

## CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES OF PLACE:

SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD  
CARE AND EDUCATION IN A SUPERDIVERSE  
'BICULTURAL' AOTEAROA (NEW ZEALAND)

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### *Abstract*

It is important that national education policy respond to demographic changes. In Aotearoa (New Zealand), recent immigration policy changes have produced the new challenge of 'superdiversity', which overlays the 'bicultural' context of Māori and settler populations and the longstanding impacts of the colonisation of the Indigenous Māori. The lack of equity in this 'bicultural' arrangement remains to be fully resolved due to the dominance of the settler culture and the historical (and in many instances ongoing) reluctance of this majority group to recognise and address injustices. The early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector requires of its teachers deep cultural understandings of and engagement with all those children and families present in the education settings. This article provides a discussion of the tensions arising when the new reality of superdiversity interacts with a 'bicultural' ECCE policy environment. It then describes the results of a study that utilised a process of documentary analysis to critically examine the macro- and micro-level policy statements and reports with regard to bicultural, cultural diversity, equity, social justice, and place-connectedness matters in ECCE settings in

Aotearoa (New Zealand). The implications of the findings point to challenges faced by teachers when translating policy commitments into pedagogical enactment, and highlight the importance for teachers to not only engage deeply with the Indigenous Māori language, culture, and local histories of connectedness with place, but that this engagement should also be made available to all children and families present, including immigrant children and their families.

*Keywords:* superdiversity, early childhood care and education, critical pedagogies of place

This article interrogates the notion of superdiversity in Aotearoa (New Zealand) in relation to early childhood care and education (ECCE) provision, in order to highlight the important role of critical pedagogies of place. The nation's founding document, *Te Tiriti o Waitangi – The Treaty of Waitangi* (thereafter: the Treaty), signed in 1840, affirmed Aotearoa (New Zealand) as a 'bicultural' nation, acknowledging (in its Māori language text) Māori self-determination alongside governance by the British Crown. Whilst Māori have continued to refer to the commitments made to them in the Māori text of the Treaty, which included protection of their chieftainship and lands, the Crown had for over a century ignored these obligations (Orange, 1987; Walker, 2004). Meanwhile, recent global human migration and immigration policy changes have brought increased numbers of immigrants, mainly from the Pacific Islands and various Asian countries (Spoonley, 2015). New Zealand is now considered to be a 'superdiverse' nation (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013; Spoonley, 2015), and this notion of 'superdiversity' has become increasingly visible in this country. For example, a 'Superdiversity Centre for Law, Policy and Business' (Superdiversity Centre, n.d.) has published reports from its superdiversity 'stocktake' of statistics and research on superdiversity issues in relation to business, government and citizens.

The phenomenon of superdiversity as manifest in Aotearoa (New Zealand) is believed to be challenging in that it overlays a particular 'bicultural' policy setting (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013). In this paper, we discuss the tensions inherent in recognising the implications of 'superdiversity' in a country that is still coming to terms with a commitment to its Indigenous people, which has often been couched within a discourse of 'biculturalism' as per the two parties to the Treaty. This paper further uses findings from a study to examine the country's commitment to superdiversity within this 'bicultural' context, with regard to its enactment in the ECCE sector. The findings reported in this study were generated using a process of documentary analysis with a focus on Māori and 'superdiversity' issues in ECCE settings. The documents were mainly published by the Ministry of Education, as well as the Education Review Office (ERO), which reviews all ECCE services and schools on a regular basis as well as reporting on national evaluations with specific focuses.

