. The difficulties encountered by some claimants to the Waitangi Tribunal in securing agreement on procedural and resolution concerns within claimant bodies provide further examples (O'Sullivan, 1999). A Māori Assembly may nevertheless be useful as a mediator of difference - an assumed feature of a self-determining society.

There are also important considerations surrounding the scope of an Assembly's responsibilities, the source of its authority and the transparency of that authority. An Assembly must at once have credibility with its claimed constituency and with the Crown. That can be problematic. A transparent, accepted procedure for the seeking of a mandate to prove that the claimed constituency is in fact genuine, is essential to Māori and general public acceptance. Implementing that kind of procedure and maintaining an infrastructure and secretariat to support an Assembly is costly and takes time to develop. If the Crown meets the cost then independence is immediately compromised. However, if the cost is met by iwi, agreement among a multitude of actors with different and

potentially conflicting agendas, is likely. The resolution of these difficulties requires the mediation of power which, as the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission example illustrates, is difficult in Māori society. Indeed:

until that capacity exists . . . Māori control of the broad directions for Māori advancement will be more illusionary than real and Māori educational progress will suffer from the absence of a plan that integrates education into the wider arena of Māori ambition (Durie, 2001, p. 12).

CONCLUSION

A Māori quest for self-determination in education is a legitimate response to an unequal power relationship with the state. However, this kind of self-determination cannot arise in isolation from broader Māori aspirations, and requires a philosophical and policy response more focused on Māori autonomy than can be provided within the bicultural framework that has lately informed Māori relationships with other actors in the education arena. Opportunities for self-determination in New Zealand are compromised by the government's unwillingness to alter a tightly controlled centralised education market to provide genuine Māori autonomy over what type of education might be available and to what end. If Māori educational elites focus their attention exclusively on those who choose kaupapa Māori education then that, too, will compromise the notion that self-determination belongs to all Māori people, not only those who elect one of the many options open to a self-determining people.

Finally, a Māori Education Authority with a sufficiently wide focus would enhance Māori self-determination in education, but perhaps not as effectively as an independent, transparently accountable Māori Assembly which would properly place education within its wider social, political and cultural context.

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