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THE PLACE OF

SCHOOLING

IN

MAORI-PAKEHA RELATIONS

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Abstract

Recognizing the continual restructuring of Pakeha-Maori relations as dominance and subordination, this thesis sets out to gain an understanding, through a critique of ideology, of the place of schooling in the securing and maintenance of those relations.

Theoretically, it draws mainly upon the concept of ideology as interpreted by Jorge Larrain but also upon Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the notion of social amnesia as presented by Jacoby and the concept of resistance as developed by Giroux. It also examines the historical development of the concepts of 'race' and 'culture' which are employed ideologically to rationalize educational policies concerning the Maori.

Tracing the progression of policies and practices in Maori education from the 1830s to the present day, the research shows the schooling of the Maori to have contributed significantly to the securing of Pakeha economic and political dominance in the nineteenth century and to the maintenance of that dominance through much of the twentieth century. Of particular significance has been the control of Maori access to knowledge. With Maori resistance playing a considerable part in the shaping of these policies and practices, the school is recognized as one of the sites of Maori-Pakeha struggle. Widespread under-achievement of Maori within education - revealed in 1960 by the Hunn Report - is recognized as an outcome of these processes.

Taking account of policies in recent years directed at improving Maori educational achievement, the thesis examines fieldwork research conducted within Auckland primary and secondary schools, in order to understand the extent to which current policies and practices of schools contribute towards overcoming the asymmetry in social relations. Focussing upon teacher perceptions of Maori children and their needs, the way schools sort and classify their pupils, provisions for a Maori dimension in schooling, including 'taha Maori', and the place of history in social studies programmes, the research finds that the struggle still continues, with tensions surrounding the efforts of the minority of teachers and other educationists working within the education system towards Maori interests. While a significant number of teachers, particularly in primary schools seem concerned to implement the
'taha Maori' policy and other aspects of 'multicultural education', these efforts are not matched by a concern to address the problem of Maori educational under-achievement, with teachers either explaining away the problem or accepting it as a quasi-natural state of affairs. Over all the research shows that schools in general continue, in a variety of ways, to control and limit Maori access to knowledge-power and thereby help to maintain the asymmetry in Maori-Pakeha relations. Maori children who do succeed within the education system are seen to do so primarily because they and their families have learned to deal with the system.

The multicultural policies of education as presented by the Department of Education are recognized as ideological responses to Maori resistance and challenges, creating an appearance of change and of commitment to Maori interests while, in essence, functioning to maintain the asymmetry in social relations.
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Abbreviations
AJHR Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives
MOOHR Maori Organization on Human Rights
NZEI New Zealand Educational Institute (Primary teachers' organization)
PPTA Post-Primary Teachers' Association (Secondary teachers' organization)