

**PASIFIKA EDUCATION: DISCOURSES OF DIFFERENCE  
WITHIN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education**

**in the University of Canterbury**

**Christchurch**

**New Zealand**

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**2013**



## Acknowledgments

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

ROBERT FROST

Yes, I took the road less travelled by when I chose to carry out a theoretical study and maintain my commitments of work and church service. I was blessed however with the unconditional support encouragement and guidance of those I have the privilege of acknowledging here. It is they that have made all the difference.

First of all, I humbly acknowledge my Heavenly Father for His guidance and support. I thank Him for the blessings of a loving, supportive husband; family and good friends without whom the completion of this research would have been unlikely.

I turn now to acknowledge those who were instrumental to my efforts to embark on and progress through this doctoral journey at the University of Canterbury - my supervisors Professor Peter Roberts of the College of Education, and Dr David Gegeo of the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies. I thank them for their patience, care and attention and their considerable scholarship and depth of knowledge. I especially acknowledge my senior supervisor, Professor Peter Roberts for the following:

\* guiding me towards carrying out research that aims to develop new and alternative ways of theorising and conceptualising (a move into unfamiliar territory but one which eventually yielded considerable personal growth and scholarly development)

\* showing me how philosophy can be harnessed and used in ways to illuminate real life problems and concerns – and that engagement with philosophical ideas *does* lead to new insights and from there, new knowledge

\* helping me to develop greater confidence in my own abilities to learn how to make sense of and to read complex abstract conceptual systems and theoretical frameworks

I am also very grateful to the Dean and staff of the College of Education, University of Canterbury for awarding me with a three-year full fees scholarship. Although I am a distance student, and was unable to participate in the College's vibrant postdoctoral student community, being a doctoral student of the University of Canterbury, College of Education has been a source of satisfaction and pride for me. I sincerely hope my work leads to outcomes that will reflect well on the College, its staff and the University of Canterbury.

Another university has played a significant role in my development as a scholar – and that is the university within which I work. I acknowledge with sincere thanks, the Faculty of Education of The University of Auckland for supporting my studies directly (with a semester of research and study leave and covering tuition fees for the remainder of my studies) and indirectly via my School (Critical Studies in Education, or CRSTIE) and its research culture. I have benefitted immensely from the School's innovative efforts to accelerate the development of emerging researchers and academics. I thank the senior scholars within the School, and the Head of School Dr Airini for their commitment to building such an enabling, supportive and collegial academic community.

I also acknowledge and thank my fellow CRSTIE colleague and mentor of many years, Associate Professor Eve Coxon. I would not even be on the academic career pathway that I am currently on, if it were not for her faith and belief in me many years ago and for her concerted efforts to identify, support and grow Pacific/Pasifika academics such as myself.

My friends and colleagues within the Kainga Pasifika (an academic grouping within CRSTIE) have been a tremendous source of support for almost a decade now. May we continue to learn /laugh /agitate/resist and grow

together on this journey through academe. And may we always do so on our own terms.

I extend sincere thanks to Hilary Tolley for her assistance with editing and formatting the series of thesis drafts that preceded the final version. In addition to technical support, Hilary helped as a reader, giving useful feedback about how to communicate ideas and arguments more clearly and for this I am most grateful.

Last but by no means least I would like to express my love and appreciation to those closest to me, who have had to witness (and respond) to me at my best, my worst, and everything else in between. I thank my husband Nathan for his constant love, patience, encouragement throughout this challenging journey. And I thank our children for their forbearance – they have ‘kept it real’ for me.

I express my love and gratitude to both my families – the Wendt family of Alafua (Samoa) and the Samu family of Mangere (New Zealand). My children have never lacked in terms of the love, affection and attention of grandparents, aunts and uncles – and I have never lacked in terms of encouragement, support, unconditional pride and belief from my parents, parents in law, and my brothers and sisters from both families.

## Abstract

This study is a conceptual analysis of specific terms and constructs that have become entrenched within education policy and practice in New Zealand within the 21<sup>st</sup> century – namely *diversity*, and *Pasifika education*. It is uncommon for users of these terms (educators, policy makers and researchers) to make their understandings and use of such terms explicit. In the absence of close and careful critique, limited and partial understandings of groups of learners constructed as diverse and different escape interrogation. The overall risks of this lack of conceptual clarity are: simplification and even misapprehensions of key dimensions of groups such as Pasifika learners and their communities. This results in unarticulated assumptions having undue influence over educators', policymakers' and researchers' perspectives and their subsequent decision-making. The philosophical research questions of this study are addressed through a deconstructivist research framework that draws on the theorisations of J.R. Martin; M. Foucault's theorisations relating to the historical analysis of ideas; and discourse theorising of a primarily post-structuralist nature. Six analyses were developed in order to address the research questions. Three focused on the level of national policies, macro-level influences, and post-colonial indigenous visioning. Three analyses are based on a selection of narrative accounts of Samoan women across time and space, examining education as a process of change, and its effects on personal identity and culture. The study critically reflects on the underlying values and belief systems of both policy and practice. It identifies and examines the tension between the state's priorities for the provision of education for Pasifika peoples on the one hand, and Pasifika peoples' motivations for pursuing and participating in education on the other. This is done in an effort to challenge complacency, provide alternative perspectives, deepen insights and strengthen understandings amongst those actively engaged as educators, policy makers and researchers in the education and development of Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Abbreviations

AIMHI	Achievement In Multicultural High Schools
ALL	Adult Literacy and Life Skills
APG	Academic Programmes Group
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BES	Best Evidence Synthesis
CRSTIE	School of Critical Studies in Education
ERO	Education Review Office
FOE	Faculty of Education
GAPS	Closing the Gaps Strategy
GETS	Government Electronic Tenders Service
HRC	Health Research Council
IAE	International Academy of Education
IOE	Institute of Education
ITO	Industry Training Organisation
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
M/ PI	Maori and Pacific Islanders
MPIA	Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAG	National Administration Guidelines
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NEG	National Education Goals
NEMP	National Educational Monitoring Programme
NOPE	Network Of Pacific Educators

NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
NZC	New Zealand Curriculum
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Education Research
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZTC	New Zealand Teachers Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORC	Organisational Review Committee
PBRF	Performance Based Research Fund
PEP	Pasifika Education Plan
PES	Pacific Education Studies
PI	Pacific Islands
PIECE	Pacific Island Early Childhood Education
PLD	Professional Learning and Development
QTRD	Quality Teaching and Research Development
RPEIPP	Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific Peoples
SCOPE	School of Pasifika Education
SEMO	Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara
SOCPOL	School of Social and Policy Studies
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEO	Tertiary Education Organisation
TLRI	Teaching and Learning Research Initiative
TOPs	Training Opportunities Programmes
UNESCO	United Nations Education Science and



	Culture Organisation
USP	University of the South Pacific
UWC	United World College

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# 1. The Landscape

*The consequent expansion of the landscape does not prevent those who wish to focus exclusively on education as an intentional activity from doing so. It does, however, make it visible for all to see that they are working but a small patch ... of a much larger terrain.*

*Jane Roland Martin, 2012, p. 110.*



## **Chapter One**

### **Introducing the research and the researcher**

New Zealand's population of Pacific peoples is multi-ethnic and heterogeneous. It comprises different Pacific cultures and languages and includes newer forms of identity that are not necessarily tied to a specific Pacific cultural heritage (Anae, 1998; Pasikale, 1999). The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) provided the following description of the Pasifika population in New Zealand stating that it is "a population of considerable size and social significance" and that,

Today's Pacific population is mostly New Zealand-born, predominantly young, and highly urbanised. It is also a diverse population made up of many different ethnic groups. Understanding these characteristics *provides important context* for analysing the social and economic position of Pacific people (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010, p.9; emphasis added).

This chapter will unpack and discuss the important characteristics of situational context. Later, in Chapter Five, the study will analyse the social and economic position of Pacific people in New Zealand in relation to formal education.

#### ***Situating Pasifika Peoples in New Zealand***

Vibrant communities from the Pacific islands became established in New Zealand after World War Two with particularly significant levels of migration occurring in the 1960s to the mid-1970s. Figure 1 presents the census counts for people of Pacific heritage (in terms of origins and descent) in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Figure 1: Census count of people of Pacific Heritage in New Zealand 1945-2006**

Year	People of Pacific Heritage
1945	2,159
1956	8,103
1966	26,271
1976	65,694
1986	127,906
1996	202,233
2001	231,801
2006	265,974

*Source: Statistics New Zealand.*

Pasifika is a multi-ethnic group, made up of people who identify with one or more of the following Pacific heritages: Samoa, Cook Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau and Tuvalu. These are the groups that Statistics New Zealand gathers specific data on and the seven largest groups in terms of numbers (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). According to the 2006 census, almost half of Pasifika peoples were Samoan. The next largest groups were Cook Island Maori (22%), Tongan (19%), Niue (8%), Fijian (4%), Tokelauan (2.6%), Tuvalu (1%) (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010, p.8). As a multi-ethnic group, however, Pasifika are made up of more than seven cultural groups, with heritages rooted in most of the island nations of the South Pacific. New Zealand has smaller communities with origins in French Polynesia (particularly Tahiti) and other island nations, such as Kiribati, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands.

It is important to note that of the seven main Pacific heritage groups (in terms of population numbers), three have more members living in Aotearoa

New Zealand<sup>1</sup> than the home nation – namely, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. The New Zealand resident communities of Cook Islanders, Niue and Tokelau peoples are fast becoming critical locations of language transmission and culture for their respective Pacific nation homelands.

In terms of total numbers, just over 230,000 people in New Zealand identified as Pasifika in 2001, rising to 265,974 in the census of 2006<sup>2</sup> (Statistics New Zealand, 2007, p.2), “representing around seven percent of the total population”<sup>3</sup>. Pasifika formed the third largest ethnic minority group, after Maori (14.6%) and Asian (9.2%). As Figure 1 shows (above) Pacific as a multi-ethnic group have risen markedly in terms of population size. Much of the population increase since the mid-1980s, however, is due to natural increase rather than immigration, as “60 percent are New Zealand born” (MPIA, date). Interestingly, 38 percent of Pacific were under the age of 15 years in 2006, compared to 22 percent of the total New Zealand population. The median age for Pacific was 21 years compared to 35 years for the overall population (Statistics New Zealand, 2007, p.2). With third, even fourth generations of Pacific peoples, this multi-ethnic grouping can no longer be considered as an immigrant minority population in New Zealand.

Proportionally, the Pacific population is the most youthful compared to other composite ethnic groupings, including Maori. For example in 2006, 56 percent (148,752 of 265,974) of the Pacific population were under 25 compared with 53 percent (301,230 of 565,329) of the Maori population. The gender distribution of the Pasifika population is relatively even (Stats NZ & MPIA, 2010a).

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Aotearoa’ is the indigenous name for New Zealand. It is accepted practice in New Zealand for those who wish to refer to this country using both names – hence, Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup> In New Zealand, a national census takes place every five years. The census scheduled for March, 2011 was cancelled due to the devastating Christchurch earthquake that occurred on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. A national census was held March, 2013; however, preliminary outcomes had not been released before the final submission of this thesis. The most recent census information available is therefore from 2006.

<sup>3</sup> MPIA, <http://www.mpia.govt.nz/demographic-fact-sheet/>

### *Group Names and Labels*

Terms used by government departments and education institutions to identify this diverse group have varied over time. For example terms like 'Pacific Polynesian' were used in the 1970s; 'Pacific Islanders' in the 1980s and 'Pacific Nations peoples' in the 1990s (Samu, 1998). At present, there is a degree of variability in the formal terms used by different government agencies and institutions - what remains consistent, however, is the administrative practice of identifying the various groups, and their New Zealand born descendants, under one broad multi-ethnic category. For example, the terms 'Pasifika peoples' or 'Pasifika' are used by the Ministry of Education (2009) and the Auckland Council<sup>4</sup>, while the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) uses the terms 'Pacific peoples' and 'Pacific population'<sup>5</sup>. 'Pacific peoples' is also the main term of reference used within the New Zealand Ministry of Health<sup>6</sup>.

Macpherson (1996) suggested three reasons for the historical practice of group names and labels: a Euro-centric school curriculum; New Zealand's role after World War One as a colonial administrator for Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau (often these islands were grouped together as a simple entity for administrative purposes); and what Macpherson described as a "... the high degree of residential and labour market concentration" of Pacific peoples once they arrived (1996, p.129).

The different formal names used by government organisations and society reflect the particular decade in the 20th century when the labels were in common usage. The 21<sup>st</sup> century contemporary term is Pasifika. It has been argued that regardless of the actual term these are social constructs, used to group people,

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<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/AboutCouncil/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://www.mpia.govt.nz/pacific-peoples-in-new-zealand/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.health.govt.nz/>

... who seem to share some rather general, possibly even superficial similarities in the way they look and sound; where they live and work in the urban areas of Auckland and Wellington and other centres; their relative socio-economic position within this society; and the Pacific (that vast area covering one third of the earth's surface) islands from which at least half have directly originated from (Samu, 1998, p.177–178).

In the mid-1990s, academics with credibility in researching and writing about (and for) Pacific peoples' migration, settlement and socio-economic experiences (including education) within New Zealand cautioned against using collectivising terms in ways that would encourage the myth of a homogenous migrant community, given that such use “conceals and undermines the historical social, political and cultural uniqueness of each Pacific Islands society” (Coxon, Foliaki & Mara, 1994, p.181). In terms of Pacific peoples' preference, Foliaki (1994, p.107) expressed the following view:

Lumping people together is convenient for the administrator. It is not what the groups themselves desire. Different Pacific groups want to keep their own separate identities and their own languages.

The use of such blanket terms can unintentionally camouflage the reality of distinctiveness of the different Pacific ethnic and linguistic groups. A number of factors (in addition to traditional forms of culture and language) account for the diversity under ‘the Pasifika Umbrella’ (Samu, 2006). First, each Pacific group has unique social structures, histories, values (Coxon, Foliaki & Mara, 1994, p.181) and identities although some forms of identity are not exclusive to any one Pacific cultural tradition. According to Samu (2006, p.40),

New Zealand-born and New Zealand-raised Pasifika young people have developed unique forms of expression and identification. They demonstrate a creative, assertive self-determination and are growing in numbers. They strive to be bicultural or multiethnic on their own terms.

Interestingly, a “vigorous if softly spoken debate” (Perrott, 2007, p.8) exists within Pacific communities about the use of terms with a pan-Pacific scope.

For Anae (cited in Perrott, 2007, p.9), the term 'Pasifika' is "a new administrative stereotype", while Laban believes it "represents anything of Pacific origin ... a modern label". Mahina considers the term to be "something of a Trojan horse" and that "whenever something is considered Pasifika, in reality it is Samoan ... [because] ... they have the most numbers in New Zealand ... the most power" (cited in Perrott, 2007, p.10). In terms of education, Manu'atu and Kepa (2002) expressed concern for the learning needs of specific students (e.g. Tongan) because they are rendered invisible when grouped together under such umbrella terms. Samu (2006, p.7), however, stated,

Sometimes the main advantage of a unifying concept is the countering effect it has against oppositional forces such as neo-colonialism – or for migrant community groups such as Pasifika in New Zealand, countering oppositional forces such as assimilation and social/economic/cultural marginalisation.

The use of such blanket terms will continue to be problematic. That is why it is important for writers to explain (and in some instances, even rationalise) whichever collectivising term they have determined to use. This must be done in order to ensure that the writing does not lead to a homogenising, reductionist effect, thereby risking the assumption, on the part of the reader, that all people of Pacific heritage in New Zealand (and even beyond) accept and reflect on a shared culture, a solid shared identity or even subscribe to such over-arching identity labels.

### ***Group names selected for this study***

This study will follow Burnett's (2012) approach and use the term 'Pasifika' to refer to Pacific peoples residing in New Zealand and 'Pacific' to signify peoples in the islands and nations within the Pacific region. When referring to the Pacific, however, this study excludes New Zealand and Australia, in order to maintain a clear distinction between Pasifika and Pacific peoples and their broad spatial locations. This study will also align with Burnett's (2012) approach in terms of differentiating between Pacific and Pasifika education communities, and Pacific education per se – that is, education in the Pacific

region (Pacific education) or within New Zealand (Pasifika education). Pacific/Pasifika will be used where both populations and settings are being considered.

In terms of education, Pasifika education is the term used in this study to refer to the education and development of the Pacific-heritage peoples, the Pacific diaspora (Burnett, 2012, p.488) resident within New Zealand. Publications that use the term 'Pacific education' to refer to Pacific-heritage peoples resident within New Zealand *and* Pacific nations tend to be older and published in the 1980s and 1990s (Coxon et al., 1994, for example). The term 'Tagata Pasifika' emerged in the late 1990s (see for example Samu, 1998) and began to become institutionalised as 'Pasifika' in relation to the education of Pacific peoples (resident in New Zealand) at the turn of the new millennium (for example, Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, Finau, 2002; Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu, Finau, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2001). The term and its meaning is now well-established within the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2009, 2012).

### ***The Research Problem***

It must be noted, however, that terms such as Pasifika education mean different things to different people but rarely do the users of such terms make their understanding and use of such terms explicit. While such a situation creates the risk of talking past one another (Metge & Kinloch, 1978), cross-cultural (mis)communication is not the main concern of this thesis.

The absence of conceptual clarity and alignment, can promote certain risks; for example, the risk of dysconsciousness. According to King (1991, p.135),

Dysconsciousness is an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given.

She argues that culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths and beliefs are caused by uncritical ways of thinking, and result in justification of the "social and economic advantages" that dominant groups have as "a result of

subordinating diverse others” (p.135). One example from the context of schooling in New Zealand is arguably the relationship between teachers and their Pasifika learners. Teachers are in dominant roles by virtue of their positions as the professional authority. According to Spiller (2012, pp.59-60),

Research suggests that poor Pasifika achievement is often attributed to three inter-related challenges: deficit theorising by teachers; issues relating to teachers not understanding Pasifika students’ identity; and a lack of effective pedagogy, including building strong teacher-student relationships.

The origins of these three challenges are teachers, and their knowledge and beliefs about how best to respond to their Pasifika learners. Spiller carried out a school-based study which demonstrated a mismatch of views between teachers and their Pasifika students. Teachers viewed poor learning behaviours as a reflection of the students’ “Pasifika values and Pasifika ways of learning” (2012, p.60). Students, on the other hand, fully aware of their wilful behaviour, explained their actions as a specific response to their perceptions of their teachers’ attitudes and actions towards them (Spiller, 2012, p.60). Thus, student subordination is in evidence when teachers theorise their Pasifika learners in deficit terms: they are unable to appreciate, value and take into account the nuances and complexities of identity (in this case Pasifika identities); and they are unable (or unwilling) to build effective meaningful relationships with their Pasifika learners.

Another risk of limited conceptual clarity relates to discursive positioning. According to Bishop (2010, p.67), “by drawing on particular discourses to explain and make sense of our experiences, we are positioning ourselves within these discourses”. As he points out “some discourses hold solutions to problems, others don’t.” It is important that Pasifika educators and researchers alike are wary of, and strive to resist, what Lather (2006, p.482-3) described as “the reductive and essentialising cultural binaries that tend to link ethnicity and identity with authenticity and authority to speak on behalf of others”. Otherwise, as the “elders and self-appointed navigators” (Samu,



2010, p.8) of Pasifika learners, we will not turn the critical gaze on ourselves. Our own taken-for-granted assumptions will escape scrutiny; our capacities to recognise and analyse the nuances and complexities will be dulled.

Underscoring the types of risks described above are limited and partial understandings of the groups constructed as diverse and different, such as Pasifika. The overall effects include the simplification, and even misapprehension, of key dimensions of these communities, which in turn results in unarticulated assumptions having undue influence over educators', policymakers' and researchers' perspectives and, more importantly, their subsequent decision-making. This lies at the very heart of the problem this thesis aims to tackle – the relations of knowledge, power and discourses about diversity in education, in general, and Pasifika learners in particular.

### ***The Appearance of the Research Problem***

The research problem emerged as a concern for me several years ago as a consequence of a number of experiences “in the world of real things” (Mintzberg, 2005, p.365). Norms became problematic, creating perplexity over my own taken-for-granted beliefs, as well as those of others. This was sufficient to generate a deep critical reflection, which eventually led to the development of the research questions that frame this study. In other words, the research topic did not originate from prior research work, neither was it inspired by extensive scholarly reading. I was “pulled by an important concern out there” (Mintzberg, 2005, p.362) or more precisely, a specific set of concerns. I took my lead from my own behaviour in practice. And from there developed some big questions (Mintzberg, 2005, p.362) because my professional and personal experiences created sufficient levels of cognitive dissonance to draw my attention to disturbing discontinuities (Foucault, 1972) that I had not noticed or been aware of beforehand.

### ***The Researcher***

I concur with Taylor's (2001) argument about the importance of making researcher identity explicit, and acknowledge that researcher identity

reflects, in part, the researcher's personal and professional interests and experiences, political beliefs and cultural values (Taylor, 2001, p.17). My research questions have emerged from key experiences I have had within the context of the New Zealand education system - these experiences also played a determining role in the selection of the analyses contained within Chapters Four to Nine. It is, therefore, inevitable that this research will result in knowledge that is partial and situated. I also draw attention to the likelihood of the contradictory tensions of ethnicity, gender, culture, class and nation and how these features have influenced my position as researcher, albeit in nuanced ways. Such matters will be discussed and theorised in Chapter Three in terms of paradigmatic positioning and research methodology.

Suffice to say, I believe it is important to identify how I situate myself because of the need to clarify my role as researcher in relation to the various roles and interactions I currently hold within the context of this study. In brief, the context of this study comprises the New Zealand education system, Pasifika education communities and Pasifika socio-cultural communities. And I situate myself in relation to this study as an emergent womanist (rather than a feminist) scholar, a Pasifika (Samoan) immigrant teacher educator and an academic currently working at a university in Auckland, a city arguably with the world's largest population of Polynesian peoples<sup>7</sup>.

### ***The Aim and Purpose of the Research***

The overall aims of this research are:

- To understand how key entities have come to know and apply terms such as diversity in education, and Pasifika education
- To determine the strengths and weaknesses of current and alternative perspectives
- To contribute to the development of new, more transformative ways of understanding these terms, particularly Pasifika education

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<sup>7</sup> MPIA, <http://www.mpia.govt.nz/pacific-peoples-in-new-zealand/>

A key indicator of the achievement of these aims is the development of explanations (even theories) that are insightful. According to Mintzberg (2005, p.361)

Theory is insightful when it surprises, when it allows us to see profoundly, imaginatively, unconventionally into phenomena we thought we understood...No matter how accepted eventually, theory is of no use unless it initially surprises- that is, changes perceptions.

The research framework is the crucial means to achieving such ends. This study is set within a deconstructivist frame. It draws on an “expanded view” (Noddings, 2007, p.59) of analytic philosophy as well as what Bacchi (2005, p.199) describes as “the analysis of discourse tradition”. This theoretical framework enabled a series of analyses (each one tied to one or other of the research questions), which in turn established a rich body of inputs from which to theorise.

The overall purpose of the research is for new insights and ideas to inform the decision-making educators, policy makers and researchers do at different levels of the New Zealand education system – particularly work relating to policy development and professional learning and development (PLD) programmes that target Pasifika learners and communities.

### ***The Research Questions***

The research questions that have been developed for this study are of a philosophical nature. They have been informed to an extent by analytic philosophy. Analytic philosophy emerged in education in the late 1950s and was considerably prominent through to the 1970s. According to Noddings (2007), an important focus was analysis of educational language and concepts based on a belief that “ordinary language held a great treasure of meanings as yet unrealised because it had not yet been analysed” (p.44). In addition to uncovering meanings that were not apparent or obvious such analyses bring to light errors in conception and attempt to establish “limits on appropriate use” (Noddings, 2007, p. 47).

According to R.S. Peters (1973, p.11), in order to “... exhibit the approach of the analytical philosopher” the nature of the questions, as methodological tools, are of considerable importance. He stated (1973, p.27) “Philosophy, as I understand it, is concerned mainly with the questions, ‘What do you mean?’ and ‘How do you know?’”

Peters called such questions second-order questions. It can be inferred, therefore, that first order questions are in the vein of “What IS...?” Hence, for example, ‘What is education?’ According to Ninnes and Mehta (2004, p.x), Noddings (1984) argues that “... to engage in caring for ideas we must be free to pursue these ideas wherever they lead ... that when presented with some kind of new conceptualisation, if we care about ideas, we can ask not just “what does it mean” but “what shall I do?” This study has interpreted this to mean that if one cares or is committed to the ideas one has actively sought and examined then new-found knowledge, or enhanced understanding resulting from the pursuit of first order and second order questions, should obligate one to consider some kind of follow-up action relating to the new-found knowledge.