## **SUPERDIVERSITY:**

### **RECONCEPTUALISING DIVERSITY**

Since its appearance in Vertovec (2007), the concept of ‘superdiversity’ has become a ‘buzz’ word in public policies and in scholarly writing across a range of disciplines, including education (Meissner, 2015; Meissner & Vertovec, 2015). Vertovec (2007) considered that recent mass global migration and the associated demographic transformation are unprecedented, and thus their impacts have not been fully understood. Social policies have not kept up with these newly emergent issues (Vertovec, 2007) because institutions are unwilling to accommodate diversity (May, 2004). The term ‘diversity’ is commonly used in association with ethnicities, identities, languages and cultures. For this paper, this definition of diversity was applied when gathering data, because this is the typical definition adopted in the documents examined, in which the term ‘superdiversity’ has yet to appear. Nonetheless, Vertovec (2007) argued that it is timely to diversify our understandings of ‘diversity’. He used the notion of ‘superdiversity’ to highlight the interplay of additional migration-related variables, such as the differing migration statuses (e.g. refugees, asylum-seekers and immigrants).

Superdiversity is proposed as a ‘summary term’ to encapsulate a range of such changing variables surrounding migration patterns – and significantly, their interlinkages – which amount to a recognition of complexities that supersede previous patterns and perceptions of migration-driven diversity. (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015, p. 542)

Contemporary migration is increasingly complex and nuanced. Most immigrants nowadays maintain close connections with their home countries, often through telecommunications or commuting (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; Levitt, 2001; May, 2014). They are not prepared to give up their cultural identities and heritages; instead they acquaint themselves with their own cultural niches, such as their religious group, and ethnic communities and precincts within the host country, as well as to a certain extent, adopting the host society’s dominant language and culture in order to acculturate and integrate within

wider social and cultural groups (Blommaert, 2013). As a result, they acquire ‘superdiverse repertoires’ (Blommaert & Backus, 2013) of resources and capital to help them maintain their cultural heritages, and also to acculturate and integrate. This robust acquisition process further suggests that immigrants will be prepared to connect with the indigenous language and culture if these are recognised and valued as the host country’s heritage and considered to be useful for acculturation and integration.

A range of researchers have suggested using a superdiversity approach to rethink and retool theories and policies (Blommaert, 2013; Meissner, 2015; Vertovec, 2007). They highlight that a superdiversity lens acknowledges multiple dimensions of migration-related social issues, including new patterns of inequality and prejudice, and that it provides a framework to re-appraise these issues, and re-develop policies to address them. A transformative approach therefore is advocated in a superdiversity frame to ensure that policies and practices catch up with the demographic and associated social changes (Vertovec, 2007). This paper argues that curriculum and pedagogy similarly have to be transformed to reflect these changes and that a nuanced superdiversity lens can be applied in ECCE pedagogies to promote social justice by adopting critical, responsive, and inclusive practices that embrace diverse diversities.

Applying the notion of superdiversity draws attention to new patterns of inequality and prejudices (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015; Vertovec, 2007) as they manifest in configurations particular to specific places. In his discussion of critical pedagogies of place, Greenwood (2008) emphasises the specificity of human interconnectedness with place. This notion of place-connectedness is challenging in relation to recent immigrants who may not yet have a strong sense of belonging in their host country, whilst desiring to sustain connections to their homeland (Chan & Spoonley, 2017; Hall, 2000). This paper suggests possibilities of applying critical pedagogies of place (Greenwood, 2008), which will be elaborated later, in ECCE settings in order to address social justice issues emerging from the superdiversity phenomenon, and to support diverse children and families to connect with each other and to Aotearoa (New Zealand)

and its histories. We suggest that such pedagogies need to take into account the country's commitment to biculturalism, the historical presences of the land, the first people of this land, Māori, and their histories.