Three sets of research questions that arise from this way of thinking follow:

***RQ1: What does diversity in education mean?***

- What does diversity mean to the Ministry of Education of New Zealand?
- What does diversity mean (or appear to mean) to other entities and educators?

***RQ2: What does Pacific/Pasifika education mean?***

- What does Pacific/Pasifika mean to the Ministry of Education of New Zealand?
- What does Pacific/Pasifika mean to Pasifika peoples?
- What does Pacific/Pasifika mean to Pasifika educators in general and Pacific/Pasifika women educators in particular?

Following on from these questions:

***RQ3: Now that we know, what do we do?***

- What theorisations and recommendations can be made in relation to the outcomes of Research Question One and Research Question Two?

In other words, what should educators, policy makers and researchers, particularly those with responsibilities relating to planning and directing education within Aotearoa New Zealand, do with new knowledge and understanding about discourses of diversity and Pasifika education?

Pacific/Pasifika women educators became a specific focus in the study for a pragmatic reason. From the literature it soon became apparent that more Pacific and Pasifika women than Pacific or Pasifika men have published reflections of their personal and professional experiences with formal education. These gender-specific sources of the meaning of education to Pacific/Pasifika educators led to the analysis of the collective experiences of Pacific /Pasifika women.

***The Research Method***

Mintzberg argues that “the creation of new theories or at least the significant adaptation of old ones” (2005, p.7) is an inductive process through which new insights emerge. He presents a number of propositions for theory development, one of which relates to the ability to “connect and disconnect” (2005, p.17). He explains,

... to develop good theory you have to connect and disconnect. In other words, you have to get as close to the phenomena as possible in digging out the inputs (data, stories and lots more), but then be able to step back to make something interesting out of them.

Too connected and you risk getting co-opted by the phenomenon ...  
Researchers have to be able to step back.

But too disconnected and you cannot develop interesting theory either  
(2005, p.17).

In order to make these all-important connections, Mintzberg argues that the research method needs to be “simple, direct and straightforward” (2005,

p.19). The steps involved in theory development are deceptively simple but by no means linear: observe, describe, study closely, speculate then invent or create a new explanation (or theory).

The methods employed in this study, therefore, are simple, direct and straightforward. An extensive documentary review was undertaken which drew on the following sources:

- National policy statements and reports by state agencies and transnational organisations, easily accessible in the public domain via the internet
- Academic publications in the form of book chapters, journal articles and theses, accessible via university libraries and electronic data bases; and
- Authored and co-authored unpublished submissions and personal narratives.

The theoretical framework provided the lens with which to 'study closely' (analyse) and then 'speculate' (theorise) to reveal new insights. It also provided the rationale for the way the various analyses were carried out.

The theoretical framework was redeveloped several times to make it as effective as possible for promoting the clarity of thought (or intellectual rigour) that was needed for what Mintzberg calls the *creation* (rather than the discovery) of theory; as he states, "We don't discover theory – we create it" (2005, p.4). He contends that such an approach to the development of theory involves the human dimension of imagination, insight and discovery and vehemently argues that the problem with "bureaucratic research [is that] ... it seeks to factor out the human dimension .... [and confuses] ... rigor with relevance and deduction with induction" (2005, p.5). To Mintzberg, the consequence of being overly preoccupied with methodological rigor is that it "gets in the way of relevance" as "People too concerned about doing their research correctly often fail to do it insightfully" (2005, p.4). Theoretically-based research, as he understands it, is therefore the result of idiosyncratic effort, and its products are the invention of a creative mind, informed by rich

speculation (Mintzberg, 2005, p.5). This is the type of process and product that this study aspires to achieve by way of the overall research method.

Despite the “profound intellectual challenge” (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p.27) inherent in developing a theoretical thesis, my prior knowledge and experiences as an educator have stood me in good stead– for, according to Rudestam and Newton,

If you know an *area* of inquiry inside out and are intimately familiar with the issues and controversies in the field, you have the chance to contribute a new theory (2007, p.27, emphasis added)

As an educator within New Zealand, I have held a number of different roles and responsibilities. First, I was a secondary school teacher and textbook writer. Then I became a university tutor and lecturer. At present, I am an academic, researcher and a teacher educator. These experiences, built up over a period of sixteen years, have resulted in implicit and deeply embedded knowledge and understandings. I have participated on Ministry of Education (MOE) advisory and reference groups supporting Ministry-funded initiatives targeting Pasifika learners and their teachers, as well as worked on MOE-funded research contracts. I currently teach courses for under-graduate and graduate programmes in Pasifika education issues and diversity in education.

In addition, I am a migrant from Samoa, but “my children, nieces and nephews were born and raised in this country. Not surprisingly, I have a vested personal interest in the education of Pacific peoples within Aotearoa New Zealand” (Samu, 2010, p.1). My other roles, within the community sphere or private domain (Bullivant, 1981) position me within the lived world as a daughter, parent, wife, aunt, sister and church youth leader – roles located within a strong Samoan extended family network, and a highly organised church community.

### ***Thesis Structure***

The overall thesis is organised into five themed parts, each of which contains chapters that serve a similar, overall purpose. The themes draw on

stratigraphy, the geological science of the study of rock layering, or stratification. The idea of studying layers of material (each holding possible clues or evidence of new knowledge and understandings) led to stratigraphy as a key concept in modern archaeological theory and practice. Two of the main theorists used in this study have used simple metaphoric images from archaeology/stratigraphy to strengthen their explanations. Take for example Jane Roland Martin – she likened her investigation of women within the academy to a “philosophical expedition” (2000, p.21) which took place “across the academy’s terrain” (2000, p.xxiii). Over a decade later, she described that she had learned about “the deep structure of educational thought” was a consequence of “... a systematic rendering of the findings I unearthed on my many archaeological expeditions” (2011, p.2). Michel Foucault (1972), in his post-structuralist approach to the historical analyses of ideas, uses terms such as surface, strata, depth and rupture to explain that deep understanding would require identifying layers of meaning underneath what is known and obvious at the surface of (presumably) experience.

Part 1 is entitled ‘The Landscape’, and consists of this introductory chapter, Chapter One. Its purpose is to succinctly map out the key features of the study. Part 2 is entitled ‘Excavation Tools’, and consists of Chapters Two and Three. These chapters describe and discuss the conceptions and theories that inform and shape the interpretative framework that guides the deep, inductive process involved in this study. Part 3 is entitled ‘Examining the Surface Features’. It focuses on the level of national education policy within which the discourses of diversity and Pasifika education are embedded – it is made up of Chapters Four, Five and Six. Part 4 is entitled ‘Exploring Strata, Seams and Ruptures’, and focuses on the lived experience of Pacific/Pasifika women at different levels and settings (including time and space). Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine are located in this section. The last chapter (Chapter Ten) is located within Part 5, entitled ‘Breakthroughs’. This is where the conclusions and recommendations for the work of educators, researchers and policy-makers are presented and discussed.

The individual chapters are briefly described as follows:



Chapter Two presents a backstory to the research problem by theorising the author's experiences as education encounters. This is in keeping with Martin's (2011) broad theory of education and key ideas about education as encounter. The context of the study is then theorised by using Foucault's (1972) views relating to the historical analysis of ideas and thought, particularly the idea of context as a product of discontinuity. The chapter also introduces and examines the methodology of auto-ethnography in order to deepen the validation and legitimation of personal experience as empirical material in the study.

Chapter Three delves in more depth and detail into the work of Jane Roland Martin, with its foundations in analytical philosophy. It also examines approaches to the theorisation of discourses. It is this composite framework that provides the connective tissue between the various analyses and creates space for other analytical lenses to be incorporated and applied as needed.

Chapter Four addresses the question, *what does diversity in education mean?* by identifying and discussing the diversity dilemma. In doing so it explores the plethora of discourses and discursive formations that relate to diversity in the context of formal education. Consideration is given to the socio-historical-political context from which these discursive formations have emerged through an analysis of critiques of the pre-revision New Zealand school curriculum. It also compares selected issues and concerns with the revised, mandated school curriculum (MOE, 2007). Such an analysis provides a means to an end – the 'end' being an analysis of the Ministry of Education's strategic efforts to build an education system that is responsive to "the challenges of our times" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.4). The perspective of the analysis is one of socio-cultural construction: curriculum is a site of cultural politics (Apple, 1990; 1996) and, in New Zealand's case, strongly influenced by specific neo-liberal articulations of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Chapter Five addresses the research question, *what does Pasifika education mean to the New Zealand Ministry of Education?* It endeavours to establish

how the Ministry of Education defines and uses the term 'Pasifika education'. National education policies and statements are examined in order to identify the national policy framework for Pasifika education. The discourses relating to Pasifika peoples, their development and role of education, as provided by the state across all sectors, are analysed.

Research is a significant activity of the Ministry of Education, particularly contract research. Included in this analysis are Ministry of Education publications relating to Pasifika education research. These products are intended to inform and shape the Ministry's own work and activities in relation of the education of Pasifika peoples across the early-childhood, compulsory schooling and tertiary education sectors.

Chapter Six explores the question, *what does education mean to Pacific peoples?* It presents a contrasting perspective to the predominantly neoliberal perspective of globalisation and the knowledge economy (explored in Chapters 4 and 5). This macro-level, contextual perspective is an influential theorisation of the value and purpose of formal education from the perspective of Pacific peoples (specifically scholars and lead educators). These notions of Pacific education emerged from collective conceptualising and theorising by educators within the Pacific Region in 2001, and became known as the Re-Thinking Pacific Education Project (Institute of Education, 2002). The fundamental concerns for these Pacific nation educators have, at a general level, much in common with those working for the education and development of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand.

Chapter Seven outlines both the process and outcomes of theorising in response to the question, *what does Pacific education mean to Pacific people, particularly Pacific women?* Reflective narratives written by Pacific/Pasifika peoples about experiences with formal education were located and formed the data for analysis. Interestingly, in the search for suitable data it became apparent that the majority contained the voices of women. Reflective narratives of Pacific/Pasifika men (and boys) within education research, as well as published narrative accounts in wider media, appears to be very

limited in both the Pacific region and the metropolitan centres of the Pacific Rim, where Pasifika communities have become well-established.

Chapter Eight contains three narratives or stories, each of which incorporates a reflective analysis about learning. The analyses are based on my experiences – and rely methodologically on auto-ethnography. Each story represents an attempt to carefully identify and think through “the social factors that operate in the constitution of individual experience” (Dewey, 1938, p.21) where the individual is myself, and the dominant voice I use for personal theorising (Stone, 1992) is not a philosopher’s voice, or a voice speaking esoterically. Rather, it is the voice of someone who has not forgotten the “world of real things” (Mintzberg, 2005, p.365). The education encounters that each story is based upon were pivotal in shaping my current situated role as a Pasifika educator and researcher.

Chapter Nine is the third and final case, and examines the experiences of an academic grouping of Pasifika women. A Faculty of Education (FOE) - the product of the amalgamation of a College of Education with a University - provides the setting for the analysis. Kainga Pasifika is a collective comprising Pacific heritage (that is, Pasifika) academic women staff. Since its inception, the Kainga has developed and maintained distinctive workplace philosophies, actions and approaches as a result of collective efforts to (i) respond, over time, to structural changes; and (ii) to participate, as teacher educators, in the process of becoming university teachers and researchers (or academics). The Kainga’s experiences, as empirical data are analysed as the main components of a community of practice. This analysis cast light on the meaning of education for this specific group of Pacific women (with socio-political identities as Pasifika women in the academe), in addition to the explicit and *implicit* meaning of Pacific/Pasifika education to the faculty of education within which they are employed as academics.

Chapter Ten is made up of two sections. The first addresses the question: “*And now that we know, what do we do?*” by presenting suggestions and recommendations for practice – specifically the practice of policymaking; the

development and delivery of professional learning and development programmes; and conducting ethical, principled research. The second section summarises and discusses the new theorisations that have emerged from the analyses carried out in the study. It also identifies and discusses the counter-discourses that were developed through some of the analyses. The discussions within both sections articulate the conclusions of the study.

## 2. Excavation Tools

*These tools have enabled workers in the historical field to distinguish various sedimentary strata; linear successions, which for so long had been the object of research, have given way to discoveries in depth.*

*Michel Foucault, 1972, p. 3*

## **Chapter Two**

### **Theorising the Problem, Education, Context and Experience**

The overall purpose of this chapter is to theorise three key components of the study. These components are: the research problem; the philosophy of education that shapes the study; and the multi-layered context within which the research problem is enacted.

First of all, the chapter provides more background to the research problem. This description is organised and presented as a backstory that is based on two work-related experiences, theorised as 'educational encounters'. After discussion of the backstory, Jane Roland Martin's (2011) theory of 'education as encounter' is discussed in more depth and detail. She argues that her theory does not "redefine education", rather, it "reclaims the broad sense of the word" (2013, p.110).

In Martin's theory, education is not solely an intentional activity, carried out by institutions. Instead, education is conceptualised broadly, as a landscape widened to include and value a co-extensive relationship between education and learning; the recognition that culture "is a fundamental part or element of the process we call education" (p.109) and where "the distinction between socialisation and education" is blurred (p.110). Her theory validates experiences that are external to formal institutions and settings (including those which are unplanned, unintentional) and rationalises how some of these are educational.

Following the discussion and critique of 'education as encounter', the overall context of the study is delineated, specified and theorised. Foucault's (1972) ideas regarding the historical analysis of ideas and thought provide a useful abstraction for different layers of potential analysis (multiple strata). I have interpreted these to include micro-level layers of personal, professional and scholarly experiences, located deep below the 'surface' where the manifestations of the research problem are more obvious (e.g. in government

policy). In order to validate and legitimise such experiences, I draw on auto-ethnography as a research methodology. This is discussed in detail in the final section of this chapter.

### ***Theorising the Research Problem***

Experience, particularly experience that results in learning, is understood and applied here in terms of Jane Roland Martin's (2011, 2013) ideas about experience and education. Her theory of 'education as encounter' "holds that education only occurs when there is an encounter between an individual and a culture in which one or more of the individual's capacities and one or more items of a culture's stock become yoked together..."(Martin, 2011, pp.16, 17). Martin argues that what becomes apparent is that both parties undergo change and "individual learning and cultural transmission are the two sides of a single coin" (Martin, 2013, p.110). The theory of education that Martin presents (and from which 'education as encounter' emerges) is very broad – so broad, according to one critic, "that there's no longer any difference between education and socialisation" (Thayer-Bacon, 2013, p.102). A robust discussion and critique of Martin's ideas will be presented shortly; suffice at this stage is to make clear that Martin's 'education as encounter' underlies the backstory and provides the foundation on which this thesis' research problem is built.

Martin states that the "theory of encounter recognises that large-scale changes can have small beginnings" (2011, p.16). This backstory shares two personal experiences to illustrate how my concerns relating to the use of the terms diversity and Pasifika education emerged from within my immediate professional settings. These experiences (as small beginnings) resulted in persistent perplexities and the consequent desire to make sense of them.

#### ***Educative Encounter One***

In 2003 I was invited to present a keynote address at the annual conference of the New Zealand Federation of Social Studies Associations. It was published a year later (Samu, 2004a). The theme of the conference was

explicit in its suggestion that teachers and educators in social studies hold a collective perspective of the world in which we live and interact. Preparing the keynote to respond to the conference theme provided me with my first real opportunity to think deeply and start to unpack (albeit, very tentatively) the notions of diversity and Pasifika in the context of education practice in this curriculum area. In my keynote address I surmised

As teachers of social studies, we recognise that we play a key role in helping our students to develop knowledge and understanding about people - particularly knowledge about people (and places) that are culturally and socially different to us. If we think about the overall aim of our social studies curriculum statement, it makes sense that an improved knowledge and understanding of those who are culturally different (to ourselves) can only be a positive contribution to the development of citizenship within a society as diverse as Aotearoa New Zealand.

But I wonder - as social studies teachers, is it possible that we operate on assumptions regarding our relative abilities (as social studies teachers) to educate about 'diversity' and 'difference'? On the one hand we might 'see the world' in a shared way – after all, we teach social studies. Ours is a unique and distinct discipline. We have battled for its legitimacy as a subject in the school curriculum. Our curriculum statement is not so new anymore – we have trialled, it, we have tested it, some of us are now questioning and challenging it in new and intriguing ways.

However, if we examine what this means (i.e. look at where we are standing) closely, and critically, we may find that we are not as unified, as social studies educators, in our perspectives as we thought. We may find that we as a collective group have multiple ways of seeing the world because our perspectives are informed and shaped by a multiplicity of specific factors (Samu, 2004, p.8).

I argued that teachers' and educators' perspectives on the purpose of social studies are shaped by personal factors such as one's social status, culture and ethnicity; the level and type of formal education one has had; the type of pre-service or initial teacher education programme one experienced, as well as when (and where) one trained; one's professional experiences and the research and theories about diversity and education one has had the opportunity to explore. In my keynote address I made the following comment



to illustrate how such factors could synthesise and inform a personal perspective or outlook.

Because I see diversity through a Samoan lens at times, then 'diversity' becomes a comparison of the relative cultural differences between me, mine and others. Sometimes, without being fully aware of it and as a consequence of the comparisons, I make judgements about what is better and what is not. When I 'see' through my ethnic perspective as a Pacific islander, I sometimes see the wider social world with suspicion. I make assumptions that I will be underestimated by the predominantly Pakeha or European society that I live within, because of the nature of generalisations and labels that have been used to describe Pasifika people (Samu, 2004, p.9)

The keynote presentation emphasised the importance of self-awareness, particularly when self-awareness is the product of critical self-reflection and introspection. I expressed the view that "an improved self-awareness ... leads to the ability to clearly articulate our perspectives. A systematic self-inventory of the factors that shape the way we see social and cultural diversity..." is important because the "... way we see influences the way we participate and the way we engage in diversity and education" (Samu, 2004, p.12). In other words, the way one sees and understands the heterogeneous context in which we work as educators leads to decisions (whether implicit or explicit) about how we respond, both professionally and personally.

### ***Educative Encounter Two***

A new Faculty of Education was established at the university, in which I am now employed, in 2004. The following year sub-committees were formed and assigned specific responsibilities to develop new teacher education qualifications. The work of each committee was to be informed by a number of key principles, drawn from the Ministry of Education's graduating teacher standards, one of which was 'diversity'. The work of each committee was compiled and draft teacher education qualifications were produced. Staff members throughout the Faculty were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the drafts. The following statement was made in a document that summarised this feedback:

Across all the submissions there was much comment about the definition of ‘diversity’ and *the need for debate and clarification* about what, how and where it is addressed in qualifications, particularly in terms of Pasifika. There was a strong view that Maori should be seen as separate from and not lost within ‘diversity’ (Consultation Feedback and Commentary, as cited in Samu, 2005, p.2; emphasis added).

This lack of clarity was not surprising, given the circumstances and parameters that each sub-committee was working within. I described these and the inevitable outcome in an unpublished position paper as follows:

The process of developing the draft teacher education qualifications for the new Faculty of Education was intense. The parameters, in which members of the various sub-committees were to work, were clear. They were to be guided by the principles of the graduate teacher outcomes and the academic/financial case for amalgamation. They were encouraged to be innovative and creative – to produce conceptual models and frameworks for teacher education qualifications that would reflect the ambitious vision and goals of the case. And they were to do it in little more than two months, within groups composed of representatives from both sides of the amalgamation, with precious little time to waste on getting to know each other and the relative merits of the approaches to teacher education in the programmes that they were currently sited within.

They persevered and they did what the Academic Programmes Group (APG) required of them in a timely fashion. Across all the sub-committees it can be argued that quality outcomes were achieved, despite the constraints of time, and the different institutional, ideological and philosophical perspectives involved ... Members of various committees did not necessarily share the same understandings of this key term [diversity]. But they forged on – not having the time to critique the term, nor the time to develop a shared understanding of it. Despite this, most of the sub-committees ensured that ‘it’ (diversity) was taken into account. There was at least a shared belief that ‘it’ was important, even if there was not a clear, shared idea of what ‘it’ was (Samu, 2005, pp. 1, 2).

### *Developing the Backstory*

In addition to the two encounters described above, other work-related encounters that took place between 2003 and 2005 stimulated similar disturbing feelings of perplexity. Examples include:

- i. My membership (2004-2006) of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) national Curriculum Reference group, an advisory group of stakeholder representatives that was privy to the developments relating to the revision of the school curriculum.
- ii. An invitation from the MOE to conduct a diversity audit of the October 5th 2005 draft of the revised curriculum statement.
- iii. In 2005, within the newly amalgamated Faculty of Education, I was assigned co-leadership and coordination of the writing group with responsibility for writing a compulsory Stage One course for the new Bachelor of Education (Primary, Early-Childhood) degrees. The course was entitled 'Diversity and Learning'.
- iv. In 2005, a request from the Academic Programmes Group (APG) of the newly amalgamated faculty to convene a group of colleagues and facilitate the development of 'diversity' as one of eleven principles for the conceptual model for the new teacher education undergraduate programmes.
- v. Still in 2005, a request from the school of Maori Education to act as convener for a Stage Three paper entitled 'Schooling and Ethnic Relations'.

Last, but by no means least, was the influence of the MOE's iterative Best Evidence Synthesis programme (BES). The first, highly influential synthesis *Quality Teaching for Diverse Learners in Schooling* (Alton-Lee, 2003) was released in mid-2003 with extensive promotion and intense dissemination across the compulsory education sector. In 2004 I was invited to be a member of the Best Evidence Synthesis Pasifika Educational Research Advisory Group, one of three advisory groups which contributed to the development of *Guidelines for Generating a Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (MOE, 2004a). In 2005, I was invited to join the advisory group for the

development of the social sciences BES, *Effective Pedagogy in the Social Sciences/ Tikanga a iwi BES* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008).

To fully understand the backstory, it is important to describe the broader context in which Encounter One and Encounter Two took place because various diversity discourse formations were appearing at national and institutional levels with what appeared to be a high stakes degree of urgency. It was a remarkable discursive shift from prior developments. In the late 1970s and 1980s, multicultural theories and ideologies were influential in shaping New Zealand's educational policy and practice (Coxon, Jenkins, Marshall & Massey, 1994; Jones, Marshall, Morris-Mathews, Smith & Smith, 1990; Samu, 1998). In the 1990s, educational policy on difference prioritised biculturalism. New Zealand was unique in the world in terms of the way it responded to its multicultural, multi-ethnic society (Samu, 1998, p.145). Education policy incorporated two models (biculturalism and multiculturalism) with the expressed belief that the development of biculturalism was a necessary precondition for the other (Irwin, 1989; Walker, 1980). This common-sense rationale considered that multiculturalism was only feasible when the two majority groups (Maori as Tangata Whenua<sup>8</sup> and Pakeha<sup>9</sup> as tauiwi<sup>10</sup>; and together as Treaty of Waitangi<sup>11</sup> partners) could come to terms with their biculturalism. This was described as an "official movement away from the ideal of multiculturalism towards an accommodation with the ideal of biculturalism" (Sharp, cited in Pearson, 1996, p.260).

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<sup>8</sup> 'Tangata Whenua': people of the land; those indigenous to a place

<sup>9</sup> Pakeha: In New Zealand, the Maori word 'Pakeha' refers to people of European heritage. It has become an identity marker for those of European heritage and ancestry who have strong personal ties to New Zealand.

<sup>10</sup> 'Tauiwi': visitors, new arrivals, immigrants

<sup>11</sup> The Treaty of Waitangi: New Zealand's founding document, signed in 1840 between many (but not all) Maori tribal groups and the British Crown intended as partnership. For further information see <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/treaty-of-waitangi>

Multiculturalism, however, continued to be an influential discourse within educational policy. According to *The Curriculum Framework* (MOE, 1993), the school curriculum would encourage

...students to understand and respect the different cultures which make up New Zealand society. It will ensure that the experiences, cultural traditions, histories and languages of all New Zealanders are recognised and valued (p.7).

The primary discourse about difference in national education policy (particularly curriculum) was undoubtedly one which foregrounded culture with biculturalism as the espoused vanguard (Samu, 1998). *The Curriculum Framework* (1993) was the blueprint for the curriculum statements developed and released throughout the 1990s and into the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The time period of 2003 to 2005 was therefore a period of change at a number of levels – at the level of national education policy; the level of institutional teacher education; and even schooling. My own involvement in these developments created the kind of perceptual space which made the norm problematic, and created the desire for further examination. This activated skills and capacities I had developed via earlier research experiences including post-graduate study. A series of educational encounters (Martin, 2011) began - a series instrumental in setting me on course towards the much larger, far more intensive education encounter that is represented by this doctoral study.

With reference to Encounter One: Accepting the invitation to present the 2003 keynote address and preparing it for publication in 2004 forced me to slow down, disengage from other commitments and to ponder the implications of my – and others'- lack of conceptual clarity on notions of 'difference' in relation to practice - with particular respect to social studies teachers' practice. It was a challenge to demonstrate the relevance (and importance) of taking a more critical approach to one's understandings and use of concepts relating to social and cultural difference. In the process of

preparing to 'speak' to practitioners, in order to demonstrate the relationship between self-awareness and informed decision-making (Samu, 2004, p.12), I realised I held conceptions limited by an emphasis on cultural difference. The discourses of 'difference' that the Ministry of Education was emphasising included characteristics such as ethnicity (rather than culture), socio-economic background, home language, gender and sexuality, and special needs which included disability and giftedness (Alton-Lee, 2004, p.21). The keynote argued that a focus on culture alone (and a simplistic one at that) was a serious limiting factor on our perspective as social studies teachers and educators.

As I worked on turning the keynote into a publication I realised that my conceptual understandings needed review and that my conceptual framework was no longer adequate for making sense of discourses of difference emerging with such pervasiveness within other education arenas (such as teacher education and schooling).

With reference to Encounter Two: in becoming involved with the development of a new set of teacher education qualifications it readily became apparent that a critical discussion of diversity *before* the sub-committees began their work drafting a framework for the new qualifications would have been useful. Although it was too late for the work of the sub-committees, I offered to write a position paper as an initial examination of diversity and education. The process of preparing this document was an opportunity to examine, in depth and in detail, my concerns about the lack of clarity surrounding meaning of diversity. This was a shared concern in that the lack of clarity was also identified in the faculty-wide feedback report on the draft teacher qualifications framework.

Through this process of writing, I learned more about the expectations the MOE held for teacher educators and teacher education. According to the MOE's draft *Strategy for Preparing Teacher Education Graduates to Teach Diverse Learners Effectively* (MOE 2004c), teacher educators and student teachers need to recognise and accept that "challenging attitudes,

assumptions and beliefs about ethnicity and ability are fundamental programme components” (Ministry of Education, 2004c, p.3). Interestingly, the draft strategy also stated that it “is imperative that initial teacher education challenges teachers to inquire into their own culture to create a pathway to understanding and valuing other cultures and learners” (2004, p.4). This prompted the question: “In order to effectively guide pre-service teachers in such journeys of self-examination, do we as members of the Faculty have the capacity for such self-examination and reflection ourselves?” (Samu, 2005, p.16).

This section has discussed, in general and through two illustrative examples, the nature of educational encounters that occurred to and around me between 2003 and 2005. These encounters provide the broader context and explain the root of the thinking that culminated in the formal proposal for this study (Samu, 2009). It is important to note, however, that not all encounters (or experiences) are educational (Martin, 2011) or ‘educative’ (Dewey, 1938). In the editorial foreword to Dewey’s essay, *Experience and Education* (1938), Hall-Quest (1938) provides this description of the nature of those experiences that are educational.

Scientific study leads to and enlarges experience, but this experience is educative only to the degree that it rests upon a continuity of significant knowledge and to the degree that this knowledge modifies or “modulates” the learner’s outlook, attitude and skill. The true learning situation, then, has longitudinal and lateral dimensions. It is both historical and social. It is orderly and dynamic (p.11).

The research problem that drives this study has longitudinal as well as lateral dimensions. It is both historical and social. Addressing it has required the sifting and sorting of experience to identify and theorise those experiences which were educational and in effect steered this study in its current direction. It is a process which, more often than not, was eclectic and hectic (dynamic) than systematic and streamlined (orderly).

Whether theorised as ‘educational encounter’ (Martin, 2011) or as ‘educative experience’ (Dewey, 1938), this thesis is a response to problems and issues

identified through experience – *my* experiences. These experiences are, therefore, firmly situated in relation to myself as a Pasifika (Samoan) immigrant, teacher educator, researcher and academic currently working at a university in Auckland, the self-professed largest Polynesian city in the world<sup>12</sup>.

### ***Theorising Education as Encounter***

Philosopher of education Jane Roland Martin, presents a philosophical theory that draws the individual and wider society together to demonstrate how “culture, encounter and change are implicated in education from the start” (2011, p.16). This prompted me to ask three questions which shape the next section of this chapter. What does she mean by ‘culture’? What does she mean by ‘encounter’? What does she mean by ‘change’?

#### ***‘The Culture’ and Cultural Transmission***

A commonly held perception about the purpose of education is that it will bring about certain favourable changes in an individual. For example, when parents think about education, they take “the standpoint of the individual” (Martin, 2013, p.109), and ask questions along the lines of ‘What is my child learning at school? Is he/she happy? Is the quality of the education he/she is receiving of a high standard?’ Educators tend to have a similar focus – be it within the early-childhood sector, schooling or tertiary education and training - concentrating on the education of individual learners or groups of learners; for example, special needs, Pasifika, Maori or boys . Parents and educators tend not to think about education of the culture. In her theory of ‘education as encounter’, however, Martin systematically examines education from the perspective “of the culture” (Martin, 2013, p.109), and theorises how individuals and the culture are educated, concurrently. Her theory demonstrates that individuals cannot and should not be abstracted from the culture, because individual learning and cultural transmission are inextricably bound together (2011).

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<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.aucklandnz.com/about/people-of-auckland>



Martin acknowledges that “most philosophers of education today agree that education is deeply influenced by culture” (2013, p.109). For her, however, culture is not a powerful influence *external* to education. Rather, it is “a fundamental part or element of the process ...” (2013, p.109). Martin’s theory of education as encounter,

...shows that the encounter is between an individual and a culture, that in the encounter some item of a culture’s stock and some capacity of an individual become yoked together, and that as a result both parties to the encounter change. It also reveals that the changes in either party can be large or small, and that even the smallest ones can turn into the radical transformations that give shape to human lives and cultures (2013, p.109).

The notion of cultural stock (which Martin first introduced in her work in 2002) can be considered in terms of assets and liabilities or cultural wealth and cultural liabilities. Examples of assets can include gardening skills, language fluency, household arts and crafts. Examples of liabilities might include racism, illiteracy and violence. Education leads to changes in culture through the generational transmission of cultural stock among a culture’s members. A vitally important question that Martin asks is, “How do we maximise the transmission of cultural wealth and at the same time minimise the transmission of cultural liabilities?” (2002, p.3).

### ***Change, Education and Educational Agents***

Let us now look more closely at what Martin describes as the yoking together of an individual’s capacities with items of cultural stock. This ‘yoking’ can be either positive or negative, depending on whether the cultural stock is a liability or an asset and the limits of the individual’s capacities. Education, therefore, leads to concurrent change in individuals *and* to the larger group (the culture). In conceiving that individual learning and cultural transmission are inextricably linked, Martin (2011) theorises that “... the assets and liabilities of a culture’s stock are the creations of individuals, whether acting singly or collectively” (2011, p.13). Take for example the capacity of an imagined individual student to engage with higher education.

The student's capacities are yoked to a degree programme. The years of diligent study, result in the award of a degree. The experience of learning has already led to a number of positive personal and professional transformations such as strong identity as a successful scholar, and improved self-efficacy. By completing the qualification, the culture (wider society, or the main cultural group the student identifies with) and its stock will be enhanced by the acquisition of another highly qualified member. This may appear at first to be a simplistic line of reasoning, but Martin argues that whilst other philosophers (such as Plato, Rousseau and Dewey) valued and gave weight to "the cultural perspective", she states that

... neither those three greats nor anyone else to my knowledge has spelled out the cultural standpoint in detail or shown how to join the seemingly disparate individual and cultural perspectives ... the theory of education as encounter makes visible not only that the two parties to the interaction undergo change, but also that individual learning and cultural transmission are the two sides of a single coin (Martin, 2013, pp109, 110).

In the example I used to demonstrate the yoking of individual capacity and cultural stock, it is the degree programme (which includes the teaching and tutoring team) which facilitated or enabled the connection. The theory of education as encounter requires an educational agent for the coupling (Martin, 2011). Martin uses the term educational agent because teachers are not the only possible educational agents, and the settings for education and learning are not exclusive to formal education institutions and intentional, specifically designed experiences. There are other sources from which to learn from, and not all of them need to be human. Sources which may have the ability to harness individual capacity with cultural stock include:

...all that is orally transmitted by humans as well as that is written by humans such as books, plays, movies, music lyrics, the internet; and other ways that our ancestors find to communicate with us, as well as other sources beyond the realm of human beings such as nature, including flora and fauna (Thayer-Bacon, 2013, p.103).

Another source is oneself – there may be occasions when we teach ourselves thereby becoming an educational agent and a learner concurrently.

### *Encounters*

The terrain of Martin's educational theory is undoubtedly broad due to its inclusivity of individuals' experiences, which are unintentional, unplanned, unscheduled and unanticipated. By conceiving education broadly as experience that results in changes to individuals' capacities and gains (or losses) in cultural stock, Martin posits that such shifts also lead to changes in the group culture, no matter how small. Martin calls experiences that lead to such change as 'encounters'. As she explains, "... learning occurs, moreover, in every nook or cranny of human society" (2013, p.110), not just within state-funded institutions of education and learning.

*Figure 2: Macro-level Influences and the Relational Context*

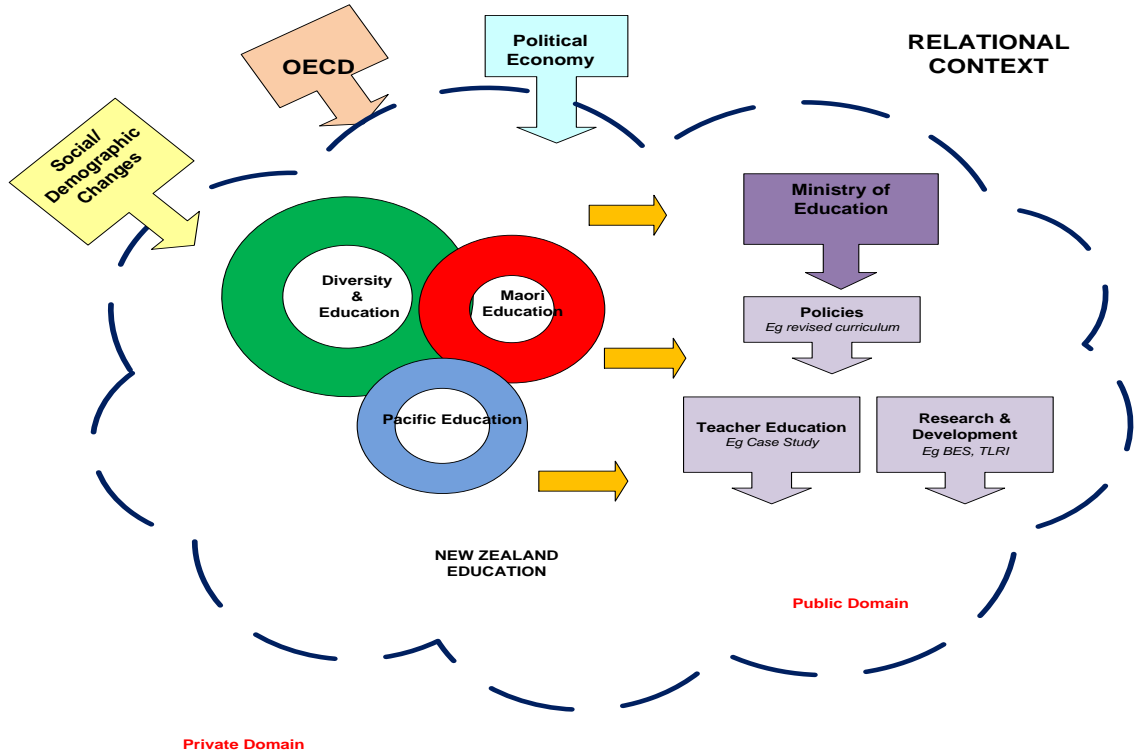


Figure 3, my second iteration of the relational context, illustrates how the selected discourses for analysis (diversity in education and Pasifika education) are situated within policy statements such as *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007) and *The Pasifika Education Plan, 2013-2017* (MOE, 2012); as well as research and professional development programmes about effective pedagogy (such as the BES programme). Although Pasifika is a distinctive discourse for the MOE (given that it has a separate, specific education policy framework), arguably the overarching or dominant discourse is ‘diversity’. This conception of context positions Pasifika as separate, yet alongside diversity (refer Figure 3). Notwithstanding, an additional element must also be recognised - that is, the relationship between Pasifika and Maori education discourses both within and beyond the formal education system. A close examination of these discourses and the relative

effect or relationship with each other is beyond the scope of this study – although a somewhat preliminary exploration is made in Chapter Six. It certainly warrants further examination.

***The Conceptual Shift to Context as a Product of Discontinuity:***

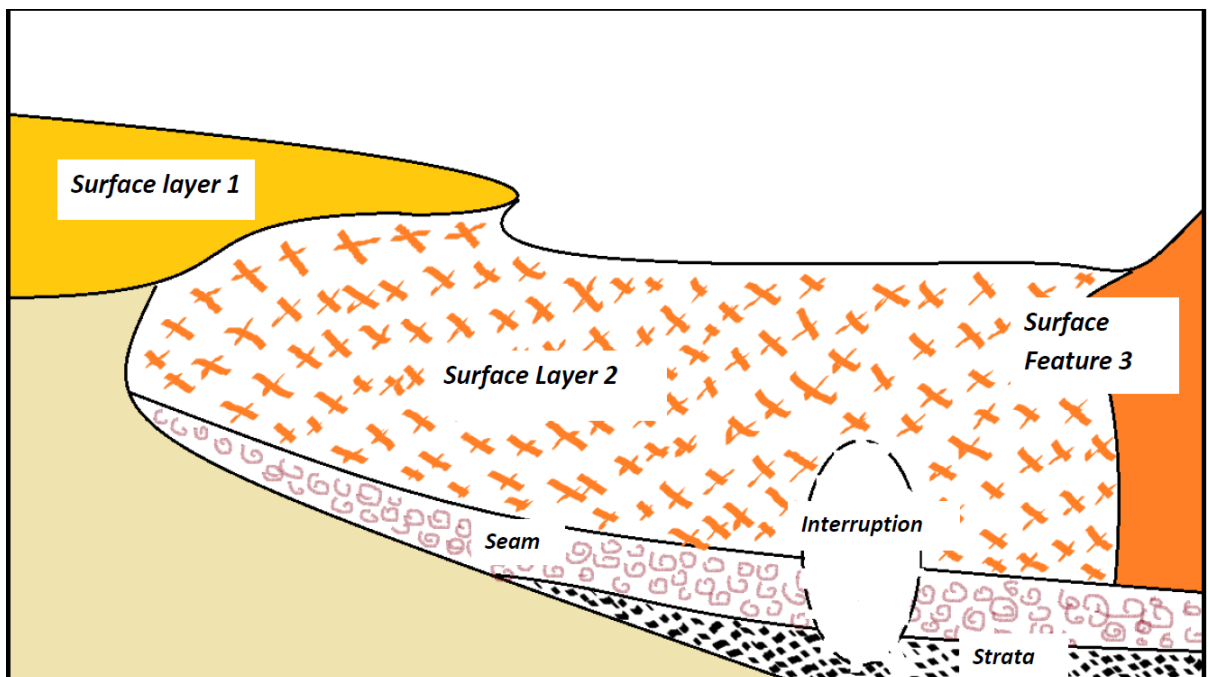
Establishing the relational context was, in effect, my concerted attempt to delineate the terrain for the research problem and, in doing so, to establish the scope of the six analyses that are presented in Chapters Four to Nine. This conception of the education context of Aotearoa New Zealand, however, remained simplistic, awkward and unwieldy. I was trying to construct context as a set of dynamic inter-relationships across a number of dimensions (including time and space) and, in my effort to do so, I lost sight of the fact that the essence of the research problem was to trace, explore and examine the development of particular ideas, concepts and the underlying knowledge and understandings. To address this I turned to my understanding of Foucault's ideas relating to methods of historical analysis of ideas (1972) in order to develop and present a better conception.

Foucault's ideas, as contained in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), enabled the recognition that the very process of establishing the limits and boundaries of the context involves more than descriptions. It involves making decisions about the elements or components that constitute the context; decisions relating to determining levels of study or analysis; and decisions about what to describe at different levels. It also involves deciding which methods are needed in order to describe and, more importantly, analyse data. There were important procedural matters and questions that needed to be considered and resolved. In terms of this study, some decision making seemed obvious - for example, identifying the level of national policy within which the discourses of diversity and Pasifika education originated or emerged. Given that responsibility for national policy rests with the MOE, the Ministry, as the systemic agent of change responsible for these developments, is the initial level at which the discourses under investigation are first documented. It was a "solid homogenous manifestation of a single or

collective mentality” (1972, p.4), and in being so, it could be termed as the surface level or surface layer of analysis.

Foucault referred to the tracing of ideas, or the study of rhetoric (through time and space), as the historical analysis of ideas. More specifically, he was concerned with how rhetoric could be studied and understood in relation to power and knowledge. He identified some of the complex tools, methods and processes that are involved in his conception of such analyses. Such tools come in the form of models, descriptions, accounts, quantitative analyses and so forth and have “enabled workers in the historical field to distinguish various sedimentary strata; linear successions ... ever more levels of analysis have been established: each has its own peculiar discontinuities and patterns” (1972, p.3). Two important points are drawn from this statement. The first is that the identification of layers (or levels) of possible analysis are inevitable and, given his use of the metaphors of ‘sediment’ and ‘strata’, this signals what one can expect in terms of the nature of those layers. The second point is that each layer is of analytical interest because of what he terms ‘discontinuity’.

*Figure 3: Discontinuity as Product and Process*



One can push the archaeological theme that Foucault used even further. For example, if we return to stratigraphy (a discipline that concerns itself with geological and archaeological layers), strata are defined as layers of deposited material. The material within each layer features internally consistent characteristics making it distinctive from other layers. Knowledge and understanding (for example, disciplinary knowledge) is generated, becomes established and accumulates over time, similar to the way sediments are deposited over time. Archaeology is a branch of anthropology involving the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artefacts<sup>13</sup> Modern excavation techniques are based on stratigraphic principles. Identifying the context of an archaeological find is important not only in order to draw conclusions about the site, but also to understand its nature and assess its spatial and temporal features. The archaeologist attempts to (i) establish whether there are other contexts (layers, strata) and (ii) to find out how they came to be created. The eventual 'picture' is one of archaeological stratification or a sequence of contexts (Harris, 1989). Contexts are distinguishable within a sequence because of the detectable traces of events or actions. These traces can take different forms – such as deposits (such as the back fill in a ditch), structures (for example walls) or even cuts (actions such as the removal of solid contexts) through earlier deposits. Finally, stratigraphic relationships are those which form between contexts in time.

When applied to the historical analysis of ideas, deep knowledge requires analysis of the surface, and identification of the stratigraphic sequence below. Some layers (or contexts) might be highly complex and reflect a broad set of experiences and interests (e.g. those of a significant or dominant group within society). Other layers may be of a more 'micro' level in that knowledge has (i) accumulated over a shorter period of time; (ii) is generated by a small minority group; and (iii) is of significance to that group and its members, but not necessarily known or valued in the same way by others beyond the

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<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/getinvolved/whatisarchaeology>

group. Layers or context may be even smaller being based on a family or the experiences of an individual.

The second point this section considers is the expectation that each layer is likely to have its own specific features or “its own peculiar discontinuities and patterns” (Foucault, 1972, p.3). Discontinuity stems from interruptions to the steady development and accumulation of knowledge. Interruptions come in different forms and levels which Foucault (1972, p.3) identifies as displacements, transformations, ruptures, thresholds, limits and series. Regardless of their status or nature, what eventuates is some form of change in the direction, development, and even nature, of knowledge. Knowledge is forced into a new phase or mode of development (Foucault, 1972, p.4). Such an event may leave ‘traces’ in specific layers (or context) or it results in the establishment of a whole new context in the stratigraphic sequence. Thus, identifying the contexts within the different sequences, and piecing together the stratigraphic relationships right through to the surface layers, requires a methodological ‘archaeological’ approach to find, identify, and understand the constituent parts of the past (Foucault, 1972, p.7).

How do these ideas relate to the research problem of this study? The discourses of diversity and diverse learners in the education system of New Zealand, in particular Pasifika learners and Pasifika education, are formal, officially and readily apparent within national policy statements and other MOE publications and reports (e.g. see MOE 2007; MOE 2012). As indicated, they became established (arguably entrenched) within the first five years of this century. While a traditional analyst’s gaze may remain at the surface – at the level of national policy making and implementation – applying Foucault’s perspective makes one aware of other levels and layers ‘below’ that should be taken into account.

In this case, Foucault’s ideas pulled my gaze below the surface level. I began to notice otherwise unseen discourses; ones that differed from the dominant surface discourses appearing in the education policy statements. The different educative encounters presented in the back story caused me to



become perplexed and my gaze became more critical. The existence of at least one other layer or level became apparent – a sub-surface layer, consisting broadly of educators (such as myself) expected to implement procedures established in response to policy. My critical gaze, and subsequent questions, was a consequence of identifying what Foucault might have referred to as an interruption beneath the surface layer.

Foucault went on to consider how one might develop appropriate conceptions to enable the discernment of discontinuity. He asked the question: “How is one to specify the different concepts that enable us to conceive of discontinuity (threshold, rupture, break, mutation, transformation)?” (Foucault, 1972, p.6).

Engagement with these ideas provided a gateway for me to develop a far more complex yet coherent conceptual framework: one that would not only articulate the context as *product*, but would also draw attention to the context as a *process*. In other words, in establishing the context, it then becomes an explicit tool in contextual creation. Describing, identifying, articulating and understanding is integral to the process of ‘discovery’ and construction of context.

So far, the study has introduced the research problem and has begun to lay down an argument to demonstrate how and why the discourses of Pasifika education and diversity, found at national policy level, are problematic. In moving away from the ‘surface’ of national policy and delving deeper into the different layers or ‘seams’ below, useful analyses based on small group or even individual experience, can be developed. Their utility is derived from a focus on personal theorising.

### ***Personal Theorising and the Study of (Personal) Experience***

Foucault contends that a consequence of studying the history of ideas and thought is that in the process of establishing an object of study, the discontinuity that drew one’s attention becomes displaced. It moves from

being an obstacle to a working concept, even an instrument of research, that illuminates the relationship such ideas have with power and knowledge (1972). I felt I needed to methodologically justify the inclusion of my experiences in order to objectify and then convert them into a research instrument (Foucault, 1972). I did not feel that theorising experiences as education encounters was sufficient, for some of the analyses in this study. I therefore turned to auto-ethnography in order to strengthen the conversion of experience to research data.

Lynda Stone (1992, p.19) explains that one way to consider teacher theorising is in terms of how teachers construct meaning about their work. Because much of this theorising “is directly practical” (in other words, related directly to their own professional experiences) she refers to it as “personal theorising”. In bringing a philosophic perspective to how teachers construct meaning about teaching, she focuses on the foundational meanings that teachers’ hold which implicitly influence teachers’ personal theorising (Stone, 1992, p.19). She introduces the concept of ‘meaning constructs’ and explains that they are

...our own personal constructs, were we to explore them, make sense of the broad time and culture in which we live. Metaphysically they tell us how we take and make the world...and what we mean by core values.... (Stone, 1992, p.21).

According to Stone, in order to change teachers’ practices, teachers’ meaning constructs need to be examined, understood and critiqued. If teachers’ shift and change their meaning constructs, then their practices will shift and change. Such a framework of “foundational and ideational structures” (Stone, 1992, p.21) is by no means unique to teachers. It can certainly be extended broadly in the education landscape and be inclusive of others endeavouring to give careful thought to their practice – such as myself. As previously indicated, as the researcher, this study has already drawn on several of my practical experiences and conceptualised these as education encounters for analysis and critically reflection. The inclusion of such experiences will occur again in this study -however, the voice (Stone, 1992) which presents and

reflects on these experiences in terms of personal theorising will differ in tenor. At times, it will be a voice filled with philosophic intent (such as 'education as encounter'). At other times it will be a more experiential researcher voice, using empirically-based information to support the personal theorising. Auto-ethnography is the methodological approach used to study personal experience in order to produce that type of information or data.

Although somewhat controversial as a methodology and rejected outright by some (Delamont, 2007), auto-ethnography is "a genre of writing and research that connects the personal to the cultural, placing the self within a social context" (Holt, 2003, p.19). It is a form of ethnographic writing that "involves highly personalised accounts where authors draw on their own experiences to extend understanding of a particular discipline of culture" (Holt, 2003, p.18). According to Ellis, Adams and Bochner, "Auto-ethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*)" (2011, p.1). The authors of auto-ethnographies prepare (that is write) personalised accounts of the research issue or problem and analyse, as empirical data, their own experiences.

Auto-ethnography has three significant features: it is qualitative; it is self-focused; and it is context conscious. It takes a systematic approach to data gathering, analysis and "interpretation about self and social phenomena involving self" (Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang, 2010, p.2). In being self-focused, the researcher is both the object and subject of study (avoiding egocentrism, narcissism and other extreme forms of self-preoccupation). The data gathered is primarily autobiographical in nature, socially constructed in ways that provide "a window through which the external world is understood" (Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang, 2010, p.3). Examples of such data include journal entries, reflections, photographs, year book profiles, conversations, letters, and most recently, status updates on Facebook, blogs, and emails.