## TE TIRITI O WAITANGI/THE TREATY OF WAITANGI, 'BICULTURALISM' AND RECENT IMMIGRANTS

'Biculturalism' in Aotearoa (New Zealand) refers to the two parties to the Treaty – affirming the first nation status of Māori, as well as acknowledging the governance of the British Crown (transferred to the New Zealand Parliament in 1852) and all who have since immigrated here under these Crown policies. The eminent former Justice of the High Court of New Zealand, Sir Taihakurei (Eddie) Durie has described the two peoples who make up this 'bicultural' nation, as *tangata whenua* (people of the land – Māori) and *tangata tiriti* (people who have become citizens since the Treaty legitimated Crown governance, that is, all who are not Māori) (as cited in King, 2003). Māori have long sought redress to historical grievances related to breaches of the Treaty (Walker, 2004), and these continue to be addressed by an ongoing Treaty settlements process (When & Haywood, 2012). Meanwhile, the notion of 'biculturalism' has been problematized as obscuring the power dynamics (O'Sullivan, 2007), whereby since colonisation of Aotearoa (New Zealand), Māori have been treated as second class citizens in their own country and their languages, values and customs denied validity within the state education system (Walker, 2004).

The longstanding commitment of the New Zealand early childhood community to the Treaty was reflected in the first early childhood curriculum for this country, *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1996). The revised curriculum further states that "Te Tiriti | the Treaty is seen to be inclusive of all immigrants to New Zealand" (MoE, 2017, p. 3). Whilst initial settlement brought an influx of predominantly British peoples during the 1800s, more recent changes to immigration has resulted in various waves of peoples. In the 1950s and 60s, there was an influx of immigrants from neighbouring Pacific Islands, and more recently

changes in immigration requirements have facilitated increasing arrivals from a range of Asian countries. For Māori, and also those descended from immigrants from the early colonial period (which include some Chinese as well as European peoples), their connection to Aotearoa (New Zealand), and to particular regions of the country is strong and goes back many generations. For more recent immigrants, their sense of connection to place may be more complicated, as they may still identify strongly with their home country and places of origin (Chan & Spoonley, 2017).

## CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES OF PLACE

Critical pedagogies of place are positioned within recognition of a socioecological framework that recognises the wider global scale of cultural conflict and flux in the context of corporate and political “assaults on both human and biotic diversity in particular local places” (Greenwood, 2008, p. 313). In nations with a history of colonisation, the pedagogies of settlers have not only represented the knowledges and tradition of their homeland, but have also served as instruments of colonisation of both people and places (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor, 2015). In the case of Māori, not only were their knowledges and rituals devalued and de-legitimised, but their language, which contained deeply metaphorical multi-layered meanings and significant knowledges, was banned just as their lands were alienated. Traditional Māori tribal schools of learning promoted connectedness to place, to spiritual rituals, genealogies, and to the local histories and ecological knowledge of that tribal area (Buck, 1950).

An oft-cited example of this interconnectedness is seen in the notion of *whenua*, which refers not only to land, but also to the placenta, both of which serve to nurture the people and ensure their wellbeing and survival. The ritual of returning a newborn baby’s placenta to the land of her or his ancestry, and to Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother, further cements these genealogical, historical and spiritual connections (Pere, 1983). The community of life includes all descendants of Papatūānuku and Ranginui, the Sky Father. The children of these original parents are the *Atua*, the compartmental gods, of oceans, forests, people, winds, and cultivation. People are

descended from Tāne Mahuta, the *Atua* of the forests, birds and insects. Thus, trees, animals and insects are our cousins, deserving of our respect and care. In return, people benefit from the extensive knowledge gleaned from close observation and attunement to such aspects as different composition and properties of configurations of stars, bush, creatures and soil as well as seasonal and tidal changes. This knowledge is applied to aspects such as navigation, cultivation, and the gathering and preparation of foods and medicines in order to ensure the mutual wellbeing and survival of people and their environment (Pere, 1983).