Finally, auto-ethnography is context conscious. It “intends to connect self with others, self with the social, and self with the context” (Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang, 2010, p.3). The self is not examined in isolation from others – understanding self involves understanding self in relation to others, because there are others located in the context that self ‘inhabits’. The others could be people or the other could be an institution or organisation, and specific processes. Hernandez, Sancho, Creus & Montane (2010, p.4) explained that “adopting an auto-ethnographic perspective means interpreting and reconstructing significant experiences, and placing them in relation to the social and cultural discourses of our time”. In terms of the way context is theorised in this study, the outcomes of auto-ethnographic analysis can be expected to have implications at a number of shifting levels.

### ***Responding to Criticism***

Auto-ethnography is not without its critics. It is perceived by some as being on the boundaries of academic research because, unlike most qualitative research traditions, it has an exclusive reliance on the self for both data and analysis (Holt, 2003). The four most significant issues or criticisms of auto-ethnography (in relation to this study) are: the centrality of the self; its legitimacy as a method of social inquiry; the location of power; and the question of authority.

### **Why Self?**

Delamont, a sociologist, argues that “auto-ethnography is all experience, and is noticeably lacking in analytic outcome” (2007, pp.1-2). She rejects the notion of self as being both researcher and data source, expressing the view that “introspection is not an appropriate substitute for data collection” (p.2) particularly in terms of sociology, which is “an empirical discipline” charged with the responsibility to study “the social” (p.4). Ellis’ (2009) criticism comes more from a post-structuralist perspective, challenging the very notion of self. “The self is an illusion it’s unknowable. You need to problematise and destabilise the idea of the ‘real’ self, make it performative, show how the self is a social construction” (pp.371, 372).

Arguing in support of self as data source as well as researcher, Ellis contends that "... the self and other are intertwined and that you can't know one without the other" (2009, p.374). In other words, the study of self often results in an examination of others, those who interact directly with self, and those who indirectly influence self and self's experience; thus impacting on the context in which self is situated. Stories about self shed light on others - which could be "others of difference" or "others of opposition" (Ngunjiri et al., 2010, p.3) - as well as on the organisations and institutions that affect self and others, and self in relation to others. Indeed, with auto-ethnography, "... authors use their own experiences in a culture reflexively to look more deeply at *self-other interactions*" (Holt, 2003, p.19, emphasis added). The explicit purpose of using oneself and one's experiences is to study culture or features of the surrounding context.

#### What makes it valid?

Another feature that critics concern themselves with is verification relating to methods. There are potential issues relating to "the dual crisis of representation and legitimation" (Holt, 2003, p.19). English argued that "less endowed and insightful" researchers (in terms of their abilities to write) who attempt to use an ethnographic approach are at risk of producing studies that would not be scientific "because science is premised on replication as a form of verification" (2000, p.21). Issues and concerns regarding verification are essentially about traditional, established, even canonical expectations of what counts or is acceptable in terms of social science inquiry. In other words, "the scholarly obligations...to hypothesise, analyse, contextualise, and theorise" with rigour and objectivity (Ellis, 2009, p.371).

Ellis, Adams and Bochner's (2011) description of developments in social science research from the 1980s onwards indicates that scholars "... became increasingly troubled by social science's ontological, epistemological, and axiological limitations" (p.1). They acknowledge that while there are still researchers who strive to carry out their work in ways that attempt to be "neutral, impersonal and objective" (p.2), there is wide recognition and

acceptance that this type of research is difficult to achieve. A multitude of methodological approaches that recognise and are designed to be responsive to “subjectivity, emotionality and the researcher’s influence” (Ellis et al. 2011, p.2) or implicated-ness in all aspects of the research process have emerged, including auto-ethnography. Arguing in support of the legitimacy of auto-ethnography as a method of social inquiry, Ellis et al. state,

Auto-ethnography ... expands and opens up a wider lens on the world, eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research; this approach also helps us understand how the kinds of people we claim, or are perceived to be, influence interpretations of what we study, how we study it, and what we say about our topic (2011, p.2).

This approach privileges other ways of knowing and, in doing so, legitimates and validates them. With reference to Asher’s (2010) use of auto-ethnography in her research of minority women and leadership in the academy, she states that “I find this work of grappling rigorously with the nuances and complexities I encounter difficult and demanding because it pushes me to arrive at integrity between theory, lived experience, practice ... and scholarly writing” (2010, p.64). As she goes on to explain, “... rigorous autobiographical work ...like any rigorous research, actually – contributes to revealing and deconstructing the nuanced, context-specific, and at times, seemingly contradictory workings of race, class, gender, culture and nation” (p.65). Asher’s aspirations to integrity in her research resonate strongly with me. I fully recognise and appreciate the challenges posed by this study – the challenges related to making connections between different settings (and inherent relationships) across the public and private domains of the relational context. These are related to my varied roles as an active participant across the settings – made complex by my race/ethnicity (as Samoan), gender (a mature woman) and nationality (as immigrant citizen).

#### Where’s the power?

Another important criticism is the possibility of power imbalances between the researcher - auto-ethnographer - and the others with which the self is

inextricably intertwined through experience, be it with individuals, groups or an organisational entity. The auto-ethnographer, in telling (or writing) the story or narrative about the event or experience, has sole responsibility for constructing the other. Delmont (2007) has argued that this generates ethical issues: for example, did 'others' in the written experience, and their interactions with the self, give informed consent? And, if they are aware and have conceded to their involvement, to what extent can their identities be hidden? "Readers will always wish to read auto-ethnographies as authentic, and therefore 'true' account of the writer's life, and therefore the other actors will be, whatever disclaimers or statements about fictions are included, identifiable and identified" (Delamont, 2007, p.1). Moreover there is the researcher's power in relation to the reader of the research product, which again is related to the researcher's 'uncontested' power to represent how he or she 'sees'. The final product, the construction of the text or narrative, is very much in the researcher's hands.

Delamont also refers to the position of the auto-ethnographer as one in which the focus is "... on the powerful and not the powerless to whom we should be directing our sociological gaze" (2007, p.2), given that a person in such a position is more often than not, a person holding an academic salaried position within a university. She writes, "... 'we' are not interesting enough ... to be the subject matter of sociology ... our duty is to go out and research the classic texts of 2050 or 2090 – not sit in our homes focusing on ourselves" (2007, pp 4, 5). In direct response to this criticism, Asher asserts that,

... in contending that 'auto-ethnography focuses on the powerful and not the powerless (Delamont, 2007, p.2) she sets up another spurious binary. Some of us are both powerful and powerless: witness critical scholarship to date that engages the contradictions we encounter – within and without the academy- at the intersections of race, class, gender and nation. And, if women, peoples of colour, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) individuals, immigrants, and those who grapple with disabilities did not summon up the energy and courage to write about their experiences, struggles, and achievements, would not there be greater lacunae than currently exist in our knowledge today; especially in such areas of scholarship as feminist

studies, women's studies, gender studies, queer theory, multiculturalism and dis/ability studies? (2010, p. 65).

Asher's views have further resonance. She has clearly articulated the complexities which come into play when a researcher endeavours to ensure researcher voice and visibility – complexities related to context-specific decision-making power. Ensuring researcher voice and visibility involves revealing unique albeit subtle, even nuanced features of the lived experience of a researcher, which will shape his/her perspective and determine aspects of his/her 'voice'. And if that lived experience is one of power/powerlessness, of contradictions, this will become apparent or obvious. It therefore requires attention, analysis and consideration. It requires a sociological gaze.

#### By what authority?

The fourth and final criticism to identify, discuss and counter, relates to the authority of self, particularly in terms of the self's interactions with other/others – to repeat Ellis (2009, p.374), "... the self and other are intertwined and ... you can't know one without the other". Ethnographic research "... facilitates understanding of a culture for insiders and outsiders, and is created by (inductively) discerning patterns of cultural experience – repeated feelings, stories, and happenings – as evidenced by field notes, interviews and/or artefacts" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p.5). In this instance, the researcher is *the* insider. The ways that he/she is inter-twined with whoever, whatever (and however) within a specified socio-cultural context presumably becomes a source of new insight and knowledge about a culture. An important question then is: what qualifies that auto-ethnographer and her/his experiences, as an authoritative voice on said culture or social group? To what extent is an essentialist argument acceptable and satisfactory as a qualifier of authoritative voice? Buzard (2003) raises several additional questions. He questions, for example, the feasibility that "... every insider enjoys equal access to the shared mentality of the culture, a mentality underlying or overriding all (epiphenomenal) internal differences ..." and that everyone "... is capable of enunciating this common mentality" (p.63).



Given the incorporation of auto-ethnographic elements into the approach of this study, the issue of authoritative voice is indeed provocative. Are my experiences qualified by particular features of my situated-ness (as presented earlier in this chapter), such as my cultural/ethnic background and gender? Are my experiences as a Pasifika (Samoan) migrant woman in teacher education sufficient? I do not subscribe to such an essentialist perspective. Rather, the aspect of my experiences that engenders a degree of authoritative voice is the Samoan cultural value of *tautua* or service. In the *fa'asamoa*<sup>14</sup>, status, even leadership, is earned through years of consistent, diligent service to one's family and one's communities. This can be inclusive of the arena within which one works, especially areas such as education, health and social work in New Zealand. These are arenas that have targeted Pasifika peoples as a strategic priority for most of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This qualification for insider-researcher may not have weight in terms of traditional conventions of academic and scholarly research, but it certainly carries weight in terms of my credibility and legitimacy as an informed socio-cultural insider, one holding informed authority.

I agree with the concerns raised by Buzard (2003). While I can feel confident about my (relative) legitimacy as cultural insider (hence giving a degree of weight to the analysis of my experiences as a source of potential insight to particular socio-cultural groups), I would not presume to be a representative authority for any socio-cultural group. I recognise diverse ways of being and lived experience. Buzard's critique has raised reflective questions relating to researcher voice, visibility and place/space.

The study has so far set out to demarcate and theorise the key features of this study in terms of the research problem, the way education is understood, and the complex context within which the researcher will move around and interact through the various analyses which are to take place. Several important conceptions have been introduced, but these are by no means the

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<sup>14</sup> *Fa'asamoa* means the Samoan way and refers to traditional cultural protocols, norms and expectations

only ones that are required for this complicated endeavour. The main theories that inform the research will be discussed in the following chapter.

### *Critical Reflections on Education as Encounter*

I have drawn heavily on Martin's theory of education for this study because of its strengths which, in my view, lie in its breadth and the way it conceives the relationship between education, the individual and the culture. The strengths are not without their limitations. But these strengths are also structural features of her theorisation and therefore have a degree of flexibility which enables the theorisation of problems and issues that Martin did not seem to take into account or make explicit, as well as responses to those problems and issues.

Breadth and scope: Martin's theorisation recognises the tendency within western philosophical traditions to describe educational dichotomies or divides (Martin, 2011, p.26-32). There are "deep structural splits ... [such as]... nature/culture, mind/body, and public/private splits" (Thayer-Bacon, 2013, p.103). Deeply embedded tacit beliefs about the relative value of knowledge or skills, derived from one dichotomy over the other, have resulted in a "two sphere ideology, [where] the public world is portrayed as the arena where intellect, theoretical knowledge, and rationality hold sway. In contrast the world of the private home is the place where childbearing, nursing the sick, and caring for the elderly are located" (Martin, 2011, p.31).

Martin's theory recognises that such splits can result in 'missing perspectives'. For example, if we see the education of children as primarily the responsibility of teachers in schools (through intentional learning experiences, facilitated by teachers as education agents), then we will overlook, or at least undervalue, other agents such as the church, social media, elders and traditional authority figures, and parents. We will risk developing assumptions that individual learners' most profound and lasting educative changes will emerge only through state and privately funded formal schooling. We will also be at risk of developing the assumption that the outcomes (changes) will be inherently positive. And we might miss the

perspectives revealed from the experiences of formal education as documented by selected Pacific/Pasifika men and women (the focus of Chapter Seven). Woven into their stories of western schooling are experiences of acquiring negative cultural stock such as inferiority complexes, negative self-images as learners, and disconnection from their families.

There are other dimensions or nuances, within the theory's extended landscape of education. Consider, for example, the collective educative experiences of a group of Pasifika women working within an institution of higher learning. They are educational agents if one considers their formal role as teacher educators. They coordinate and deliver courses for undergraduate and graduate programmes and play a pivotal role in harnessing the capacities of their students with necessary cultural assets to support the students' development (or transformation) into teachers. But this lens of analysis is not focused solely on their role as educational agents—rather, the focus includes their experiences of institutional change and the learning they underwent meeting new employment-based expectations to become academics and scholars. In this example, education as encounter is managed and controlled by the collective, as a risk management strategy of personal and professional transformations at odds with their explicated core values as Pasifika women. Two distinct cultural worlds are being negotiated – that of western academia and that of their specific Pasifika cultural group, particularly their families. They are a politically conscious, critical, strategic thinking collective that has also taken on the role of education agent – of themselves. Chapter Nine presents a detailed analysis of this.

The individual, culture and education: If one were to carry out a historical analysis of philosophy of education, one would soon realise that it is a history of western European thought and western culture. Philosophy of education is euro-centric and, therefore, when Martin speaks about education, *the individual* and *the culture* presumably it is western culture that is the dominant culture - that of the United States, of Europe and for New Zealand. But in reality New Zealand, like other westernised and

developed nations, is a diverse nation made up of many ethnic groups, with cultures often quite distinct from a traditional European or Pakeha culture. This is particularly apparent in New Zealand's largest and most diverse city, Auckland.

This results in an interesting dynamic and, although Martin does not explicitly raise and discuss this issue, I believe her theoretical framework is sufficiently flexible to accommodate such a dimension. This dynamic is reflected in the following questions:

- What if an individual or a group of individuals, identify with more than one distinctive culture?
- What then is the relationship between those two cultures? What happens if one culture is more dominant in terms of its influence on individuals than the other?

In terms of Martin's theory, this would mean that there is more than one source of cultural stock from which to draw and more than one culture and cultural group affected by the changes or transformations of an individual. In other words, more than one culture (within the same society) may be implicated in the changes wrought by an educative encounter.

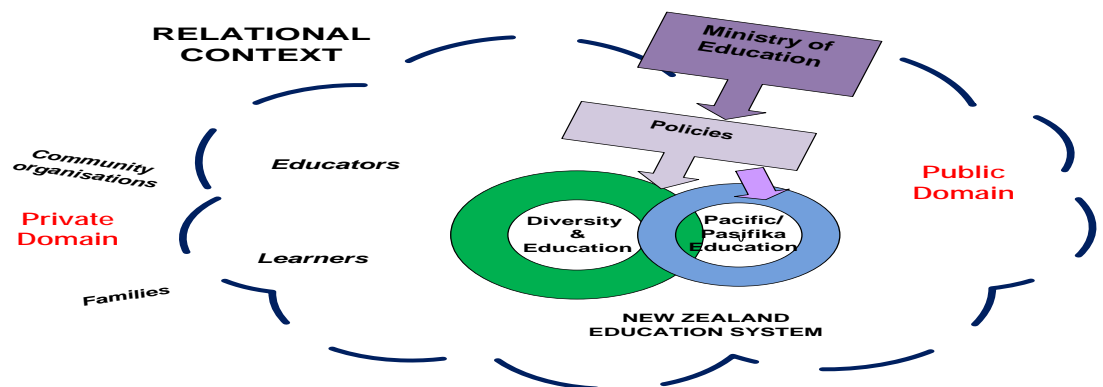
### *Theorising the Context as a Product of Discontinuity*

This section theorises the context of the study. The process of theorising the context took place in two phases. From the outset (as represented by the proposal submission for this doctoral study in August, 2009), the overall context of the study was conceived in relational terms (Edwards & Miller, 2007). Not as a container within which discourses occur, but as a complex set of inter-relationships which shape, and are shaped by, the discourses under analysis. In the proposal and early drafts of this study, I coined the term 'relational context'. After reading and carefully reflecting upon Michel Foucault's theorisations relating to the historical analyses of ideas (1972), however, an alternative conception began to present itself that seemed to take the key component relationships, and the nature of those relationships, further into useful abstraction. Foucault's ideas appeared to offer a far more

effective method of recognising and delineating the multi-dimensional context of this study, addressing its complexity head-on and accommodating its dynamic, disorderly nature.

Figure 2 represents my initial attempt to identify the main elements of the study and capture (in a general sense) the inter-relationships and connections between them and, in so doing, delineate the overall context, in terms of ‘relational context’

*Figure 4: The Relational Context*



I recognised the importance of applying a socio-historical perspective of context and, therefore, determined that the inter-relationships captured within Figure 2 would also be inclusive of time and space.

*The Initial Conception as Relational Context*

The Ministry of Education’s (MOE) policies and programmes shape and influence different sectors of the New Zealand education system, such as tertiary, compulsory and early-childhood education. Teacher education programmes are responsive to these policies as well as to the knowledge generated by Ministry-funded research programmes and activities. Teacher

education programmes are, of course, accountable for preparing teachers (pre-service, in-service) to understand and implement education policies within the varied settings of their institutions, such as early-childhood centres, schools, polytechnics and universities.

In Figure 2, the ‘private domain’ and ‘public domain’ are drawn from Bullivant’s (1981) identification of two social domains. As culture finds expression on a personal level through its unique traditions, customs and languages it belongs to the private domain within socio-cultural institutions and entities that education agencies refer to as ‘home’ and ‘community’. For example, the MOE uses ‘home’ in its Home School Partnerships programme<sup>15</sup> while The Education Review Office (ERO) uses the term ‘community’ when it refers to ‘parents, families and communities’ in Goal Four of its Pacific Strategy<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, a university faculty of education in Auckland identified ‘Community Engagement’ as one of the goals in its 2012 Annual Plan<sup>17</sup>. Closer reading reveals that, in this instance, community refers to professional communities (such as ‘targeted mainstream and Maori medium schools’ and ‘schools/centres/agencies’) which place this faculty’s notion of community as part of the public domain.

The public domain encompasses being part of a nation state and carries certain inherent obligations. Several institutions, such as an official language or languages, the legal system, the financial system, the political system and, of course, the state-funded or subsidised education systems are held in common, and all members of society are expected to support and engage with them. Ideally these are structured so that they are applicable and, perhaps more importantly, are accessible to all so that all members of the society have the opportunity to fully participate (Bullivant, 1981).

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://home-schoolpartnerships.tki.org.nz/>

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/ERO-Pacific-Strategy-2013-2017>

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/home/about/our-faculty/vision-and-plans>

It is to be noted that in this study (and hence, in Figure 2) that the term 'educator' is defined as "a person especially a teacher, principal, or other person involved in *planning or directing education*" (Dictionary Reference, <sup>18</sup> emphasis added). Educators, therefore, are individuals located in formal institutions which have the overall purpose of delivering intended, premeditative educational experiences. Educators are those with professional responsibilities (even designated authority) for planning or directing education activities at different levels, contexts and settings. Examples include teachers and lecturers, principals, Early-Childhood centre supervisors and professional learning and development advisors. Educators are usually located within institutions that are accountable to the state (via the Ministry of Education) for implementing national education policies.

In addition, the MOE contracts out professional development services and research intended to inform policy development. These competitive contracts are sought by tertiary institutions (through faculties of education) and independent education consultancies and enterprises. Given the decentralised nature of New Zealand's Ministry of Education, educators with significant professional and academic expertise within these institutions (including independent consultancies) are often invited to collaborate and advise Ministry officials on the development of national policies and policy frameworks, as well as research and development initiatives. The relationship between the MOE and tertiary education institutions (particularly faculties of education located within universities) is, therefore, highly significant.

It is also important to note that this study has developed the term 'agent of systemic change and direction'. In this study, the term is defined as 'an entity within the education system (an institution, an agency, an organisation, even a programme of work) with a mandated responsibility to influence, advise, guide and at times even direct, specific activities within sectors of the system. In the relational context, the systemic agents of change and direction, such as

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<sup>18</sup> See <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/educator>

the Ministry of Education (MOE); the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) programme<sup>19</sup>; and teacher education programmes (primarily located within faculties of education, or FOEs) have a somewhat hierarchal relationship to each other. For example, the MOE's policies and programmes direct and influence the schooling system, including the provisions of teacher education. The MOE's BES programme has contributed to the provision of evidence-based knowledge that in turn influences the MOE's perspective and activities. Teacher education programmes have endeavoured to be responsive to the knowledge generated by the BES programme and its outputs, as have the providers of professional learning and development (PLD) programmes.

The concept of relational context recognises the macro-level influences on the education system, and the importance of examining how these might shape and influence the development of policy. Such influences can be political, social and economic, and can originate from both the national and global spheres. The relational context also requires engagement with the socio-cultural and socio-historical influences that impact on actors within the private domain or sphere. Figure 4 attempts to present these additional, inter-connected, 'big' issues and concerns.

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<sup>19</sup> An example of a research and development programme of national significance.



## **Chapter Three**

### **The Primary Tools**

This main purpose of this chapter is to describe, discuss and critique the two main theories that have been drawn on to construct the methodological framework. 'Methodological' in this sense is understood as "... the theory of knowledge and the interpretative framework that guides a particular research project" (Harding, 1987, p.2, as cited in Lather, 1992, p.87). The framework enables the study to pursue the research questions by examining (analysing) selected phenomena closely and then speculating (theorising) in order to arrive at new insights.

This chapter will begin by stepping back, briefly, to consider the paradigmatic positioning for the framework. It will draw on Lather's 'paradigms of postpositivism' typology (1992, 2006) to better understand the nature of the emancipative/ deconstructivist ideas underlying the framework. Next it will identify and discuss the two main theories, after which attention will turn to how and why these theories and ideas are harnessed together, and how they will be applied metaphorically as excavation tools to search for clarification and meaning via analyses of the discourses of diversity and Pasifika education presented in Parts 3 and 4 of this thesis.

#### ***Paradigmatic Positioning***

According to Burnett (2012, p.482),

By asking how it is possible to know, research decisions made at a paradigmatic level position the research on its course and inform a range of decisions concerning methodology, data analysis and outcomes.

There has been, however, a 'proliferation of paradigms' (Lather, 1992, 2006) in education research, which, amongst other things, renders such crucial decision making problematic, given the complex, competing and tension-ridden issues involved. Lather addresses these in an in-depth and comprehensive manner in several key publications (for example, see Lather

1992, 1998, 2006 & in Moss et al, 2009). Writing in 1992 about the emergence of different perspectives of social inquiry in education, she signalled that “a proliferation of contending paradigms is causing some diffusion of legitimacy and authority ... This proliferation of paradigms goes by many names” (Lather 1992, p.89). She continued to observe such proliferation in 2006 – apparently an on-going process and on-going source of scholarly debate and concern.

The primary concerns of such debates relate to the beliefs, values and techniques that guide social inquiry. Paradigms differ in these fundamental areas and therefore these issues cannot be tied to research methods (the techniques for gathering empirical data) but rather, to the methodologies that emerge from within a particular paradigm. Paradigms reflect different values and beliefs (and therefore approaches) relating to the generation and legitimation of knowledge and, therefore, is it likely that there will be different views on the relative adequacy of one paradigm over another.

The stance that Lather takes in relation to research about paradigm proliferation is captured quite succinctly in the sub-heading: “Proliferation happens” (2006, p.42). She argues that “... proliferation, like deconstruction, happens. This is a historical and ontological claim, not an epistemological one” (Lather, 2006, p.43). Some of the given features of contemporary research are the multiplicities of possible paradigms.

### *A useful typology*

Lather (1992) refers to the array of alternative paradigms in education research as “post-positivism” (p.89) and argues that ‘new’ paradigms emerge in response to perceived weaknesses and short-comings of positivism and represent “the loss of positivism’s theoretic hegemony” (p.89). She conceived a chart that organises paradigms into broad categories. It began with four categories in 1992 and was revised into five categories in 2006. She argues that “each of the post-positivist ‘paradigms’ offers a different approach to generating and legitimating knowledge” (Lather, 1992, p.89) and

explains her theorising behind the first four categories in the following manner:

The chart is grounded in Habermas’s (1971) thesis of the three categories of human interest that underscore knowledge claims: prediction, understanding, emancipation ... I have added the non-Habermasian column of ‘deconstruct’ (Lather, 1992, p.89).

A fifth category was added in the revised version of the “paradigms of post-positivist inquiry” chart (Lather, 2006, p.37), and simply entitled ‘Next?’

Figure 4, below, presents an adapted version of Lather’s 1992 and 2006 charts and adds my own suggestions in the last row.