All these knowledges, the *taonga tuku iho* (highly valued items handed down from the ancestors), were contained in and conveyed through the medium of *te reo Māori*, the Māori language. The retention of these is thus dependent “on the retention of the Māori language and the values and beliefs it reflects” (Pere, 1983, p. 64). In traditional Māori child-rearing, some of the earliest learning for babies is through the medium of song. *Oriori* are chants traditionally sung to babies that contain complex historical references to ancestors, *Atua* (compartmental gods), and ancestral geographical features such as rivers and mountains (for an example, see M.O., 1965). Children learnt not only the history of their human and more-than-human ancestors, but also how to read and respond to spiritual *tohu* (signs). According to Rose Pere:

A *tohu* can be conveyed through natural and psychic phenomena [such] as the sudden appearance of creatures away from their natural habitat, the way in which sea or river currents flow or change direction, the flowering time of certain trees .... (Pere, 1983, p. 65)

This is a very different sensory attunement and responsiveness than that currently fostered in western modes of education. The lack of such a sensibility in the current dominant globalised western capitalist neo-liberal project, now resulting in an increasingly catastrophic climate crisis, leads us to consider the implications of such Indigenous onto-epistemologies for reconceptualising a critical pedagogy of place. David Greenwood (2008) has written that:

The ecological challenge to critical pedagogy is to expand its socio-cultural analyses and agendas for transformation to include an examination of the interactions between cultures and ecosystems. Just as critical pedagogy draws its moral authority from the imperative to transform systems of human oppression, critical ecological educators posit that an ecological crisis necessitates the transformation of education and a corresponding alignment of cultural patterns with the sustaining capacities of natural systems. (p. 312)

Whilst an ecosocial critique is beyond the scope of this paper, we acknowledge that the rising sea levels generated by global warming will increasingly raise the numbers of climate change refugees, possibly from the Pacific Islands. Many of these people will need to be re-homed in countries such as Aotearoa (New Zealand), and will face the daunting prospect of maintaining traditions and languages that originate from islands that no longer exist (Lawler, 2011).

In concluding this section, we suggest that a superdiversity lens needs to apply critical pedagogies of place that recognise the particular histories of local Indigenous peoples, which are founded in a sense of inter-relatedness to land, mountains, rivers, oceans and other components of the more-than-human world. At the same time, the respective cultures, values, histories, stories, songs and meanings of other ethnic groups present in the ECCE settings also require respectful inclusion. Whilst in contemporary Aotearoa (New Zealand), many Māori now live in urban settings, having been dislocated and dispossessed of their tribal lands, and residing alongside them are immigrants from various countries. Research shows that contemporary immigrants usually have dual identities, and despite their best intentions, they may struggle to maintain their home heritages as well as to connect with the host country (Chan & Spoonley, 2017), highlighting the need for ECCE teachers to support immigrant children to retain their dual senses of connection to place.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A process of documentary analysis was used in this study, during which a range of macro and micro documents were examined to investigate the commitment of Aotearoa (New Zealand) organisations to (super)diversity. Legal and mandatory documents at the macro-level, such as the ECCE regulations and curriculum, lay out the national expectations and function as the country's "statements of commitment" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 599). These macro documents shape the development of micro policies. At the micro-level, individual centre philosophies as well as reports from the (ERO) were examined to find out how macro-level expectations were translated into practice by teachers in ECCE centres. Demonstration of commitment "depends upon the work generated around the document" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 602); otherwise they are only empty words. While commitment statements can be hollow, they are important to diversity and equality work because at least it is "a start point" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 602), having defined the expectations. Examining and analysing macro and micro documents not only revealed the ways in which (super)diversity is acknowledged and embraced in Aotearoa (New Zealand) ECCE, but also exposed the gaps between rhetoric and enactment.