*Figure 5: Lather’s ‘paradigms of post-positivist inquiry in education’ chart, adapted*

Paradigms from Lather 1992, 2006				
Predict	Understand	Emancipate	Deconstruct	Next?
<i>Positivist</i>	<i>Interpretive</i>	<i>Critical</i>		
	Naturalistic Constructivist Phenomenological Hermeneutic Symbolic/ interaction Microethnography	Neo-Marxist <Feminist> Race-specific <b>Praxis-oriented</b> Freirian Participatory	<b>&lt;Post-structural</b> Postmodern Post-paradigmatic Diaspora (John Caputo)	
Additional paradigms from revised chart (Lather, 2006)				
Mixed methods	Ethnographic Interpretive mixed methods	Critical race theory <Action research Gay & lesbian theory <b>Critical ethnography</b>	Queer theory <b>&lt;Discourse analysis</b> <b>Postcolonial</b> Post-Fordism Post-humanist Post-critical Post everything (Fred Erickson)	Neo- positivism Post-theory Neo-pragmatism Citizen inquiry Participatory dialogic Policy analysis Post-post
<i>The next row is my addition to Lather’s chart</i>				
		<b>Critical (auto)ethnography</b>	<b>&lt;Expanded view of analytic philosophy (Jane Roland Martin)</b>	

Key: < and > Represents cross-paradigm movement

Left of **bold line**: Modernist, structural, humanist theories and discourses

Right of bold line: the post theories, wherein all concepts (e.g. language, discourse, knowledge, power etc) are deconstructed

Despite all the paradigms within the chart being in current practice, Lather (2006, p.37) states that there is a “historical sense to their articulation” and explains their emergence and nature as follows:

August Comte (1778-1857) proposed positivism in the nineteenth century; social constructivism is often dated from Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s (1966) book, the *Social construction of reality*. The emancipatory paradigms grew from the Frankfurt School and the social movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s; and the post paradigms from the critiques following the Second World War, include those of Michel Foucault (1926-1984), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), and Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995).

Movement across categories represents paradigm shifts. Lather (2006) draws attention to the fact that paradigm shifts take place “...as reaction formations to the perceived inadequate explanatory power of existing paradigms” (p.37). For example, someone may choose to develop a research project from within an emancipatory paradigm, but such a decision is most likely to have involved an understanding of “the theoretical assumptions as well as the critiques of positivism and interpretivism” (p.37). While this knowledge would have informed the decision to use an emancipatory paradigm, assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of different paradigms (relative to the aim and purpose of the research work) would also have come into play.

### ***Paradigm Mapping and Pasifika education research***

Situating this study in terms of its paradigm positioning (Burnett, 2012) was an important meditative process, carried out in order to address the epistemological issue of ‘how do we know?’ The answer, in terms of this study, is via an overall theoretical framework anchored within deconstructionist paradigms (lightly shaded in Figure 4). In some of the analyses, however, there are slight shifts in paradigm positioning, with movement between deconstruction and emancipation paradigms (dark shading in Figure 4).

Burnett (2012) argues that research that draws on emancipationist (at times referred to loosely as 'critical research') and deconstructionist paradigms has the greatest potential to produce knowledge that can lead to social transformation. He explored the nature of postgraduate research in Pacific/Pasifika education carried out in New Zealand universities between 1944 and 2008, posing the important question: "how are Pacific education worlds known?" (2012, p.483). He was interested in establishing patterns and trends in the broad theoretical approaches used in these studies, and applied Lather's (2006) typology in order to do so. Despite "increasing calls" from within Pacific/Pasifika education communities to "decolonise and re-indigenise ... educational research agendas" and concerns regarding "systems of Pacific primary and secondary schooling influenced by educational research" (which can be useful to the Pasifika context), Burnett contends that "very little emancipatory and deconstructive education research has been completed" (2012, p.399). This study represents a concerted effort to address this situation.

### *Introducing the Main Theories*

How should the problems of murky conceptualisation and unrecognised distortions in the way systemic agents of change talk about difference in education be named and framed? Which conceptual tools and analytical lenses should be utilised in order to uncover meanings that are not apparent or obvious, in order to bring to light possible errors in conception?

The research problem and questions that steer this study required a research approach that would closely scrutinise the meaning of key terms. Analytic philosophy lends itself to such an investigation, particularly in relation to education policy, for several reasons. According to Marshall (1981, p.16), analytic philosophy is a process involving the "... clarification of concepts, theories and claims" in order to achieve "... clarity and truth, as reflected in the way in which our ordinary language is meant to parallel our common sense beliefs about the world..." According to Scheffler, a pioneer in this

particular field, there are several intriguing connections between the analytical process and (education) policy.

Philosophy is neither art nor technique but the pursuit of wisdom. Its function is not to facilitate policy but rather to enlighten it by pressing its traditional questions of value, virtue, veracity, and validity (Scheffler, 1980, p.402).

It would seem that philosophers develop analyses that are intended to reformulate the problems policies address in ways that enable new insights, even wisdom. The inherent integrity of the process of the reformulation is reliant on the nature of the questions that are developed. Referring to policy and social sciences, Scheffler states that philosophy draws on its own resources to confront "... questions of meaning and method, of sense and significance" (1980, p.403). These seem to be key features of the process of developing deft, clearly articulated, well-supported analyses that emphasise the use of logic and formal methods of reasoning.

Philosophical analysis in education emerged in the late 1950s and was considerably prominent through to the 1970s. According to Noddings (2007) an important focus was the analysis of educational language and concepts due to a belief that "ordinary language held a great treasure of meanings as yet unrealised because it had not yet been analysed" (p.44). In addition to uncovering meanings that were not apparent or obvious before, such analyses brought to light errors in conception and even went further to try and establish "limits on appropriate use" (Noddings, 2007, p.47).

But analytic philosophy - at least the narrower forms of analytic philosophy prominent in the earlier years of its emergence and establishment- has limitations. I have taken into account several criticisms of the field that, interestingly, come from Jane Roland Martin. Martin describes herself as a having made a culture crossing in her own career – one which moved her away from analytic philosophy, the primary form of philosophy that she had trained in and upon which she established and built her academic career until the 1980s. When she began to "inquire into the place of women in

educational thought” (2008, p.127), she began to move away from her “analytic philosopher identity” which she acknowledges “... had never been an entirely comfortable fit” (p.128). One of the reasons she gives for this misfit is what she describes briefly as the gendered traits of analytic philosophy – traits which, when exhibited by men they were deemed favourable, yet perceived as negative when exhibited by women (p.128).

Martin’s culture crossing involved an explicit shift towards scholarship that could bring together concerns located within the public sphere and the private sphere to create a closer connection with “the world as I, a mother of two sons, knew it” (Martin, 2008, p.132). In other words, the shift in her theoretical orientation and research programme was driven by a desire to search for practical wisdom and a commitment to enhance clarification in order to bridge theory with real-life problems and concerns. This resonated strongly with me. I do not, however, consider Martin’s self-described culture crossing as being a disconnection from analytic philosophy. Rather, I see her highly significant shift as a metamorphosis into what Noddings (2007) has described as an *expanded view* of analytic philosophy.

Noddings states that,

... the debate continues between those who would hold to a narrower or stricter view of philosophical analysis and those who would expand the field to include analysis of literature and episodes taken from daily life ... we should expect to see an interesting blend of empirical, literary and philosophical analysis directed as the understanding of educational phenomena (2007, pp.59, 60).

In examining Martin’s book publications over the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I am of the view that this body of work reflects such a blend – a blend of empirical, literary and philosophical analyses. Not only do these works appear to exemplify an expanded view of analytic philosophy, they also provide highly relevant conceptual frames with which to produce analyses that respond to the overall research questions of this study. I would describe analytic philosophy as the bedrock upon which Martin (2000, 2002, 2007, 2011) constructed her key concepts and theorisations about women in education,

and the importance of culture and identity, education and change – ideas and concepts which are central to this study and align particularly well with Research Question Two (page 12).

Martin acknowledges that she came to realise that “if I wanted to understand my subject, *it would not be enough to analyse language, concepts and arguments*. I would also have to dig up the culture’s fundamental, largely unspoken assumptions about education” (2011, p.2, emphasis added). The determination was made that additional theoretical lenses or conceptions would be needed, at least for some strata levels (away from the surface), in order to interrogate my data more deeply and more sharply. There are, arguably, a number of theoretical lacunae in Martin’s philosophical approaches (as reflected in her main publications since 2000). These limitations are not so much to do with short-comings in her theorisations, but rather the inability of Martin’s ideas to address all the analytical needs revealed by discontinuities of context or different levels of inquiry relating to the research questions of this study.

In the thesis so far, diversity in education and Pasifika education have been problematised and situated both in terms of time (the advent of the new millennium) and space (New Zealand). Each term has consistently been referred to as discourses. What has not been done (purposefully) is the provision of a definition of ‘discourse’, or an explanation for how the study addresses the term, discourse (despite its frequent use from the onset, as in the title). This will be addressed now although it is by no means a simple or straight forward exercise. As Bacchi (2000, p.45) concedes, “The concept of ‘discourse’ has become ubiquitous in contemporary social and political theory ... it is not always clear what different authors mean when they use the term.” It is a term that has spread throughout the social sciences and humanities disciplines and is recognised as having “confusing, multiple and conflicting usages” since the 1980s (Sawyer, 2002, p.434).

In designating diversity in education and Pasifika education as discourses, the study needs to establish ‘discourse’ as an analytic concept. The



methodological approach should therefore demonstrate how the concept of 'discourse' is conceived/ understood as well as explicate how the analysis of discourse will be approached. Not surprisingly there are several different approaches to discourse, discourse analysis and the analysis of discourses, each with specific theoretical underpinnings (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001; Alba-Juez, 2009; Sawyer, 2002; Bacchi, 2000 & 2005). There are three key requirements for this study that no single approach is capable of addressing. First is the ability to excavate the hidden or "unspoken assumptions about education" (Martin, 2011, p.2) which may lie within surface manifestations, such as national education policy, the discursive practices of Pasifika peoples, or within personal theorising of Pacific/Pasifika educators. These are potential sources that may "... offer a sediment of systems meaning of terms, narrative forms, metaphors and commonplaces from which a particular account can be assembled" (Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990, p.207). Second is the ability to draw attention to variations in understanding and 'talking about' the enactment of policy, particularly when education policy targets specific groups of learners and their communities. With regards to their conception of discourse, Potter et al. (1990, p.208) state,

Given that discourse is constructed and orientated to action, we will expect that with different sorts of activities different sorts of discourse will be produced. If you take an event, say, or a social group or a feature of a person it will be described in different ways...

Thirdly, not all approaches can proffer up a critical research gaze that identifies and critiques power relations deeply embedded in the socio-cultural contexts or discontinuities (Foucault, 1972) of education.

The remaining sections of this chapter will present in-depth discussions of the two main sets of theories that underpin the theoretical framework of this study. First will be the theories and ideas of Jane Roland Martin which reflect an expanded view of analytic philosophy of education. Second will be an examination of discourse theory which will explain the way discourse and discourse analysis is understood and applied in this study.

*An expanded view of analytic philosophy: The 21<sup>st</sup> century works of Jane Roland Martin*

Martin is a philosopher of education and one of the few women associated with the early developments of the field of analytic philosophy. As noted earlier, although her academic career between the 1960s and 1980s drew heavily on analytic philosophy, during the eighties her interest shifted to other areas. However, her early background remained relevant to her later work, as she explains,

I have never turned my back on my philosophical training or renounced my earlier analytic findings. On the contrary, the training that I received ... is a bedrock on which all my work rests (2008, p.128).

The theories and work Martin has produced since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2000, 2002, 2007, 2011) are central to the substantive theorising of this study. They will be referred to as The Collection. They are:

- *Coming of Age in Academe: Rekindling Women's Hopes, and Reforming the Academy* (2000). Martin conceptualises academic women in university settings as immigrants to a foreign land, facing pressures to assimilate and to culture cross in order to fit in and succeed.
- *Cultural Miseducation: In Search of a Democratic Solution* (2002). Martin presents what she describes as “a new formulation of the old problem” (p.xi) being the societal expectation that schools operate as democratic communities in order to foster the development of fully participatory, intelligent members of society (Willis, 2002). She introduces the notion of ‘cultural wealth’ and ‘cultural liabilities’ into her “new conception of community” (Willis, 2002, p.x).
- *Educational Metamorphoses: Philosophical Reflections on Identity and Culture* (2007). Martin presents Cases (similar in nature to case studies) from both non-fiction and fiction (literary) sources and analyses these to develop persuasive arguments about how the processes of education can transform and change an individual.
- *Education Reconfigured: Culture, Encounter, and Change* (2011). This is Martin’s most recent book. In it she presents her theory of education as encounter, and brings together her ideas regarding the

relationship between individuals, culture and the role of education (which she defines in very broad terms).

Given 'the bedrock' of analytic philosophy underlying Martin's work, a discussion and critique of key elements of analytic philosophy will follow.

### *Exploring the Bedrock of Analytic Philosophy*

Jane Roland Martin's work produced after 1985 demonstrates how philosophy can be harnessed and used in ways to illuminate real life problems and concerns. For example, reflecting on a watershed experience that changed the course of her own scholarship, Jane Roland Martin (1994) explained how new avenues of inquiry opened up and she developed questions that she would not have thought about asking. This brought her scholarship into close connection with everyday life, including her own. This process allowed her to identify with her subject matter and to develop a voice of her own. She later wrote,

My subsequent decision to study the place of women in educational thought ... hastened my return from the ivory tower. In 1980 a fundamental premise of feminist scholarship was that academic learning should illuminate the lives and experiences of women past and present in all corners of the earth. ....With items such as marriage, mothering, domesticity, sex role stereotypes, a gender based division of labour, and women's double-binds now on my list, I was at long last able to identify with my subject matter (2008, p.132).

She concerned herself with such matters, because of a commitment to bridge "... the great gulf between those who search for knowledge and those who wish to improve society" (2000, p.x). This stance made sense to me – because I understood it in terms of *tautua*, the Samoan ideal of service which can have such a powerful influence on Samoan women's every action (Fairburn-Dunlop, 1996).

Martin's work after the 1980s has always been influenced by her training and experience in the narrower, more focused analytic approach to philosophy in education. Given her recognition of the influence of her early training it makes sense to identify and discuss the relevant strengths of this

methodological approach in terms of my understanding of her work. I have determined these strengths to be: clarity of conceptualisation and writing; the ability to offer insight and illuminate; and the appearance of neutrality and detachment.

### Clarity of Conceptualisation and Writing

Philosophers of education with a strong analytic background appear to construct succinct arguments which are written with careful precision. The net effect is their use of language –particularly in terms of clarity. According to Noddings

Analytic philosophy in all its forms claims to analyse and clarify ... Analytic philosophers try not to smuggle new meanings into the concepts they analyse. They try to clarify what is really there in a word, concept or bit of writing. They insist on analysis, not interpretation. One of its earliest and most prestigious proponents, Ludwig Wittgenstein, claimed that philosophy ‘leaves everything as it is’. That is, philosophy does not change the world; it just makes the world clearer” (2007, p.44).

There appears to be consistency amongst the early analytic philosophers in terms of the afore-mentioned clarity. Take for example, R.S. Peters’ (1973) philosophical analysis of the aims of education. This analysed the concept of education and the development of general criteria for being educated. Snook’s (1972) examination of the concept of ‘indoctrination’ is another example. Part of his analytical method was to create and present a number of cases or scenarios of indoctrination and then “sit in on a discussion in which some reasonably sophisticated people discuss these cases” (p.4). He presented an imagined dialogue between several individuals (characters) – which he analysed and developed several notions about conceptual analysis in general and the analysis of the actual term of ‘indoctrination’. Snook made an interesting statement about the way his analysis was conducted, or the methodological approach he advocated:

The important thing is not that the reader agree with my conclusions but that he [sic] engage with me in the process of analysis. By doing

so he will become clearer about [the concept under analysis, in this case 'indoctrination'] even if he is unable to accept my conclusion (1972, p. 13).

Snook clearly values and gives considerable weight to reader engagement of the analytical process. However, Snook made specific statements about the kind of reader that was needed for such analyses:

The attempt to clarify a concept is only possible among people of a certain sophistication. The man in the street can get by with only a vague or intuitive notion (1972, p.11).

Snook's comment regarding "people of a certain sophistication" is interesting. He does not explain what he means by this, particularly in relation to the "man in the street" and therefore it is open to interpretation. The first that comes to mind is related to differences in intellect or as Martin might argue, intellectual capacities that are easily translated into cultural stock- perhaps leading to the assumption that people with a greater capacity for harnessing and using intellect are more refined, advanced and sophisticated than the ordinary person.

Soltis provides more insight to the notion of sophistication in relation to intellectual endeavour. Sophistication describes the skills of discernment that are developed through the process of studying ideas and concepts deeply, in the search for the finer nuances of meaning. This is important, even necessary for the more careful and considered usage of key terms and concepts (Soltis, 1968). Communication to a more sophisticated readership, however, may in some instances lead to the production of complex, esoteric pieces of text. Gloria Steinem (2000) has criticised such scholars – scholars who coat their work by using "... arcane language that only insiders understand" (pp. xiii, xiv). She commends Jane Roland Martin, however, for her efforts to ensure that her work is understood by a wider readership, much like physicians. Physicians, she says,

.... have good reason to use specialised words, yet we ask them to explain in terms we can understand, and to empower us to make our own decisions. Whether we are academics, or those who desperately need

academia's research and wisdom, why should we settle for anything less?  
(Steinhem, 2000, p.xiv).

I concur with her sentiment - Jane Roland Martin's work *is* particularly strong in this respect. It exhibits conceptual clarity and intellectual precision and yet she communicates in ways that are accessible to readers who do not have formal training or extensive experience with philosophy, and perhaps are not 'sophisticated' in the way Snook envisaged.

One could view 'sophisticated' writing as that which only sophisticated readers are able to engage with – the kind of writing that the philosopher Michael Peters describes as “the standard grey academic article [that] seems to drain the text of any personal reference like a catheter taking excess fluid from a fresh corpse” (2008, p.155). Such writing is (arguably) the antithesis of Martin's approach. Thayer-Bacon considers Martin to be “an excellent writer” in relation to her theory-writing (2013, p.101). Martin, to reiterate, writes with singular readability and considerable clarity and succinctness.

I would go further and suggest that the effectiveness of her writing lies in her ability to engage and connect intellect with experience in an inclusive, unpretentious manner. This is vitally important for making the theories generated by philosophers of education accessible and relevant to others beyond that branch of academia – for example agents of systemic change, such as policy makers, educators, and researchers from different levels within the education system.

### Insight and Illumination

By and large, analytic philosophers have interests in illumination, insight and how this “... has an important contribution to make to practical wisdom ...” (R.S. Peters, 1973, p.29) but, as Peters warns, it cannot be a substitute for it. Soltis is another philosopher who has carried out significant analyses on the theme of the relations between epistemological and educational notions. He is quoted as saying

Many of us ... would be hard pressed if asked to spell out in simple words the ideas which are contained in such ordinary concepts of education such as teaching, learning, or subject matter. Yet these very concepts are basic to any thought or discussion about education. Furthermore, I believe that such an attempt to explicate these ideas would invariably result in the unveiling of nuances of meaning which we unconsciously assume in our actions as students or teachers. As a result, we would not only become more sophisticated and *careful in their use*, but would also gain a deeper insight into education as a human endeavour in which all men [sic] take some part sometime in their lives (Soltis, 1968, p.2; cited by Noddings, 2007, p.45; emphasis added).

The clarity that results from the analysis of key concepts within education leads to deeper insights of the human condition, which is why we should “... take the trouble to analyse terms about which clarity is really important” (Snook, 1972, p.14).

This continues to be an important concern for the education system, particularly within heterogeneous societies such as New Zealand. Terms such as culture are embedded in the discursive formations of diversity and Pacific/Pasifika education that circulate within the relational context of this study. Deeper insights into the origins and meanings of these terms by educators would surely lead to more concerted, focused and pertinent action? Martin’s major 21<sup>st</sup> century works (2000, 2002, 2007) culminate in her 2011 unified theory of ‘education as encounter’ – where culture is placed alongside the individual and the two are seen *together* as being at the heart of the process of education (Martin, 2011). The concepts she introduces, such as the concepts of cultural stock; cultural mis-education (Martin, 2002); and culture crossings as educational metamorphosis (2007), have proved insightful and illuminating when applied to the main concerns of this study.

#### The appearance of neutrality and detachment

The last feature of analytic philosophy and Martin’s approach to philosophical analysis that I believe to be a scholarly strength (hence its influence in the development of the study’s theoretical frame) is what Noddings described as analytic philosophers’ “claim to neutrality and

detachment” (2007, p.46). I concur with Noddings’ view that neutrality and detachment is *not* an inherent outcome of such an analytic process. In her view, the work of analytic philosophers is “by its very nature, concerned with value” and that a value-laden position can be found underscoring such work (2007, p.47). I consider, however, the general *tenor* of the work of analytic philosophers to be neutral and detached because the precision of their well-constructed arguments and the succinctness of their writing give the *impression* of detachment, and the *impression* of impartiality.

I have my own somewhat subjective rationale for this. After almost two decades of undergraduate teaching and close observation of senior members of academic staff, I have come to the understanding that neutrality, detachment and objectivity are some of the desired markers of good scholarship, and contribute to perceptions of what constitutes a ‘good’ lecturer, valid and legitimate course content, not to mention research. The following brief example draws on an anonymous comment made about my teaching by a student completing a course evaluation several years ago. I had contributed a series of introductory lectures on Maori education, and Pacific/Pasifika education. The student expressed the view that, whilst I was obviously passionate about these topics, this in itself was not sufficient to justify the inclusion of these topics in a course about New Zealand’s main educational issues and concerns.

This student’s feedback, when considered alongside other seemingly isolated incidents and interactions (with both colleagues and students) over a fairly protracted period of time, drew my attention to the fact that I am one of the few ethnic minority academic staff in my faculty. It is possible, therefore, that for some students, I may represent their first ‘encounter’ with a Pacific/Pasifika academic. What might their taken-for-granted expectations of such a university lecturer be? And to what extent are their responses to both myself and the content of my lectures (if initially, non-accepting) a consequence of my not reflecting their initial expectations of a university academic?



Jane Roland Martin has described the dispositions associated with “the scholarly ideal that has come down to us from Plato” (Martin, 2000, p.129). These include “reasoned deliberation rather than spontaneous reaction, dispassionate inquiry rather than emotional response, abstract analytic theorising rather than concrete story-telling” (Martin, 2000, p.129). She also presents the case that these are traits that are culturally associated with men, rather than women, and that when women enter into the academy it is much like the experience of migration. Upon arrival, migrants must determine how they will respond – via assimilation or acculturation (Martin, 2000, pp.115-123).

Martin does not include a sufficiently in-depth analysis of how the experience of minority women, particularly ‘women of colour’ within the academy would differ from that of European or, in New Zealand’s case, Pakeha women. In terms of my perception of how students and staff may initially respond to me as an academic and scholar, in a faculty staffed predominantly by women, my gender is not problematic. My race and my ethnicity, however, do not reflect the norm, and at times, this is problematic. Studies overseas (Asher, 2010; Skachkova, 2007) and within New Zealand (Fitzgerald, 2003a; Fitzgerald, 2003b; Lewis, 2007) have shown that immigrant and indigenous women academic staff in tertiary institutions experience differential treatment from their students, their colleagues, and their administrators. This is undoubtedly a complex issue; however, I have determined that what I *can* do is to ensure that my work reflects the ideal dispositions of scholarship. From experience, I have learned that credibility and acceptance is enhanced when one’s work (in terms of research and teaching) at least gives off an air of detachment and neutrality. This however does not necessitate assimilation into the culture of western academe.

### ***Discourse Theory***

Discourse (and analytic traditions such as discourse analysis and the analysis of discourses) has become well-established across and within many disciplines of the social sciences and the humanities (Wetherell, 2001 &

2003, Bacchi, 2005, Alba-Juez, 2009). I do not include the “standard usage of discourse” here which Sawyer (2002, p.434) says “refers to a unit of language larger than a sentence, and discourse analysis is the study of these sequences of sentences”. Standard usage of the term discourse dates back to the 1940s (Sawyer, 2002). The broader usage of the term began in the 1970s – “‘broad’ because it encompasses much more than language” (Sawyer, 2002, p. 434). Numerous approaches and traditions have emerged under its umbrella, some of which make ambiguous claims to the titles of ‘discourse’ and ‘discourse analysis’.

The considerable number of traditions, approaches and their respective complexities are too many to identify and explicate here. Instead, I will attempt to examine how and why discourse and associated terms (such as discursive practices and discursive formations), as key analytic concepts, have become so ambiguous and differentially understood. This is a necessary *clarifying* process, rather than a critique (Bacchi, 2005, p. 199), in order to forge a coherent theorisation which will best serve the overall aims and purposes of this study.

This study makes a distinction between primary and secondary scholarship in the broad usage of discourse. Primary scholarship refers to the work of theorists whose ideas and conceptions inform paradigm level thinking; for example, the work of thinkers widely considered to be post-structuralist, including Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze (Lather, 2006). Secondary scholarship, on the other hand, draws on primary scholarship in order to develop theoretical frameworks tailored to suit the needs and interests of a specific discipline-based research project. The analyses of selected scholars on the diverse and ubiquitous uses of the term during two separate, yet broad, periods in time – the 1990s and the 2000s, will be examined in order to illuminate the relationship between primary and secondary scholarship in discourse theory (Sawyer, 2002). It appears from the literature that the theories and ideas of primary scholarship (particularly the work of Michel Foucault) have been understood in different ways, and given rise to an eclectic mix of contextualised approaches within secondary scholarship.

Arguably, it is this variability that has contributed to the immense (in terms of volume), variable (in terms of approaches and traditions) and conflicting literature relating to 'broad' discourse.

This discussion includes a summation of the main points of Sawyer's (2002) argument about the misattribution of aspects of discourse theorising to Foucault. Understanding this has proven helpful for sorting and clarifying the array of 'broad' usages, and enables the discussion to move on to a close examination of an "... exchange between leading discourse psychologists" (Bacchi, 2005, p.200) - namely Parker (1990) on one side, and Potter, Wetherell, Gill and Edwards (1990) on the other. This exchange of ideas is illustrative of longstanding tensions within discourse theorisation. Examining this exchange of viewpoints is useful for clarifying key aspects of the debate, and in doing so, distilling the strengths of the two different theorisations they present.

The discussion will then draw on additional, secondary theorisations of key analytic concepts used in the study that are associated with discourse theory.

#### A Plethora of Traditions

Discourse (as an analytic concept, in terms of broad usage) is considered to have originated within French and British theory in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Sawyer (2002, p.442), "Theories of discourse and language, derived from French structuralism and post-structuralism, began to filter into British social theory in the 1970s".

By the mid to late 1980s, according to Potter et al. (1990, p.205), "the analysis of discourse and rhetoric [had] become increasingly established as a major alternative perspective" in social psychology (their specific field of research and scholarship). They argued that "at least four distinct *strands of work* laid claim to the title discourse analysis" (1990, p.205, emphasis added), namely: a psychologically orientated strand closely associated with cognitive science; a strand shaped and influenced by speech act theory; a strand that centred entirely on continental social philosophy and cultural

analysis; and the sociology of science, relating to traditional and radical theorisations of scientific action.

Interestingly over the next decade to 2001, several of the same scholars identified five core traditions - and therefore methods - in discourse analysis (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001). These were: conversation analysis, sociolinguistics, discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis and Foucauldian analysis. The shift to the use of 'traditions' rather than 'strands' for the different forms of discourses and discourse analysis that had become established is indicative of the development of distinctive, legitimated - albeit disparate - fields of work. In 2009, in a review of the fields that employ a discourse or discourse analysis variant, Alba-Juez (2009 p.15) identifies nine traditions, namely: pragmatics; interactional sociolinguistics; conversation analysis; ethnography of communication; variation analysis and narrative analysis; functional sentence perspective; post-structuralist theory and social theory; critical discourse analysis and positive discourse analysis; and mediated discourse analysis. This demonstrates the development of different approaches and traditions to discourse and its analysis over time, creating an immense literature base.

After engaging with aspects of the significant (in terms of volume) and diverse (in terms of both primary and secondary scholarship) literature, I decided to peruse the earlier debates about the nature of discourse and discourse analysis. Over time the debates have grown in depth, detail and intellectual rigour as scholars from the same and different fields responded to each other's work. It was largely for pragmatic reasons that the decision was made in this study to focus on the earlier historical debates (covering the 1980s through to early 2000s) given that the literature base for the first twenty years of broad usage discourse scholarship is not as immense as a literature base covering thirty years. It made it easier to distil key patterns and trends.

A further reason, however, for the decision to focus on the earlier time frame is because those debates appear to represent the first, initial challenges to

what has since become normalised knowledge and unproblematic practice. Therefore they produced insights that at the time were revelatory in terms of new and innovative perspectives. According to Potter et al. (1990, p.206), some of the approaches in the mid-to-late 1980s were well-articulated, while others differed in terms of “radically varying degrees of specificity and subtle theoretical inflection”. They recognised the likelihood of “many important theoretical tensions”, as well as “poorly realised and unscholarly analysis” (1990, p.208), which scholars such as themselves could take issue with. Their observations are unsurprising given Sawyer’s (2002) key finding that, by the late 1980s, a widespread misattribution of the concept of discourse to Foucault by US and British writers had become entrenched and accepted as a given feature of the broad usage of discourse.

### Finding a Way Forward

Given that discourse (and related terms) has come to mean different things to different people (across, as well as within, social science disciplines and the humanities), it might be reassuring for others exploring discourse and discourse analysis for the first time to know that there is no right or correct definition of discourse. As anthropologists Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990, p.7) state,

‘Discourse’ has become, in recent years, one of the most popular and least defined terms in the vocabulary of Anglo-American academics – As everyone readily admits, defining discourse precisely is impossible because of the wide variety of ways it is used.

Broad usage has become “... widespread and typically appears without attribution, indicating that the usage is established and unproblematic” (Sawyer, 2002, p.434). Discourse, as a taken-for-granted fixture in research talk, becomes even more problematic if one takes into account that discourse and discourse analysis

...can be part of contrasting theoretical and disciplinary debates and can come to mean very different things. Indeed part of the struggle is exactly over what these terms mean or what they ought to mean (Potter et al., 1990, p.206).

So where does one go from there – are there other aspects of this situation that need highlighting? There are indeed. Consider the views shared by Bacchi (2000, p.46). She argues that,

...we cannot provide definitions of discourse because the whole idea of discourse is that definitions play an important part in delineating knowledge ... they require scrutiny, not replication.

In a later publication, she elaborates,

It is more important to identify the role(s) the term is expected to play in intellectual practices and to pay heed when particular uses of the term may work against agreed political projects (Bacchi, 2005, p.199).

One can take this to mean that the way one theorises discourse and related terms in effect provides the containment area for the study or research project. More importantly, it shapes the analytic concepts for the roles they are to play in the study. In other words, the paradigm(s) from within which the research emerges will forge the analytic concepts into the precise tools required for the research. Bove (1990 p.51 cited in Bacchi, 2000, p.46) states that the “key terms are finally more important for their place within intellectual practices than they are for what they may be said to ‘mean’ in the abstract”.

This point provided further support for the decision to make a generalised distinction between types of scholarship. As explained previously this study uses the terms primary scholarship and secondary scholarship. The ideas of primary scholarship are generally at the level of abstraction – the concepts are highly theorised, with a tendency toward the use of esoteric language. In other words, they lean heavily in the direction of inductive reasoning. Secondary scholarship on the other hand is research that draws, at least in part, on primary scholarship in order to develop innovative, contextualised analytical tools and frameworks for application to specific, bounded projects within an identifiable field or discipline. Secondary research leans towards deductive reasoning and research.

In making such a distinction, this study is not suggesting that a hierarchal relationship exists between primary and secondary scholarship. One is not presumed to have status or acclaim over the other. For the purposes of this study, such a distinction between primary and secondary scholarship is useful, especially in the interests of achieving clarity.

Another important set of distinctions, that I believe, needs to be made is between discourse analysis and the analysis of discourses. This study will apply Bacchi's (2005, p.199) distinction where she "highlights two central analytic traditions in discourse theory". The tradition that she refers to as discourse analysis has a more social psychological focus on patterns of speech. I would extend that more broadly to a focus on what Wetherell, Taylor and Yates (2001, p.i) define as "the study of talk and texts". They elaborate this further by stating that discourse analysis,

... is a set of methods and theories for investigating language in use and language in social contexts ... Discourse analysis provides a range of approaches to data, and crucially, also a range of theorisations of that data.

It also provides,

...routes into the study of meanings, a way of investigating back-and-forth dialogues which constitute social action, along with patterns of signification and representation which constitute culture (Wetherell et al., 2001, p.i).

Bacchi (2005, p.199) describes the second tradition as "... a political theoretical focus on the ways in which issues are given a particular meaning within a specific social setting" and refers to this tradition as the analysis of discourses. In this tradition,

...the goal is to identify, within a text, institutionally supported and culturally influenced interpretive and conceptual schemas (discourses) that produce particular understandings of issues and events.

The work of those who critique policy statements and other documents, and "critical discourse analysts more generally", who focus on the "political

nature of systems of thought” (Bacchi, 2005, p.200) involve themselves in the study of discourse per se rather than in discourse as conversation or as ‘talk’.

Although the distinction between the two traditions is very useful, Bacchi (2005, p.200) cautions against making too sharp a distinction. Her view is that there will be overlaps, akin to Potter et al.’s (1990) argument about complementarity.

Learning from Sawyer’s ‘Discourse on discourse: An archaeological history of an intellectual concept’ (2002).

R. Keith Sawyer (2002) convincingly demonstrates that despite “widespread consensus” (p.433) the broad usage of discourse did not originate with Foucault. He carries out an archaeological historical analysis of the idea (drawing on Foucault’s (1969/1972) approach) to identify the origin of the broad usage as well as a determination of how and why Foucault came to be widely associated with the term. As Sawyer (2002, p.450) points out,

In Foucault, we have a writer who began to use the term ‘discourse’ years after its usage was already fashionable among French intellectuals; used the term in a more restricted, technical sense than many of them; and discontinued his focus on discourse after May 1968.

Sawyer’s (2002) intellectual history shows that Foucault’s use of the term discourse (appearing first to English readers in the 1972 translation of his 1969 book, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*) was neither new nor original. Rather, it is “consistent with the term’s established usage within French structuralism” (Sawyer, 2002, p.436), which had been in use since the 1950s. Sawyer credits Benveniste and Lacan as using the term first, and in French (2002, p.437). For them, discourse was considered to be a specific event of language use; for example letters, documents, conversations, and speeches – in other words, text. What Foucault did was to develop several analytic concepts connected to his understanding and usage of discourse (such as positivities, discursive formations, concepts, strategies, apparatus and the archive) which mapped out the “conceptual scope” (Sawyer, 2002, p.436) for



his relatively narrow conceptual framework, which was not intended to be about discourse per se, but rather, the historical analysis of ideas or the archaeology of knowledge.

Foucault's ideas within *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/72) (or *AK*) were not interpreted in the same ways by secondary scholarship; in fact, considerable confusion has emanated, leading to misattributions of discourse theorising to *AK*. Sawyer argues there are two important reasons for this: (i) the failure of English-speaking readers to understand the extent of structuralism's influence on 1960s French theorising, in particular "the structuralist elements of its theoretical architecture" (p.440); and (ii) a failure to understand that there was a significant shift in Foucault's thinking in 1968 - after *AK* was written. Six years were to pass before Foucault published his next work, *Discipline and Punish* 1975/1977).

This was his longest break between book publications and what is interesting is that,

In this and later works, Foucault's avoidance of the terms 'discourse' and 'archaeology' is remarkable; Foucault never again described his projects using the terms 'archaeology', 'archive' or 'discursive formation' (Sawyer, 2002, p.441).

When he did use the term discourse, it was with the understanding that discourse was deeply embedded within the non-discursive practices that were his primary focus or, as in his *History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (1976/78), simply used "to describe specific instances of talking or writing about sexuality..." (Sawyer, 2002, p.441).

Foucault shifted his thinking and focus but, Sawyer argues, misreadings resulted from Foucault's *later work* being seen as *the origin* of the contemporary, broad use of discourse. These non-discursive concepts therefore were often,

...conflated with the more structuralist and linguistic notions found in *The Order of Things* and in *AK*. In attributions that contradict Foucault's rather careful usage, discursive concepts from his earlier

works – episteme, discursive formation, archive - have been conflated with non-discursive concepts from the later works ... (Sawyer, 2002, p.441).

His use of discourse in that instance was not as an analytic concept. He defined non-discursive practices as “the rules and processes of appropriation of discourse” (Foucault, 1969/72, p.68) examples of which are “pedagogic practice, the political decisions of governments” (Sawyer, 2002, p.441); the domain of influence of an institution and the interactions within it; specific sets of inter-connected events and activities; as well as series of economic processes.

An important example of such a conflation, for this study, is power-knowledge relations (to be articulated in relation to this study later on). In addressing the question of why this conflation took place, Sawyer provides a detailed, well-argued historically situated ‘trace’ of ideas, demonstrating how theories and ideas about discourse and language began to “filter into British social theory in the 1970s ... but these were not based on Foucault’s writings” (Sawyer, 2002, p.442). Sawyer goes on to argue, (p.445)

...the ‘first wave’ of British scholars read Foucault quite closely and were aware that his terminology did not match their already-developed concept of ‘discourse’. One does not find ‘discourse’ attributed to Foucault in British texts from the 1970s or early 1980s; they all attribute Pecheux, Althusser or Lacan as the source of the broad usage.

Cultural theorists, in particular, endeavoured to theorise discourse even more deeply in order to address the theoretical needs of their research programmes and interpreted Foucault’s works according to their already established concept of discourse. Some came to emphasise and focus on Foucault’s later non-discursive work. In effect, they,

...blended Foucault’s later theory of non-discursive practices with a theory of discourse that had originated with other French sources. Throughout the 1980s, a second wave of English-language theorists gradually began to attribute this hybrid concept of ‘discourse’ to Foucault (Sawyer, 2002, p. 446).

After 1989, the attribution of the hybrid to Foucault by Anglo-American scholars was so widespread that it had become entrenched; writers were making reference to Foucault without citing or making specific reference to any of his works.

Sawyer's work has been described as a "... fine paper challenging the common association of this meaning of discourse with Foucault" (Bacchi, 2005, p.208). The primary value of his analysis to this study is that it provides a very useful lens with which to sort, sift and make sense of the vast and confusing literature on discourse theorising, particularly post-structural discourse theorising. As Sawyer (2002, p.450) stated in his conclusion,

Defining and limiting one's usage of 'discourse' in these more careful ways could provide much-needed clarity to the many vague contemporary uses of the term; a general attribution to Foucault tends to perpetuate this confusion.

In other words, given the possibility that highly credible secondary scholarship in poststructuralist discourse theorising may have either imposed the concept of discourse on Foucault's earlier work (namely *AK*), or uncritically accepted other scholarship that has done this, this study focusing on the contextualised meaning and use of discourse and discourse analysis of selected sources. It accepts reference and attribution to Foucault's concepts or theorising as interpretation. It does not consider it necessary to pursue a deeper analysis of these attributions to Foucault in order to verify and authenticate the application of his ideas in the theorising carried out in a secondary scholarship project. The study concurs with Bove (1990, p.51), in that in this instance,

...terms are finally more important for their place within intellectual practices, than they are for what they may be said to "mean" in the abstract .

Learning from a scholarly exchange between Parker (1990) and Potter et al.

(1990)

In Britain, in the field of social psychology, a number of scholars gathered to exchange ideas about the status of discourse and the relevancy of discourse analysis within their field (Parker, Potter, Gill, Edwards, Wetherell, Abrams &

Hogg, 1990). They recognised that confusing understandings and articulations were emerging and identified the need to clarify and theorise more precisely. Part of that endeavour involved considering how discourse ought to be defined and applied in research. Four position papers were presented as a part of the symposium. In light of the discussion above, I will explore two of the position papers (Parker, 1990; Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990) in terms of the strengths of their arguments. These papers represent an exchange of views and ideas in that Parker's (1990) paper came first. Potter et al. (1990) was written in response to Parker's (1990).

'Discourse: definitions and contradictions' (Parker, 1990)

Parker (1990, p.190) categorically states that "my only understanding of discourse is informed by post-structuralist work" thus grounding his definitions of discourse and discourse analysis in post-structuralist theorising (particularly the ideas of Foucault, Barthes and Derrida). He draws attention to how social psychology turned to language and meaning, using ideas from microsociology and analytic philosophy (via speech act theory). He argues that post-structuralists contend that thought is caught up with language and reflexivity - and reflexivity, in turn, is continually caught up with and distorted by language. Discourses paint reality and therefore 'pictures' of reality are distilled within statements of text (either written or verbal) as metaphors, tropes, analogies and descriptions. Recognising a discourse involves a process of exploring the connotations, allusions and implications that statements of text evoke.

For Parker, discourses are structures of meaning; hence, the importance of researcher (and reader) reflexivity. Reflexivity needs to be grounded in the post-structuralist tradition. By looking at discourses in their historical contexts, their coherence becomes clearer - they also become more systematised via elaboration. Parker (1990, p.196) cites Foucault (1972, p.49), stating that discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak". According to the abstract for the series of papers, Parker promotes a definition of discourse that breaks down into

... seven necessary and three supplementary criteria. In these terms a discourse is a coherent system of meanings, realised in texts, which reflects on its own way of speaking, refers to other discourses, is about objects, contains subjects and is historically located. A discourse may also support institutions and power relations and have a variety of ideological effects (Parker, Potter, Gill, Edwards, Wetherell, Abrams & Hogg 1990, p.187).

Parker's seven criteria are presented as assertions about discourse, each of which "... are necessary and sufficient for marking out particular discourses" (p.198). The seven necessary criteria are: discourse is a coherent system of meanings; it is realised in texts; it reflects on its own way of speaking; it refers to other discourses; it is about objects; it contains subjects; and it is historically located. In addition, there are three other additional aspects of discourse and these are: discourses support institutions; reproduce power relations and have ideological effects.

It is useful to note at this point that Parker periodically draws on Foucault's conceptions to illustrate and support his post-structuralist arguments. This is an example of the term secondary scholarship, particularly using the work of a primary scholar (Foucault) to support the development of a specific framework for research. Parker's criteria "deal with different levels of discourse analysis" (Parker, 1990, p.191), and are intended, when applied, to contribute to the development of a researcher's theoretical framework for discourse analysis.

This study is in general agreement with all but one of Parker's seven assertions about discourse. The exception is the criteria of 'discourse is about objects' (which will be returned to and discussed shortly). What was particularly enlightening (and therefore useful for this study) was Parker's explanation of the three supplementary criteria he identified.

In terms of the criterion that 'discourses support institutions', the key point of interest was that some discourses are implicated in regards to institutional structures. Such discourses entail discursive practices which are invested with meaning, and therefore enable the reproduction of the material basis for

the institution. In short, discursive practices reproduce institutions. For example, some policy analysts consider policies to be a form of discourse, and therefore study them using one or other tradition of analysis of discourses (Bacchi, 2005). Education curriculum policies, for example, lead to discursive practices such as curriculum statements; state-funded websites offering professional learning and development material for teachers across the sectors; and subject specific teaching resources by commercial publishing companies.

The second criterion 'discourses reproduce power relations' resonates in terms of institutions being structured around and reproducing power relations. Herein is an intimate link between power and knowledge: for example, the increasing institutionalisation of diversity in education discourse will increase its power (and influence), thereby increase its legitimacy and validity. Although this represents only one particular way of understanding it (diversity), for systemic agents of change, it becomes *the only* accepted way of understanding diversity. Discourse is not in itself power, but it plays a significant role. Not all discourses can reproduce power relationships. Some discourses do not entail power because they do not have institutional back up. Others discourses, however, emerge in a resistant response to a dominant, more powerful discourse.

Parker's final supplementary criterion is 'discourses have ideological effects'. Although not all discourses are ideological, Parker admonishes researchers to exercise caution when trying to distinguish between those discourses which are ideological and profess to deal with truth telling. Parker theorises ideology as historically situated and "should be employed to describe relationships at a particular place and historical period" (Parker, 1990, p.200). For example, this criterion opens the door to consider the values and beliefs that families pass on to their children, and brings to mind the beliefs, and even ideologies, that families pass on to their children - the 'truths' learned and passed on within the private domain.

These are the key points drawn from Parker's work and, informed by post-structuralist theorising, inform the theory of discourse subscribed to in this study. They are particularly useful when applied to policy analyses.

The key points from Potter et al.'s (1990) response to Parker's (1990) paper will now be considered.

'Discourse: noun, verb or social practice?' (Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990)

It is clear that Potter et al. (1990, p. 187) share some of Parker's post-structuralist concerns, "... however, their theorising is also influenced by developments in ethnomethodology/ conversation analysis, sociology of scientific knowledge and rhetoric. While they make it clear that they are in general agreement with Parker on several key matters, they identify three points of disagreement. These are: they do not consider discourse ever to be an object; they make a distinction between discourse analysis and the analysis of discourses; and they do not generalise and apply post-structuralist definitions to *all* discourse analytical traditions and approaches. In addition, they

...take particular issue with elements of Parker's account which treat discourses as reified and decontextualized entities and fail to address their occasioned and rhetorically organised nature (Parker et al., 1990, p.187).

Potter et al. draw on their own definition of discourse and discourse analysis, developed at a time when, they argue, there was very little published literature about discourse analysis. Their approach identifies three themes: the functional orientation of language; the constructive processes that are integral to the functional orientation; and the variability that results from the functional orientation of language. These three themes enable a body of work to be identified as discourse analysis. The parameters or boundaries of such a body of work, however, have a "soft perimeter" within which "there are many important theoretical tensions" (Potter et al., 1990, p.208).

This study agrees with Potter et al. (1990) in that discourses are *not* sets of statements with specific features and characteristics neither are they ever objects, or independently existing entities (which is in direct contrast to Parker's (1990) view). This is because the functional orientation of language means that discourses are abstractions from practices in context – they are a constitutive part of a specific type of social practice (referred to as discursive practices) situated in specific settings and contexts. This, in turn, leads to variation because variable meanings are inevitable when different interpretative perspectives are applied.

The analysis of discourses therefore involves the analysis of social practices, requiring close attention being paid to "... local geography of contexts and practices and also the devices through which the discourses are effectively realised" (Potter et al., 1990, p.209). To be "effectively realised" is to convert into 'fact' or be presented as real. The way an object is constructed is dependent on the discursive practice within which the discourse is invoked. Different discursive practices include the use of certain terms, tropes, and metaphors. Discourse is therefore undoubtedly part of situated practices.

Discourse analysis, on the other hand, is based on the recognition that different forms of discourse are possible. On some occasions there may be constraints to the discourse used. For example, a particular discourse may have unforeseen, unanticipated consequences that were not formulated or understood by the speaker or author of the talk or text. There is an interesting tension when people are seen as active users of discourse and when discourse is understood as either generative, enabling or constraining. According to Potter et al. (1990), discourse analysis studies how people use discourses, and how discourses use people. Contrast this meaning with the meaning of the analysis of discourses – which, to reiterate, focuses on the analysis of social practices within which discourse is situated.



### In Summation

The strengths and benefits identified and drawn from this exchange of ideas between Parker (1990) and Potter et al. (1990) has been useful in making a distinction between discourse analysis and analysis of discourses. The strengths of Parker's (1990) theorisation are particularly relevant in terms of analysis of discourses. His ideas provide insights of potential value for the study of national education policies relating to diversity, Pasifika education and the systemic agents of change responsible and responsive to such policies. The strengths of the Potter et al. (1990) critique are particularly pertinent to discourse analysis, and reinforced the decision for this study to include the so-called private domain as a setting within this study. These are the settings involving real people, their discursive practices (how people use discourses) and how dominant discourses affect them (how discourses use people).

### Forging the Way Forward

Additional sources of secondary scholarship have been drawn on in order to build on the key points derived from the comparison between Parker (1990) and Potter et al. (1990). This next section provides summary explanations for how key analytic terms, such as discourse (and related terms); language; power and knowledge will be used in the analyses within this study. The discussion will conclude with an outline of why policies are regarded as discourses in this study and explain the relevance and importance of subject agency.

Discourse: is defined as socially produced groups of ideas or ways of thinking – as a system of coherent meanings which can be tracked in individual texts or groups of texts. Texts can take different forms, including verbal behaviour. Discourses are socially and historically situated.

Discursive practices: are social practices which generate, as well as use, discourses.

A discursive event: is an instance, or an identifiable expression (in terms of time and space) of a discourse. It can be a comment, a phrase within a publication, or within a public speech.

Discursive formations: are when discursive events "... refer to the same object, share the same style and support ... a strategy ... a common institutional, administrative or political drift and pattern" (Cousins & Hussain, 1984 as cited by Hall, 2001, p.73).

Language: each discourse analysis tradition (or school of thought), regardless of the differences in name and theoretical foundation, focuses on language and theorises the pivotal role of language in social interactions. Such a focus demonstrates an interest in

... what happens when people use language, based on what they have said, heard, or seen before, as well as in how they do things with language, such as express feelings, entertain others, exchange information, and so on (Alba-Juez, 2009, p.15).

Language is not a simple system for the transmission of communication. Fairclough (2003) conceptualises texts, or more precisely language, as being abstract, dynamic and intimately connected to wider social practices and structures of meaning making.