The ERO evaluations of educational programmes are publicly available on the ERO website (<http://www.ero.govt.nz/>). For the purposes of this study, the ERO reports of 20 ECCE centres spread across Aotearoa (New Zealand) were selected and analysed. Although Auckland is the most popular city for immigrants, and 40% of its population were not born in New Zealand (Spoonley, 2015), this study was interested in exploring how ECCE centres nationally have responded to this phenomenon of (super)diversity. Based upon the demographic make-up as per each centre's ERO evaluative report, 20 centres with a wide range of different ethnicities attending were selected, and their philosophy statements were then accessed through each centre's website. It is common for ECCE centres in New Zealand to proclaim their commitments to certain values, beliefs and practices through a philosophy statement. Commitments such as a recognition of the Treaty and the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa (New Zealand), the adoption of a free play approach, and working in partnership

with families, all of which reflect the aspirations and expectations of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996, 2017), are typically stated in philosophy statements. Together, the philosophy statements and ERO reports of the centres regarding philosophical commitments to (super)diversity and pedagogical enactment of these commitments were examined. Since all the documents are publicly available, the authors have decided not to directly quote any excerpts in this paper in order to protect the identities of the centres.

Our study was particularly interested in examining the nation's commitment to supporting the learning of Māori children within a superdiverse Aotearoa (New Zealand). The New Zealand government's Māori education strategy has focussed for a number of years on addressing the 'achievement gap' whereby Māori results have featured negatively (MoE, 2008, 2013). ERO has responded with a focus on national evaluations in support of improving educational experiences of Māori. This article, therefore, also draws upon a range of ERO national evaluative reports which focus on pedagogies that support the education of Māori children within mainstream ECCE settings (Education Review Office [ERO], 2008, 2010a, 2012). Findings presented in this paper will be discussed using the superdiversity lens and recommendations to ECCE teachers will be made with regard to the call for critical pedagogies of place (Greenwood, 2008).

## FINDINGS

Superdiversity is not simply used to describe the complexities of a social environment; instead it draws attention to new patterns of inequality and prejudices (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015; Vertovec, 2007), implying the necessity to examine and evaluate educational policies in terms of how they respond to the new patterns and to rethink pedagogies to address them. To illustrate, with an increased population of immigrants, Ranginui Walker (1987), a prominent scholar and advocate for Māori, warned that a generic multicultural approach would subordinate issues pertaining to Māori and thus treat Māori as just another 'ethnic minority' within their own country. Pedagogies have to be critically responsive to newly emergent social injustice arising from (super)diversity. Whilst the philosophy

statements and ERO reports of individual ECCE centres seem to suggest a strong commitment to (super)diversity and to Māori children, ERO national reports (2007, 2012, 2013a, 2013b) paint a different picture. They show that many education settings in New Zealand still fall short in catering for Māori learners, let alone responding to the multiple dimensions of superdiversity, in that cultural differences were often ignored, marginalised and excluded.

## MACRO COMMITMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

*Te Tiriti o Waitangi – The Treaty of Waitangi* affirmed the rights of Māori to their self-determination, lands, resources, and to equal citizenship (Orange, 1987). Recognition of the two parties to the Treaty, Māori along with the British Crown and descendants (all who are tauiwi, or immigrants or whose ancestors were such), positioned Aotearoa (New Zealand) as a ‘bicultural’ nation. The original *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996) was the first ‘bicultural’ curriculum for Aotearoa (New Zealand). It stated in its introduction that: “In early childhood education settings, all children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi” (MoE, 1996, p. 9). It also asked teachers to consider “In what ways do the environment and programme reflect the values embodied in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and what impact does this have on adults and children?” (MoE, 1996, p. 56). The revised *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) states that: “Te Tiriti |the Treaty has implications for our education system, particularly in terms of achieving equitable outcomes for Māori and ensuring that te reo Māori not only survives but thrives” (p. 3).

*He Pou Tātaki: How ERO Reviews Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2013c), the document that guides ERO evaluators and ECCE centres in assessing the effectiveness of a centre’s programme, highlights the commitment of ERO to Tiriti and to enacting the government’s Māori education policy. It states that “Te Tiriti o Waitangi informs the development and implementation of all policies and procedures in ERO, including its education evaluation approaches”, and that the Treaty “guides education with regards to participation, power and partnership for Māori, as tangata whenua, and

non-Māori as signatories to the Treaty. The Treaty provides a driving force for the revitalisation of Māori language and culture” (p. 7). *He Pou Tātaki* also states that curriculum must “help children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritages of both parties to Te Tiriti o Waitangi” (ERO, 2013c, p. 7).