Language is understood to be constitutive: in discourse analysis, language is constitutive in that "it is the site where meanings are created and changed" (Taylor, 2001, p.6). Language or more precisely, language in use is an inherently dynamic process of meaning making. The meaning of a term or phrase in one context (or time period) may be re-created in another context or time to have a very different set of meanings.

Language is situated: In a discourse analysis project it is necessary to consider language in its situated use, "... within the process of an on-going interaction" (Taylor, 2001, p.7). Language is, therefore, both constitutive and situated.

This study is interested in approaches that involve the search for patterns within larger contexts and settings, such as society or culture. In such approaches, language is recognised as an important part of wider processes and activities. One example is the analysis of language patterns used for labelling or classifying groups of people. The values and beliefs underlying such categorisations can be analysed to identify and understand the social effects of such categorisations (be they positive or negative), as well as the knowledge and understandings (not necessarily research-based) that have become associated with them.

Power is exercised: several writers (Alba-Juez, 2009; Carabine, 2001; Hall, 2001; Taylor, 2001) have used interesting metaphoric language to express their understanding of Foucault's conception of power - for Foucault, power is not so much possessed as *exercised*.

Mechanisms for power: there are different, even alternative, mechanisms for power - as Olssen describes, there is a "multiplicity of force relations" (2004, p.63). Power circulates or flows and is then exercised through all levels of society. In human relations networks power flows in ways similar to the human circulatory system, with its network of arteries, veins and capillaries. Power flows or circulates in a complex, integrated system in all directions and therefore the exercise of power is not always downwards from a central, all-encompassing authority.

Individuals and power: individuals can exert or exercise power over others because of their roles or positions in that specific context which, according to Hall (2001, p.77), is one of the "... many, localised circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates".

The complexity of power relations: this conception of power describes how power circulates through a society via a 'micro-physics' system of rituals or forms of behaviour. These cannot be understood in terms of being a reproduction of power relations at higher levels, nor can it be understood in terms of some notion of there being a centralised, all-encompassing power

force. In other words, power relations at more local levels are not “... a simple projection of the central power” (Foucault as cited by Hall, 2001, p.77).

Power can be productive: another highly significant feature of this conception of power is that it can be productive, rather than just repressive (Scott, 2008, p.53). This might challenge some notions of power, but this “more inclusive view of power argues that power ... is at one and the same time repressive and productive” (Scott, 2008, p.53).

Knowledge and power: according to Foucault, “There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of the field of knowledge, nor at the same time any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (1977, p.27). Thus, this conception of power is intricately involved with knowledge – hence knowledge/ power.

Policies as discourses: Bacchi (2005, p.45) makes reference to those scholars who use the term discourse when studying policy – they describe policy as discourse “either directly ... or by implication”. How they conceptualise or understand policy affects how they understand and analyse policy – much like discourse. This study is interested in discourses and discursive formations in the context and setting in which they are found, including education policy statements and documents. Taylor (2001) describes this as moving from the discursive to the extra-discursive and said that a focus on ‘language in use’ (her term for discourse) blurs any distinction between them. According to Taylor, this approach,

...draws attention to the social nature and historical origins of the world ‘out there’ which is generally taken for granted. Controversy is basic to this form of discourse analysis because it involves the study of power and resistance, contests and struggles. The basic assumption here is that the language available to people enables and constrains not only their expression of certain ideas but also what they do (2001, p9).

Policies (as discourse) and language: the approach to discourse that Bacchi (2005) has developed builds on an understanding of language usefully elaborated by Wetherell, Taylor and Yates (2001). Irrespective of the

discourse tradition used there is a focus on language, how it is used and its pivotal role in social interactions.

The extra-discursive dimension: policy analyses in this study go beyond locating discursive formations, tracing their origins, and trying to understand their current usage in education policy. The extra-discursive dimension involves examining the influence and effects at different levels - particularly the macro level – as well as the underlying values, beliefs, even political ideologies that are also communicated, and how these might construct and organise different social groups within society.

Subject agency: in his discussion of Foucault's theories and ideas, Hall (2001) posed the question: "Where is the subject?" (p.79). In other words, a Foucauldian conceptualisation of discourse asks where the knower, or viewer (that is, the human individual) is located in relation to knowledge/power. The theoretical response is interesting. Hall explained that for Foucault the knower is *not* the author of representation – he or she does not have full sovereignty over the processes involved. Hall (2001) states,

It is discourse, not the subjects who speak it, which produces knowledge. Subjects may produce particular texts, but they are operating within the limits of the *episteme*, the *discursive formation*, the *regime of truth* of a particular period and culture (p.79, emphasis added).

There is a strong focus on education policy in this study; there is also a strong focus on other forms of discourse formation which are reflected in the actions of individuals. Such analyses provide highly relevant insights which could prove useful to both policy makers and educators (as policy implementers) in different education settings and contexts within Aotearoa New Zealand.

### ***Harnessing the Theories Together***

The study has harnessed the approach to philosophy in education exemplified by Jane Roland Martin because her conceptions of culture, cultural liabilities and cultural stock, identity, change and transformation

(and other related conceptions), as presented within her 21st century publications (The Collection), have provided important tools for this study. Her methodological antecedents in analytic philosophy contribute to the scholarly rigor of her investigations of concepts such as culture, and its role in education – her theorisations have been very useful as tools of conceptual deconstruction and clarification. There were limitations, however, in terms of the ability of her philosophical approach alone to address the complexities of contextual discontinuities, of discourses and knowledge/power. Discourse theory provided scope for developing conceptual tools that would facilitate significantly deeper levels of both deconstruction and potentially transformative interpretation leading to an even more critical, emancipationist inquiry (please refer to Figure 5 , the adapted version of Lather’s paradigms of postpositivist inquiry in education, on p. 55).

Under the broad banner of discourse theory are discourse analysis and the analysis of discourses which shape the theoretical framework, along with the expanded view of analytic philosophy as reflected in Martin’s most recent work. The highly influential (and therefore dominant) ways of talking about diversity and difference can now be referred to as discursive formations – the discursive formation of diversity in education, and the discursive formation of Pasifika education. The approach to discourse theory selected for this study provides additional analytical tools with which to de-construct, analyse and thereby address embedded power relations.

There are six analyses that draw on this methodological framework. Each is located within a chapter. These chapters are contained within Parts 3 and 4 of the thesis. Part 3 (Chapters Four, Five and Six) collectively examines diversity and Pasifika education discourses in terms of their location and use within educational policy and varied institutional contexts of education. The movement of educational ideas across and within national boundaries and socio-political concerns, such as social justice, equity and emancipation, emerge as important features and concerns. Policies are treated as extra-discursive formations - hence, discourse analysis is one of the main analytical

tools applied. Ideas of a post-colonial nature from Pacific scholars and thinkers are included in the analysis presented in Chapter Six.

Section 4 of the thesis (Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine) illuminates discursive practices that permeate within the private domain of community spaces and places. The analyses will show that dominant discourses reverberating throughout the public domain by educators and education institutions may well be at odds with the values and perspectives of education expressed by Pasifika communities. Within the private domain of homes and families, as well as within professional Pasifika education communities, alternative understandings may exist, and therefore are more than likely to generate 'other' discourses. These in turn shape perspectives of Pacific/Pasifika peoples and hence the decisions about education they make for themselves and their children. Note that other theories have been drawn on within specific analyses (refer to Figure 5) – these complement the overarching methodological framework of this study, and are explained in depth and detail within the pertinent chapters. For example, auto-ethnographic methods emerge again and take a strong lead within Chapter Eight. Meanwhile, Martin's conceptions are of utmost importance in the analysis within Chapter Nine, but alongside are theories of learning (such as Wenger and Lave's communities of practice).

### **3. Examining the Surface Features**

*From the political mobility at the surface down to the slow movements of 'material civilisation', ever more levels of analysis have been established: each has its own peculiar discontinuities and patterns.....*

*Michel Foucault, 1972, p.3*



## **Chapter Four**

### **What does diversity in education mean?**

This chapter will first explore the socio-historical origins of the use of diversity in education policy and in doing so explore past meanings and practices, in order to trace their shifts and movements. Curriculum policy will then be analysed as an illustrative case study of the important connections between discourses of diversity and extra-discursive dimensions. This analysis will include examining critiques of the pre-revision curriculum (*The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*, Department of Education, 1993) and comparing selected issues and concerns with the revised curriculum, *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007). The chapter will then probe the MOE's strategic efforts to build an education system that is responsive to the 'challenges of our times' (MOE, 2007, p.4), via the perspective that, as a socio-cultural construction, curriculum is a site of cultural politics (Apple, 1990; 1996), and in New Zealand's case, strongly influenced by specific neo-liberal articulations of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

#### *Establishing the Series*

The term 'diversity', as it is currently used in Aotearoa New Zealand, appears to have replaced the terms 'multicultural' and 'multicultural education' which were previously used to address the implications of cultural diversity for teaching and learning within New Zealand classrooms and commonly used in curriculum policy (Department of Education, 1993) and statements such as *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 1997).

Gibson, writing in the mid-1970s about what she considered the phenomenon of multicultural education, warned that,

If instead we wish to move multicultural education from the realm of emotion-raising slogan to that of a practical concept for educational policy decisions, we must become more *precise* about the phenomenon to which the concept refers (1976, p.2, emphasis added).

A similar argument can be made for diversity. Arguably, the “lack of clarity with regard to key concepts” that she identified in relation to multicultural education (in all its variants) and the tendency to allow “unsupportable” assumptions to escape testing and critique (Gibson 1976, p.14) led to the development of several discursive formations with their accompanying ways of thinking about (and responding to) diversity in New Zealand’s education system in this the 21<sup>st</sup> century – especially within the first five years of this new century. Three such discourses were identified for analysis: diversity used simply as a descriptor; diversity in education and education for diversity. These discourses can be found at levels within the education system responsible for interpreting and implementing policy in a range of contexts and settings – such as schools, universities, contracted research and the provision of professional learning and development (PLD).

This study contends that at that time (2000-2005) diversity was under-theorised and escaped rigorous critique. It has become a highly influential set of discursive formations which has shaped the formulation and direction of education policy (and continues to do so). Examining the development of New Zealand’s national school curriculum provides useful insight into the discursive formations relating to diversity – for example, the ‘responsiveness to diversity’ set of discursive formations (Samu, 2006) – which, like all discursive formations, is socially and historically situated. The development of New Zealand’s national school curriculum is a good example of policy developed to not only be responsive to diverse learners when enacted, but designed with aspirations relating to educating for social cohesion within heterogeneous societies.

The need for understanding and respecting the many different cultures of New Zealand has been at the fore-front of government policy since the 1980s (Department of Education, 1993); however, notions of power sharing and resource redistribution have been largely absent or ignored. In promoting the recognition and value of the “experiences, cultural traditions, histories and languages of *all* New Zealanders” (Dept of Edu, 1993, p 7.) one can argue that *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Dept of Ed, 1993) rests on the

implicit assumption that all such social groups already enjoy relative parity and equality. Multicultural education is about education for a multicultural society – it focuses on cultural inclusiveness in the curriculum as well as the pedagogies used in teaching and learning that curriculum. It tends not to be explicit about power relations (Samu, 2004a; May & Sleeter, 2010).

The Ministry of Education no longer uses ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’ as terms or notions in education policy. But, these terms, and the different ways that they are used, are arguably still very much part of the discourses of difference for teachers and educators. The labels may have changed - ‘diversity’ instead of ‘multicultural’ - but one can hold reservations about the underlying assumptions. It is probable that some of the underlying assumptions about multicultural education, and the education of ‘others’, or those who appear different from the teachers’ perspectives, have been reassigned and now underpin the use of terms such as diversity. Teachers and educators do not bring blank intellectual and ideological slates to issues and concerns relating to diversity and education. As with any area, teachers and educators have their own knowledge, beliefs and assumptions about diversity and education, and what constitutes quality teaching in settings with diverse learners. They also have knowledge, beliefs and assumptions about the wider social and cultural groups their learners represent or belong to. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995), speaking of their experiences as teachers at tertiary level, offer the following insights:

We, as well as our learners, will have beliefs and values regarding learning and the roles of teacher and learner. These are culturally transmitted through such avenues as history, religion, mythology, political orientation, and familial and media communication. The ways in which we experience a learning situation are mediated by such cultural influences (pp.7,8).

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) note the need for educators to develop an awareness of different interpretations of the term diversity and recognise that diversity “goes far beyond race, gender, and class” to include “ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, language and disability” (1995, p.xi). They do more than just identify diversity in descriptive terms. For them, the term diversity

...conveys a need to respect similarities and differences among human beings and to go beyond 'sensitivity' to active and effective responsiveness. This requires constructive action to change ideas and attitudes that perpetuate the exclusion of underrepresented groups of students (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995, p.8)<sup>20</sup>.

One approach to making sense and conceptual order of the confusing array of diversity discourses is to draw on the ideas of Bullivant (1981). Referring specifically to multiculturalism, Bullivant argues that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether the term is being treated as a "social or political theory" or as a "prescription for educational practice" (1981, p.1). The same can be said for diversity and education. Such discourses focus on ideas, beliefs and understandings about social or political theory, and others focus on what should happen or take place in the nation's early-childhood centres, classrooms or lecture halls in order to ensure that teaching and learning make a difference for all learners, and not just for some.

### *Critiquing the Array of Diversity Discourses*

It is possible to identify three diversity discourses, each with different implications. These are: diversity as an adjective or a descriptor of an observed situation; diversity in education; and education for diversity.

Diversity as an adjective describes contexts and heterogeneous learners within these contexts. For example, Alton-Lee of the MOE's Best Evidence Synthesis<sup>21</sup> (BES) programme, defined diversity as follows:

Diversity encompasses many characteristics including ethnicity (and increasingly, multiple ethnic heritages), socio-economic background, home language, gender and sexuality, and special needs (including disability, and giftedness). Teaching needs to be responsive to the diversity and the diverse realities within groups, for example, diversity within Pakeha, Māori, Pasifika (the Pasifika 'umbrella') and Asian

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<sup>20</sup> 'Active and effective responsiveness' refers to pedagogical responsiveness.

<sup>21</sup> The Best Evidence Synthesis Programme (BES) sought to identify and synthesise evidence based national and international research of effective practice that had made a difference for diverse learners. "The series of BESs is designed to be a catalyst for systemic and ongoing improvement in education" <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/bes>

students who are arguably the most diverse 'ethnic' group categories by cultural and linguistic heritage (Alton-Lee, 2004, p.21).

In this instance, the term 'diversity' is used to identify, categorise and describe variation; however, this is problematic. The identification and description of the physical, social and intellectual characteristics of learners and features is not the sole reason teachers and educators do this. The process of recognising and naming has a significant and very necessary dimension – and that is to do with the differences that are found *within* categories. The recognition of someone's culture involves noting what is different or the same in relation to one's own (Samu, 2004). The recognition or identification of a person's cultural identity, or sexual orientation, or level of physical ability, is a process that purposefully marks out difference.

However, diversity as simply a descriptor or adjective is limiting. Theoretical definitions on the other hand, will go beyond stating the obvious. The BES programme's 'responsiveness to diversity' framework does this to an extent, in that it "... rejects the notion of a 'normal' group and 'other' or minority groups of children" (Alton-Lee, 2003, p.3). This is a clearly stated position – it is a definition that recognises that in 'seeing' difference, other deeply embedded beliefs, values and assumptions come into play. This is related to the fact that some forms or expressions of difference, within a category or type of difference, have greater social acceptance than others. These are the 'norms', or reference points, which determine negative perceptions of other expressions of difference.

Tatum (2000) offers a far more challenging, thought provoking framework for understanding diversity. From the United States context, she refers to 'categories of otherness' and states that

...there are at least seven categories of "otherness" commonly experienced in U.S. society. People are commonly defined as other on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and physical or mental ability. Each of these categories has a form of oppression associated with it ... (p.331).

The important difference between Alton-Lee's and Tatum's definitions or conceptualisations lies in their recognition of the power relations within the forms of diversity. The BES programme definition, for example, recognises that, in the context of education and schooling, some forms of difference are normalised, and educators may use terms such as 'norm' and 'other' when considering the differences between students. According to Alton-Lee (2003, p.3), the BES definition

...rejects the notion of a 'normal' group and 'other' or minority groups of children and constitutes diversity and difference as central to the classroom endeavor and central to the focus of quality teaching in Aotearia, New Zealand.

The existence of a power differential is signaled but is not examined. What makes the situation conceptually even more problematic is that the process of establishing norms is complex, and deeply ingrained. Norms are inextricably connected to 'others' – and are evidence of a response to identified difference. What is 'other' can be responded to in negative ways in education– such as the cultural production of stigmatising labels and excessive use of testing, tracking and separating which students with disabilities and special needs may face. This represents, in education, an exercise of power over students. A statement regarding the rejection of the notion of norms is arguably too simplistic and even naive.

Tatum (2000), on the other hand, has a far more robust conceptualisation. She argues that within each category of difference is the reality of 'othering'. Some expressions of difference are normalised, and become the reference point for other expressions of difference, particularly those which appear extreme to the norm. The normalised expression, or the norm, ends up controlling or at least influencing, how other expressions are seen and received. Other expressions of difference might be merely seen as odd or unusual and elicit fairly neutral reactions. Other, more extreme forms will elicit stronger, negative reactions. Tatum (2000, p.10-11) refers to those expressions considered most 'exceptional' to the norm as 'targeted identities'. The norm position is so influential that it subordinates other

expressions of difference. Arguably, this could result in the realities of subordinated, targeted identities being either overlooked or actively discriminated against.

Tatum's concept of diversity and difference provides a dimension of crucial importance to teaching and learning and one that is absent from the BES conceptualisation. Delpit (1995) shares the following viewpoint in a discussion on the role of power relations in teaching and learning.

We all carry worlds in our heads, and those worlds are decidedly different. We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist? Indeed, many of us don't even realise that our own worlds exist only in our heads and in the cultural institutions we have built to support them ... (1995, p.xiv).

The conceptual limitations of the BES programme's 'responsiveness to diversity framework' do not enable teachers and educators to reflect critically on their own perspectives of difference, and thus allows to go unchecked any limited or distorted understandings that they might hold about inequity and diversity.

A second diversity discourse is when diversity is seen as a prescription for education practice. That is to say, diversity in education is about effective teaching and learning practices for 'diverse' (adjective) learners. The evidence-based research publications informing the BES programme are prime examples – such as *Effective Pedagogy in Social Sciences/ Tikanga a Iwi* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) and *Effective Pedagogy in Pangaru/Maths* (Anthony & Walshaw, 2007). These reflect trends elsewhere. With reference to the “meta-discipline” of multicultural education in the United States (Banks, 2000, p.viii), Gay (2005) states,

The field *began as primarily a curriculum enterprise*, but quickly shifted to a pedagogical focus. This shift in focus has continued over time such that currently multicultural education scholarship deals primarily with pedagogical issues....developmental trends ...concerned foremost with modifying classroom instruction to make it *more reflective of and responsive to the ethnic, racial, cultural and*

*social diversities that characterise U.S. society* (p.xvii, emphasis added).

In addition to Alton-Lee's Best Evidence Synthesis (2003), a number of other theorists and educational researchers have identified and developed what they consider to be the key features/ characteristics/ or principles of pedagogical practices that are responsive to diverse learners. Examples from the United States include Banks (2002); Gay (2000); the Centre for Research Excellence in Diversity Education (CREDE, 2004) at the University of California-Berkley and Hernandez Sheets (2005).

Each of these frameworks enables educators to critically reflect and examine research for strategies that are responsive to learner diversities. Each framework defines diversity, and makes explicit what 'responsiveness to diversity' entails in relation to pedagogical practice (bearing in mind that the different frameworks do not use the phrase 'responsiveness to diversity'). Each framework offers a set of principles, or characteristics, which can, if applied, guide teachers' decisions regarding pedagogical practice and makes explicit the crucial role of the teacher.

Much of the diversity and education research in New Zealand focuses on pedagogy and the structures and processes (such as the professional learning and development of teachers, and management of schools) that enable measureable, evidence-based improvements to the learning outcomes of diverse learners (Bishop et al., 2003; Timperly et al., 2007; Robinson et al, 2009). Much of this research and development is driven by the MOE. The BES programme is a major example of an initiative that focused on pedagogy in addition to the Ministry of Education-funded Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI)<sup>22</sup> currently administered by the New Zealand Council for Education Research (NZCER).

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<sup>22</sup> The Teaching and Learning Initiative (TLRI) is a contestable research and development fund established to fund projects to research effective practices in a range of settings. It is intended to grow evidence based national research.



A third, far less pervasive diversity discourse in New Zealand at the national policy and research level, is the way diversity is used as a social theory, or the belief that a certain type of schooling will play a significant role in increasing tolerance, and reducing prejudice, within wider society. In other words, it is the enhancement of social cohesion through education for the acceptance of diversity; or more simply, education *for* diversity. Curriculum developments and implementation are the major foci for analyses of this discourse – particularly developments (such as resources) which are intended to help learners develop greater understanding of culturally/socially different others within their own society, in other parts of the world and in the past/present. For example, Siteine and Samu (2009) carried out an investigation of the New Zealand *School Journal* examining how Pacific/Pasifika peoples were represented in this well-established, state-funded free-to-school primary school resource. The study was interested in determining the types of understandings that students are likely to develop about Pacific/Pasifika peoples as a consequence.

#### ***Other related discursive formations***

To demonstrate the connections of diversity discourse formations to the wider context of policy development, the study will now explore other discourses such as ‘responsiveness’ and ‘quality teaching’.

In 2005 Alton-Lee noted that,

The high disparities, the relatively high variance within schools in the New Zealand PISA results, and our rapidly growing demographic profiles for those learners traditionally underserved by New Zealand schooling, indicate a need for community and system development *to be more responsive* to diverse learners (p.8, emphasis added).

These problematic outcomes in international tests at the start of the new century and New Zealand’s distinctive demographic profile (and the implications on school population projections) resulted in a corresponding focus on teaching and learning of diverse learners (diversity in education).

When the MOE considers quality teaching, it assumes that such a notion is evidence-based, or based on measureable outcomes. If outcomes (such as test results) are positive, then a direct connection can be made to the effectiveness of the teaching. If the outcomes (test results) are poor, then questions are justifiably raised regarding the effectiveness of the teaching that preceded the students' test performance. It is possible to argue, however, that the Ministry's notions of 'quality' or, more precisely, effective teaching, are in fact shaped by comparisons of New Zealand with other OECD countries using data from international studies such as the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment<sup>23</sup> (PISA) In 2000, for example, some New Zealand students achieved very highly on the PISA tests while others achieved very poorly. According to Alton-Lee (2005, p.8), "Maori and Pasifika students featured quite prominently amongst the students that performed poorly". She described the education system of New Zealand as being one of "...high disparities in achievement by comparison with most OECD countries" (p.8). Overall, New Zealand's performance in PISA 2000 was described as "high average and large variance" and placed New Zealand, for reading literacy, in a comparative quadrant labeled "high quality, low equity" (OECD, 2001, p.257). Other OECD countries located within this quadrant included Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom – however, New Zealand had a far greater percentage variation than these nations.

In effect, New Zealand scored the second highest ranking in terms of disparity among OECD member countries. To have irrefutable evidence that identifies New Zealand internationally as having a 'high quality' education system (New Zealand's top students do very well on the test) is presumably a reflection of the effectiveness of the teaching they received. Yet, New

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<sup>23</sup> PISA is the only international education survey to measure the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds, the age at which students in most countries are nearing the end of their compulsory time in school. Launched in 1997 by the OECD, it "... aims to evaluate education systems worldwide every three years by assessing 15-year-olds' competencies in the key subjects: reading, mathematics and science. To date over 70 countries and economies have participated in PISA." See <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>

Zealand's education system is also marked 'low equity' indicating that its poorly performing students are well behind the students who perform well. Given the over-representation of Maori, Pasifika, special needs and impoverished students<sup>24</sup> within this lowest band of student performers is evidence indeed that teaching may not be effective for these groups of learners. Historically, one of the key justifications for a secular, state-provided education system in New Zealand (Education Act of 1877) was to provide equal opportunity for all regardless of social and economic circumstances. Understandably, the evidence from this first set of PISA results demonstrated otherwise which would not have aligned with the ethos of many New Zealand educators.

Further analyses by the MOE through its BES programme of research and development showed "... there is marked variability within schools in teaching effectiveness" (Alton-Lee, 2004, p.4). The MOE found that differences in educational outcomes were the result of differences in the effectiveness of teaching within schools in New Zealand. Little wonder that the outcomes (and the persistent nature of the patterns) of the PISA tests since 2000 have led to an in depth and systematic response programme of research and development by the MOE. The BES programme and its outputs (a series of eight comprehensive iterative syntheses) represent significant, high level investment by the MOE, and are held in high regard by the MOE as evidenced by statements of its own expectations. Consider the opening statement on the homepage of the BES programme website: "Trustworthy evidence about what works and what makes a bigger difference in education".