Besides its commitment to the Treaty, the original *Te Whāriki* also recognised the “increasing cultural diversity” (MoE, 1996, p. 18) in this country, and highlighted that immigrants who settled in this land have diverse beliefs and practices. It stated its commitment to celebrating cultural differences and to ensuring children develop positive cultural identities, thereby expecting ECCE centres to implement culturally responsive pedagogies (MoE, 1996). This commitment of *Te Whāriki* was later affirmed in the *Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008* (New Zealand Government, 2012) and the *Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008: Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework* (MoE, 2011). Both documents require each licensed ECCE centre to encourage children “to be confident in their own culture and develop an understanding, and respect, for other cultures” (MoE, 2011, p. 8; New Zealand Government, 2012, p. 27). Hence, it can be argued that responding to cultural diversity is a national commitment. This commitment has been reinforced in the revised curriculum which “sets out expectations of inclusive and responsive practice that acknowledges diversity” (MoE, 2017, p. 12) and requires that “those working in early childhood education respond to the changing demographic landscape by valuing and supporting the different cultures represented in their settings” (MoE, 2017, p. 3). The curriculum’s commitment to (super)diversity and social justice can further be seen in the ‘Contribution’ strand, which states that: “Language and resources are inclusive of each child’s gender, ability, ethnicity and background” and that “children have opportunities to discuss bias and to challenge prejudice and discriminatory attitudes” (MoE, 2017, p. 39).

In addition to the focus on supporting Māori learners, *He Pou Tātaki* (ERO, 2013c) also requires recognition of cultural differences by examining how children’s “culture, languages and identities are

recognised and responded to in order to help them succeed” (p. 21). It is also concerned with “how management promotes equity and social justice for children and their families through cross-cultural development and understanding” (p. 28). *Early Learning Curriculum: What’s Important and What Works* (ERO, 2016) synthesises findings from 17 recent national reports about ECCE curriculum implementation. It reiterates ERO’s commitment “to improving equity and excellence” for culturally diverse learners (p. 14). It stresses the importance of teachers forming partnerships with diverse parents and ensuring the application of culturally responsive assessments and pedagogies that recognise children’s diverse identities, languages and cultures.

Although the country’s commitment to Māori and (super)diversity is demonstrated in the macro documents outlined above, evaluative reports prepared by the ERO have consistently revealed many concerns. The 2004 ERO national report *Catering for Diversity in Early Childhood Services* evaluated how 100 ECCE services catered for the diversity of cultures, languages, families, children’s interests, abilities and special needs. It found that “there is still a need for considerable improvement in approaches to diversity” (ERO, 2004, p. 1), and that “provision for diversity of cultures needs to move beyond tokenism to a deeper understanding of how service provision impacts on different cultures” (p. 16). Responding to cultural diversity is re-emphasised in another national report (ERO, 2011). In 2007, ERO highlighted that at enrolment, many ECCE services asked for information about the child’s family. “However, this was frequently the only consideration of the child’s family, cultural background, values and beliefs. ERO found little evidence that educators used this information in planning or to reflect on children’s learning” (ERO, 2007, p. 20).

The 2013 ERO national report, *Working with Te Whāriki*, identified that there is an issue in translating rhetoric regarding Tiriti-based commitments into practice:

Many services made reference to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to New Zealand’s dual cultural heritage and bicultural practice in their philosophy statements. However, only a few services were

fully realising such intent in practice by working in partnership with whānau Māori [Māori families] and through the provision of a curriculum that was responsive to the language, culture and identity of Māori children. (ERO, 2013b, p. 13)

A report from the same year, *Priorities for Children's learning in Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2013a) provides illustration of some ways that centres support Māori and Pacific Islands' children and families. For example, it reports that at Te Puna Reo o Puhī Kaiti, a Māori immersion ECCE centre located in the Ngāti Porou tribal area: "Children are supported to develop a strong sense of identity through pepeha and whakapapa" (p. 14). Pepeha are tribal sayings that contain identity markers such as ancestors, mountains and rivers. Whakapapa is genealogical connectedness, which is also strongly linked to place. However, this report shows that only 17% of ECCE centres were found to be highly effective in gathering "assessment information [that] reflected children's diverse cultures" (ERO, 2013a, p. 8). Furthermore, only 15% of ECCE centres "had some responsive practices that enabled Pacific children to experience success" and that while Pacific languages and resources were used often, "children's assessment records did not often reflect their Pacific heritage" (p. 21).

## **MICRO COMMITMENTS AND REVIEWS**

The philosophy statements and ERO reports of 20 ECCE centres from across New Zealand, 11 from Auckland, were gathered via the internet to examine how the notion of (super)diversity is embraced at the micro-level. It is useful to reiterate that all the centres selected had enrolled children from a wide range of different ethnicities, demonstrating that (super)diversity is not simply an Auckland phenomenon. Only three out of the eleven Auckland centres have more than 25% "Pakeha/New Zealand European" children attending, and only three of the nine out-of-Auckland centres have more than 50% "Pakeha/New Zealand European". The remaining usually comprises of a mix of ethnicities, namely "Māori", "Pacific", "Asian", and "other ethnic groups".

The philosophy statements of 19 centres variously express the centre's commitment to the 'bicultural heritage' of Aotearoa (New

Zealand) and/or to diversity. For example, many centres highlight the multi-ethnic nature of their community, and some are particularly proud of their multicultural and multilingual teachers who can ease children's settling into the centres and enhance communication with parents. Terms which appear frequently include 'identities', 'languages', 'cultures', 'inclusiveness', 'welcoming', 'a diversity community', and 'partnership'. These centres appear keen to project an image welcoming of cultural diversity. As Ahmed has pointed out, "Diversity is cited in documents and becomes a way of re-imagining organization" (2007, p. 605). Ahmed (2007) suggests that the purposes and effectiveness of such documents are debateable, and that images of diversity and inclusivity are often used to mask inequality. In order to investigate how the centres' commitments to (super)diversity were being enacted, each centre's ERO report were also examined.

Although 11 of the selected centres' ERO evaluative reports contain recommendations to improve pedagogies in relation to cultures and languages, 14 centres were endorsed in their ERO reports for their commitment to the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa (New Zealand) and responsiveness to diverse cultural and language backgrounds of children enrolled in the centres. Ethnic diversity of teaching staff and their ability to communicate with non-English speaking children and families in their home languages is often commended by the ERO. Action words such as 'promoted', 'catered', 'celebrated', and 'acknowledged' feature frequently in these reports to describe culturally responsive pedagogies. Since such approaches are described in a somewhat standardised manner in these centre evaluative reports, it is difficult to know what specific actions teachers have taken that earned the ERO endorsement. A positive endorsement from ERO is likely to convince teachers that there is no need to diverge from the status quo.

## **DISCUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The macro documents seem to suggest that Aotearoa (New Zealand) is committed to embracing superdiversity within a bicultural policy setting. Diverse identities, languages and cultures are the

three aspects that received attention in these documents, which also suggest using responsive pedagogies to embrace diverse diversities. This indicates that children are not expected to conform to one set of norms; instead they are encouraged to maintain their cultural heritages (Blommaert, 2013). Social justice and equity are also highlighted in these documents as important in supporting diverse learners to succeed. This clearly aligns with the notion of superdiversity, which includes considerations of inequality and prejudices (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015; Vertovec, 2007).

National ERO reports (ERO, 2004, 2013a, 2013b) illustrate some ongoing challenges. The 2004 report highlighted that:

There was a strong correlation between the quality of provision of te reo [Māori language] and tikanga Māori [Māori cultural values and practices] and the provision for the differing cultures of families contributing to services ... , it appears that attention to one had positive benefits for the other. (ERO, 2004, p. 10)

This would suggest that teachers who are culturally responsive to Māori children and families are able to translate these pedagogical strategies to be inclusive to children from other ethnic backgrounds. Yet nearly a decade later, the statistics provided by ERO (2013a) are disheartening. Teachers are still struggling to move beyond tokenism to connect with the local Māori knowledges, histories, and the in-depth Māori language that would serve as the basis for an authentically ‘bicultural’ curriculum. It appears that they may also be challenged in enacting a similar commitment in the service of children who are recent immigrants to Aotearoa (New Zealand), in order to sustain these children’s connections to homelands and heritage languages. This is despite the fact that recognition of the importance of supporting immigrant children to maintain knowledge of home languages has been affirmed in many previous studies (Jones-Diaz, 2014; Mu & Dooley, 2015; Strzelecka-Misonne, 2016). Interestingly, young children in a New Zealand study of diverse ECCE settings demonstrated a great interest and facility in learning the many languages of their diverse community (Mitchell et al., 2015). As a result of their involvement in this study, teachers recognised they needed to “be more intentional about incorporating stories and songs

from different cultures into large group experiences and to include more Māori stories and traditional tales” (Mitchell et al., 2015, p. 21). Further to this step is the challenge of responding to the “vibrancies of places” and their particular histories, especially those recorded by longstanding inhabitants such as the local Indigenous communities (Nxumalo, 2016, p. 650). Significantly, *Te Whāriki* states that children “learn by engaging in meaningful interactions with people, places and things” (MoE, 2017, p. 12). Enacting such pedagogies requires deep engagement with the original people of the land to build longstanding, trusting relationships whereby the histories of these lands and people will be shared with the newly arrived. This also requires respectful use of the local Indigenous languages, since language encapsulate cultures, values and meanings.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the potential of applying a superdiversity lens to examine social justice issues alongside critical pedagogies of place in relation to ECCE centres’ responses to diversity. Our findings indicate that whilst many teachers are still struggling to deliver programmes that genuinely reflect Māori knowledge and support Māori children’s identities, further challenges have now arisen with regard to the need to offer pedagogical approaches that respectfully and meaningfully include diverse languages and cultures, which is particularly crucial in an increasingly superdiverse Aotearoa (New Zealand). We suggest that sharing the Indigenous Māori language and culture with immigrant children and their families will help them understand the histories of and connect with Aotearoa (New Zealand). It is also important to demonstrate to immigrant children and families that their home languages and cultures are respected and valued in ECCE settings, because these families may still wish to maintain their connection with their home countries. It is the role of ECCE teachers to disrupt the privileged status of dominant cultural ideologies and language in order to avoid marginalising the non-mainstream knowledge of immigrant families. A socially just Aotearoa (New Zealand) will support immigrant children and families to develop a sense of trust and a sense of belonging, thereby deepening their

connection with this place and the histories and language of the local Indigenous custodians.

The Education Council Aotearoa New Zealand (EDUCANZ) requires all certificated (that is, degree qualified) teachers to adhere to its new ‘Code and Standards’ (EDUCANZ, 2017), which promotes social justice and requires teachers to “develop an environment where the diversity and uniqueness of all learners are accepted and valued” (p. 20). Teacher education degree qualification providers are also required by the Education Council to ensure that their programmes cover issues related to cultural diversity and social justice issues (EDUCANZ, n.d.). Meanwhile, a range of recent ERO reports have recommended that teachers receive more in-service professional learning opportunities (ERO, 2010a, 2013a, 2013b) in relation to supporting children from diverse backgrounds. The findings from our study provide further support for the need for a range of appropriate professional learning to be funded by government to enhance teachers’ pedagogical approaches in relation to (super)diversity and social justice commitments.

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