The MOE has produced an explanatory flier about the BES, which provides examples of the high esteem the BES programme's outputs have generated internationally. For example the president of the International Congress of School Effectiveness and Improvement, Dr Lorna Earl, is quoted as saying that,

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<sup>24</sup> 'impoverished' refers to the children captured within New Zealand's poverty statistics

The Iterative BES Programme is at the forefront of a wave of activity that is already moving the reform landscape forward in a dramatic way by linking research to policy and practice. In my view, the Iterative BES Programme has the potential to make a dramatic impact, not only on education in New Zealand, but in other countries around the world<sup>25</sup>

Another example of international recognition is the International Academy of Education (IAE), which “has commissioned summaries of recent BESs for international use, as part of its Educational Practice Series”. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has funded the publication of these materials and made them available on its website<sup>26</sup>.

It would seem that ‘responsive’ as a discourse pertains specifically to being responsive to diversity (as an adjective). It involves an emphasis on approaches (in teaching and learning) that will enhance success for all students simultaneously. It is explicit in its challenge to deficit thinking – that is, the problem of measurable underachievement is not the fault of the learners and their families and communities, but rather ‘the system’. It also challenges assumptions that more able students will cope without their special needs and abilities being taken into account.

‘Responsive to diversity’ has become a distinctive discourse with several highly significant discursive events to support it (in the form of numerous BES outputs or publications). It is a discourse that drives much of the education research funded by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand since the turn of this current century. The indirect, implicit meaning of ‘quality teaching’ is teaching that is measurable, evidence-based and therefore proven to show that it is effective which means moving learners from one point to the next in terms of their progress through, and achievement of, the learning outcomes of the national curriculum. Teaching that is effective in these ways is teaching that is responsive to diverse learners. Because if

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<sup>25</sup> See [www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES)

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/services/online-materials/publications/educational-practices.html>

teaching only has measureable effects on some groups of students and not others, then it cannot be the kind of quality teaching that an equitable, high-quality internationally recognised education system would feature.

Programmes such as the BES have made highly significant contributions to the knowledge base that the MOE can draw on in order to address the aforementioned systemic problems. ERO (2012, p.4) has found that while some schools are making a conscious and concerted effort to raise Pasifika achievement levels, “...the overall progress across the education sector was minimal”. Results from successive PISA tests (2003, 2006, 2009)<sup>27</sup> as well as National Education Monitoring Programme (NEMP)<sup>28</sup> reports indicate that Pasifika students still remain most at risk for not succeeding (ERO, 2012). Since 2008, ERO (2012) has carried out a series of national evaluations, “...focusing on how schools engage with Pacific learners and act to improve their achievement outcomes” (p.1). The results of the most recent report (2012) showed that there had not been much in the way of “... *system-wide* changes.... in the way schools were responding to Pacific students, despite the widely recognised disparities in education outcomes for these students” (ERO, 2012, p.1, emphasis added). ERO concluded that “...school leaders and teachers in most schools were not recognising and *actively responding* to this achievement disparity” (ERO, 2012, p.1, emphasis added).

It can be argued however that in terms of the dominant discourses of effective teaching and quality teaching, there remains the afore-mentioned conceptual problem – which is the absence of a power-relations perspective. Arguably what is required is a far more in-depth critical analysis of the complexities of culture at a number of inter-faces – such as teachers and educators at the inter-face with learners; between researchers and those who are researched; between providers of PLD contracts and the facilitators they employ to deliver programmes, and the teachers that these programmes are

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<sup>27</sup> Refer to <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2543>

<sup>28</sup> Refer to <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/research/NEMP>

delivered to. These are lines of discussion that will be explored and developed further in subsequent chapters.

### *Connecting with Curriculum Policy*

It can be argued that the phrase ‘active and effective responsiveness’ is inclusive of curricular responsiveness – particularly for curriculum statements that are pedagogic in nature and include, within the design, explicit principles regarding teaching and learning. Openshaw, Clark, Hamer, and Waitere-Ang (2005) explain that a pedagogical curriculum is one where the curriculum is viewed as a pedagogical process. In the classroom, students, subject matter and other features of the context are mediated by teachers through a set of dynamic interactions. Curriculum as pedagogical process is a deeply embedded, co-constructed curriculum-making process. It is a socially constructed set of understandings within, and influenced by, the social and policy contexts of education.

The current New Zealand school curriculum statement, *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007), is a pedagogic curriculum as was its predecessor, *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Department of Education, 1993). This section of the chapter will focus on how both curricula were designed to shape and influence not only *what* was to be taught, but also *how* the content (knowledge, skills and attitudes) was to be taught. It will demonstrate how both curricula were designed to be responsive to broader social, economic and political concerns of the times. It will establish that a strong emphasis on the preparation of young people for participation in the nation’s economic development was a particularly important priority for both curricula statements. Interestingly, the relationship between enhancing social cohesion (due primarily to cultural diversity) and contributing to the economic well-being of the nation (through the pursuit of economic productivity) are addressed in two quite disparate ways.

Lee, Hill and Lee (2004, p.73), have warned that confusion will ensue when there is a “failure to understand our education history and to recognise

earlier curriculum debates and their significance to contemporary discussions". The next section of this chapter will therefore set the scene, in terms of the historical context, before the study examines and discusses the two curriculum statements.

### *Historical Context*

In the 1930s, New Zealand established and developed itself as a Welfare state (under a Labour government) with its citizenry receiving state-funded services and benefits such as: generous retirement packages; a fully-funded health system; state housing for lower income earners; 'free' education; heavily subsidised tertiary education; and family benefit payments contingent on income levels and numbers of children. The relative stability and prosperity of the economy over the 1950s and 1960s meant that such services and benefits became taken-for-granted fixtures, while embedding social expectations of the role of the state (Roberts, 1998).

New Zealand as a nation underwent dramatic economic and social change after the election of a Labour government in 1984. The "comfort zone created around the New Zealand economic and social landscape" (Roberts, 1998, p.32) created and supported by the Muldoon-led National government (from 1975 through to 1984) was, however, not sustainable in terms of the global economic context within which the New Zealand economy had to survive. A "broader raft of social, economic and political changes within New Zealand" (Philips, 2000, p.143) ensued which were similar in nature to developments overseas in England, Scotland and Australia. Peters and Marshall (1996, p.1) provide an analysis that describes New Zealand as becoming "the 'neo-liberal experiment' in the 1980s and 1990s" for the western world, lauded by influential trans-national organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the OECD. The economic, social and political reforms that were made were underscored by a philosophy of "market liberalism" (Roberts, 1998, p.32) in which,

...the individual lies at the centre of all policy thinking and social change. The decisions and actions of human beings are assumed to

flow from a form of rational self-interest, in which individuals seek to maximise their own utility in a competitive world (Roberts, 1998, p.32).

In this context, it became obvious that, at policy development level, notions about education had shifted and changed. According to Roberts (1998, p.32),

The notion of viewing government spending on education as an investment in creating and maintaining an important *public* good has given way to the dominant idea that education is a *commodity* (emphasis added).

Not surprisingly, such a shift in wider social and political policy led to the most pervasive (in terms of scale, breadth) and profound (arguably in terms of depth) period of educational change in New Zealand. The education reforms occurred in response to the administrative restructuring instituted by the initiative *Tomorrow's Schools* (Dept. of Education, 1989). These changes impacted on school governance, assessment and qualifications systems and - not least - the school curriculum. These curriculum reforms were the most extensive to date in the history of the New Zealand education system (Philips, 2000, p.143). Beginning with a draft discussion document detailing the proposed new curriculum structure for schools in 1991 and subsequent consultations, it was developed and published in 1993 as *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Philips, 2000, p. 145).

### ***Re-Visiting The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993)***

*The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Dept of Education, 1993) was modelled on the education system in the United Kingdom – a framework that O’Neil, Clark and Openshaw (2004, p.37) described as “... highly prescriptive, bureaucratic and politically contentious”. It was also untried, untested. Thus, New Zealand committed to a model in the absence of any research supporting its educational merits and worthiness for children and young people in New Zealand (Elley, 2004).

The structures of this framework consisted of nine principles to guide teaching and learning; seven essential learning areas; eight essential groups



of skills; a generic statement about the place of attitudes and values in the curriculum; and an outline of assessment policy for school and national levels (Dept of Education, 1993; Philips, 2000). According to O'Neil et al. (2004, p.37),

The most radical departure from the earlier curriculum is not its size or 'crowdedness' (a huge practical issue) but the national Achievement Objectives set out in a 'structural ladder' of eight progressive levels of achievement across each learning area. These are defined as statements of achievement objectives or learning outcomes against which student progress is to be measured.

A number of other practical issues developed. For teachers, some of these were excessive levels of assessment, and insufficient time to cover "an enormous number of topics" (Elley, 2004, p.92). This would have been a particularly acute problem for primary teachers, with the responsibility of addressing all seven essential learning areas and the achievement objectives for up to four levels of learning for each essential learning area. Irwin (1999) also identified issues relating to the number of levels of learning; the lack of differentiation; and the specification of learning outcomes.

Elley (2004) identified and discussed issues of a more profound nature. For example, he questioned the educational validity of the structure for the sequencing of knowledge and skills. In particular, the problem of educators being able to identify progressions of learning that made sense to teachers, in terms of their professional judgements of student learning. He highlighted the varied results across levels and curriculum areas. According to Elley (2004, p.94),

The problem is that students' knowledge growth in most topics of the curriculum is individual and idiosyncratic. Their knowledge develops into unique networks of partially mastered concepts and multitudes of particulars. Each student organises their cognitive systems individually depending on their unique experience. Rarely will their knowledge schemes fit neatly into sequences prescribed by the curriculum.

Another issue was the wording or expression of these progressions for some levels in some essential learning areas. For example, Elley (2004) presented an in-depth analysis of the way progressions were structured and articulated for English. His main argument was that a skills-based level structure was do-able for some subjects or topics, but not for those based on what he termed “receptive language modes” (p.98). Elley described the objectives in *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* as “vague” and therefore unable to capture any inherent progressions within English as a discipline or field of study. He went so far as to describe *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework’s* approach to English teaching and learning as a “... clumsy, outcomes-based approach, with neither logic nor research to support it” (2004, p.98).

Codd (2005b, p.xv) shared these views of the overall social and education reforms of the 1990s, and the impact on curriculum development. He stated that,

Under the influence of neoliberalism, economic objectives have replaced citizenship as the primary political purpose of public education. It is not surprising, therefore, that much of the recent political rhetoric is about the role of education in creating a knowledge-based economy and preparing young people for the globalisation of markets. The advocates of the knowledge economy insist that all areas of the curriculum should be designed to produce the attainment of specific learning outcomes, which leads to a narrowing of content to focus on product rather than the processes of learning and thinking. This produces a curriculum for social control to ensure that centrally formulated social and economic objectives are met.

O’Neil et al. (2004, p.35) present a similar argument about the curriculum developments that took place during this time. They argue that in making education more economically efficient (as in value for money) and more responsive to the economy, it is obvious that the “intrinsic benefits” of the education system were not “the development of the intellect and the opening up of knowledge” but rather “the benefits that ‘skilled’ individuals who can move from job to job when the market dictates, will ensure for the economy”.

The curriculum structure also drew close analytical attention. For example, Irwin (1999, p.158) argued that the underlying assumption of curricula structure is that “all forms of learning can be constrained within one structure without distortion”. O’Neil et al. (2004) pointed out that the structure within which the selected content (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values) of the curriculum is contained and organised, determines what teachers will do in their teaching. Such structures are therefore “... frameworks of compliance, regulation, assessment and evaluation” (2004, p.27) and can be seen as an expression of Foucault’s notion of governmentality. This means that “... the curriculum form, structure and content essentially ‘do’ the work of the state, promoting cultural reconstruction by providing a guiding regulatory regime in which teachers and students work” (p.23).

Lee, Hill and Lee (2004, p.20) also analysed the curriculum’s framework, and argued that the national curriculum was “primarily couched in the discourse of modern economics and designed to service the demands of economic growth”. It was evident to them that the purpose of schooling was to produce educated and skilled individuals to take their appropriate place in the workforce and to contribute to restoring New Zealand’s economic well-being - as worthwhile, disciplined and productive citizens. They also drew attention to the way *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Dept of Education, 1993) brought training (vocational education) and education together with training given great emphasis because of the belief that this was of more importance to economic prosperity. They also criticised the structures (such as the essential learning areas and essential skills) by questioning the underlying assumptions about what the future economic, educational, social and vocational needs of young people would be. An important question one can ask is how can such future needs be anticipated and planned for so confidently? (Lee, et al., 2004).

Philips (2000, p.144) summarised the curriculum changes over the 1990s as follows:

Curriculum changes have therefore been characterised by much tighter specification of what students are expected to learn, an extension of assessment programmes and related initiatives aimed at monitoring students' learning, and closer control by the state of teacher performance.

Ideologically, however, there is no doubt that the reforms in the national school curriculum were driven by the neoliberal reform agenda of the successive governments throughout the mid-1980s and through the 1990s. As Codd (2005, p.4) argues "... neoliberal economic theories continue to have distorting effects on education policy by neglecting its social purposes", an unsurprising outcome given the perspective of Treasury officials during this period of time. According to Codd (2005, p.4), Treasury argued that,

... education should no longer be seen as an investment by government in the wealth-generating capacity of the nation, but as a drain on the nation's resources, keeping taxation high, stifling investment and *providing benefits mainly to the individuals* who received it rather than the nation as a whole (emphasis added).

The study will now reflect on the 'ideal' individual that a neo-liberally-informed approach to economic and social development might desire. If education policy is driven by such ideology, then what expectations are there for the ideal 'educated' person, as a product of the type of curriculum represented by *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Dept of Education, 1993)? What kind of individual would emerge from what Peters and Marshall (1996, p.93) describe as "... frameworks of busno-power and busnocratic rationality"? What are the characteristics of such an individual, referred to by Peters and Marshall (1996, 2004) as the "autonomous chooser"?

### The Autonomous Chooser

Peters and Marshall (2004) state that underlying the reforms were specific notions of freedom and choice encapsulated in what they termed the "autonomous chooser" (p.119). They argue that the autonomous chooser was a "unit in an enterprise and consumer-driven market reality" and that the activity of such an individual was "the primary way to improve both society and the economy" (p.121). It is evident from this study's analysis of *The New*

*Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007) that this notion still persists; but, in a reconstituted form. Before examining and justifying this further, it is perhaps useful to examine the context within which Peters and Marshall framed and explained this notion of the autonomous chooser.

Peters and Marshall (2004) acknowledge that theirs' is "but another critique of the economic and social theories and politics of neo-liberalism" (2004, p.123). They argue, however, that a central tenet of the reform programme is the conception of individuals as "primarily seeking their own interests ... in all aspects of their behaviour and existence" (p.120). This narrow, classic economics perspective of human nature and behaviour implied that "... people will *only* and *always* do what is best to enhance their own lives" (p.120, emphasis added). Underlying this type of personhood is the assumption that it is human nature to make "...*continuous* consumer-style choices" and decisions (p.120, emphasis added), and that such individuals make these choices and decisions independently. This renders members of society well-positioned to make decisions about education, in accordance with their needs and interests, in the belief that "... society, the relations between learning institutions and the quality of learning itself are enhanced by the consumer-driven activities of autonomous choosers" (Peters & Marshall, 2004, p.120).

Peters and Marshall (2004) identify several flaws in this conception. The one that impacts particularly on education provision is the assumption that autonomous choosers' needs and interests are independent and 'free' from external influences, pressures and manipulation – ensuring such individuals have the capacity to be independent decision-makers. This is problematic and, as Peters and Marshall (2004, p. 120) state, "Therein lies the conflict: The 'autonomous chooser' exists in a world in which so much of our social, economic and cultural life is now marketed, branded and 'sold'". The autonomous chooser can be shaped, influenced and even

... 'made' through ideologies and multi-media forms of presentation that emphasise the demand for skills, the continual need during a

working life-time to be reskilled, and the economic motives of both getting educated and purchasing quality education” (p.122).

Peters and Marshall (2004, p. 122) argue that this is why the autonomous chooser is such a crucial unit in neo-liberal economic and social theories: because individuals that act or behave “as if one’s life becomes an enterprise” will purportedly be “perpetually responsive to the environment, particularly the socio-economic environment”. And from the perspective of the nation-state, “... influencing individual consumer activity becomes the primary way to improve both society and the economy” (Peters & Marshall, 2004, p.121).

Peters and Marshall (1996, 2004) argue, therefore, that the rationality adopted by New Zealand governments (the 1984 Labour government, followed by the 1990 National government) was a ‘busnocratic’ form of rationality. Busnocratic rationality and ‘busno-power’ shapes neo-liberal autonomous choosers and turns them into subjects who make their choices in ways which align with the neo-liberal agenda (Peters & Marshall, 1996). Peters and Marshall state that busnocratic rationality marks the change in education culture instigated by the state (in this instance, the aforementioned governments of New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s). It is a type of education culture that emphasises the promotion of skills; information and information retrieval; and the view that it is consumers - and not the professional educators that provide education - that define and determine quality in education.

What skills, information and information retrieval processes are valued most? From a busnocratic rationale, it would be the values of business or commercial enterprise (Peters & Marshall, 1996, p.93). These become the aims, or purpose, of education within a state-funded education system. The skills, information, and the pre-eminence of the influence of the consumer are developed at the expense of traditional liberal understandings of knowledge and understanding. Peters and Marshall (1996) developed that notion of ‘busno-power’ and explained that it is a form of power that is directed at

...the subjectivity of the person ... through the mind, through forms of educational practice and pedagogy which shape through choices in education the subjectivities of the autonomous choosers (1996, pp.92,93).

The permeation of busnocratic rationality in the education system especially in the curriculum developed during the 1990s is evident in terms of structures such as: achievement objectives, which form the basis of learning outcomes; a focus on skills (such as the specific 'essential skills'); and the association of effective teaching with the business notion of efficiency.

It must be acknowledged at this point that a far more comprehensive critique of the neo-liberal education reforms is possible, and to be expected, if the primary focus of this study was to the ideological underpinnings of education policy change. Because the focus of this study is elsewhere (in discourse analysis and the analysis of discourses relating to diversity) then such depth and detail was deemed unnecessary. A summary overview of the neo-liberal reforms was a necessary part of an analysis of the discursive practices of discursive formations relating to diversity.

When the curriculum reforms and changes of the 1990s were complete the Ministry of Education carried out a review and revision of *The Curriculum Framework* (Dept of Edcn, 1993). This took place between 2000 and 2006. The next section of this chapter will examine the current curriculum, released in 2007 as *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007). It became mandatory for all New Zealand schools in 2010. The examination will focus on the macro level discourses that had the most influence on the development of the new curriculum policy (such as those emanating from the OECD), and determine whether busnocratic rationality, so evident in the previous curriculum, was carried through. Did the notion of the autonomous chooser remain or was the disposition of the ideal individual reconstructed in a different way?

### ***The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)***

The first questions to ask are: (i) What type of curriculum is *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007)? and (ii) What is the evidence that it is a pedagogic

curriculum? The document's purpose statement pronounces that the "principle function ... [of the curriculum is] ... to provide guidance to schools as they design and review their curriculum" (MOE, 2007, p.6) and set the direction for student learning. The eight principles relating to school-based curriculum decision making make it clear that the prescription of knowledge and skills is not its core business. Instead, the principles "put students at the centre of teaching and learning" (MOE, 2007, p.9), and are intended to guide teachers, at the level of the school, in the design, delivery and review of their school-based learning programmes. In a section entitled 'Effective Pedagogy', the statement sets out a clear and succinct outline and summary discussion of seven "teacher actions" that will promote student learning (MOE, 2007, p.34). These are:

- Creating a supportive learning environment
- Encouraging reflective thought and action
- Enhancing the relevance of new learning
- Facilitating shared learning
- Making connections to prior learning and experience
- Providing sufficient opportunities to learn
- Teaching as inquiry.

*The New Zealand Curriculum* or NZC (MOE, 2007) is undoubtedly a pedagogic or pedagogical curriculum. It is one in which teachers in schools play a major role in the co-constructed, deeply embedded and authentic nature of the learning in the contexts of school, classrooms and "what each student has learned" (McGee, 1997, p.14). It plays a pivotal role in providing the proactive context for pedagogical responsiveness – which, as argued in the first part of this chapter, in the New Zealand education context, equates to diversity in education.

#### The OECD and Key competences

Late in the same year that PISA<sup>29</sup> began (1997), the OECD initiated its Definition and Selection of Key Competences Project (referred to as the DeSeCo Project). The aim of this project was the provision of "a sound

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<sup>29</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment



conceptual framework to inform the identification of key competencies and strengthen international surveys measuring the competence level of young people and adults” (OECD, 2005, p.5). The Project developed what it described as a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach. It brought together “... scholars, experts and institutions to identify a small set of key competencies, rooted in a theoretical understanding of how such competencies are defined” (p.4) in order to “... produce a coherent and widely shared analysis of which key competencies are necessary for the modern world” (p.18). The framework complements and is linked to the large international assessments of these competencies, namely PISA and ALL<sup>30</sup>. The final report of the DeSeCo Project was published in 2003, entitled *Key Competencies for a Successful Life and a Well-Functioning Society*.

The comprehensive sequence of activities of the DeSeCo Project covered a period of five years, with the summary report being released in 2005. Interestingly, the the DeSeCo Project over-lapped with New Zealand’s review of the curriculum in 2000-2002 as well as the start of the work to develop the school curriculum. The national Curriculum Reference group first convened in 2004. This study is confident that the DeSeCo Report was an influence on the revision of the curriculum, given the replacement of the notion of ‘skills’ with ‘key competencies’.

So what are key competences, and why are they apparently so important today? According to the OECD, a competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. Three broad categories of key competencies were identified: using tools inter actively (e.g. language, technology); interacting in heterogeneous groups; and acting autonomously. The OECD argues that these

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<sup>30</sup> The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL, [www.ets.org/all](http://www.ets.org/all)), conducted by Statistics Canada, which provides empirical evidence on the salience of key competencies in terms of the ability to interact with tools such as written texts.

competencies are important in current complex economic, social and political times because, the mastery of narrowly defined skills is insufficient. It states,

Globalisation and modernisation are creating an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. To make sense of and function well in this world, individuals need for example to master changing technologies and to make sense of large amounts of available information. They also face collective challenges as societies such as balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and balancing prosperity with social equity (OECD, 2005, p.4).

The concept of key competencies is intended to assist OECD nations and associate nations with 'individual and global challenges' in a world where:

- Technology is rapidly and continuously changing, and learning to deal with it requires not just one-off mastery of processes but also adaptability
- Societies are becoming more diverse and compartmentalised with interpersonal relationships therefore requiring more contact with those who are different from oneself
- Globalisation is creating new forms of interdependence and actions, which are subject both to influences (such as economic competition) and consequences (such as pollution) that stretch well beyond an individual's local or national community (OECD, 2005, p.7).

The revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007) makes statements that almost mirror the DeSeCO Project. For example:

The NZC takes as its starting point a vision of our young people as life-long learners who are confident and creative, connected and actively involved (MOE, 2007, p.4).

Our population has become increasingly diverse, technologies are more sophisticated, and the demands of the workplace are more complex. Our education must respond to these and the other challenges of our times (MOE, 2007, p.4).

The rhetoric of the knowledge economy, as composed of individuals who are life-long learners, adaptable and responsive to change is certainly consistent throughout the front section of the NZC (MOE, 2007, p.4-17). This reflects what this study refers to as the three thick threads of concern to the OECD:

economic growth, environmental sustainability and social equity, within the context of societies which “agree on the importance of democratic values and achieving sustainable development” (OECD, 2005, p.7).

An interesting point to note in terms of the The DeSeCo Project’s genesis is that it sought close co-operation with UNESCO in defining its framework (OECD, 2005, p.19). This is not surprising, given that UNESCO formally established the International Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in 1993. Its final report<sup>31</sup>, entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within*, was released in 1996, just prior to the start of the OECD’s DeSeCo Project. The report conceptualised ‘education throughout life’ as being based on metaphoric pillars, known as ‘The Four Pillars of Education’. These pillars are: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. They are conceived as pillars of knowledge that cannot be anchored solely in one phase in a person’s life or in a single place. The Four Pillars is a conceptualisation much like the OECD’s key competences. It is located within a ‘learning for real life’ discourse. It is arguably a conceptualisation of competences that preceded and influenced the work of the DeSeCo Project.

It would appear that another point of significance is a simple duality in the preparation of young people and adults for ‘life’s challenges’. In other words, it seems that by ‘preparing’ individuals, the “overarching goals for education systems and lifelong learning” will somehow also be achieved (2005, p.5). This indicates that the OECD’s notions of ‘individual’ and the ‘successful society’ require closer examination and critique.

#### OECD’s conception of ‘individuals’ and a ‘successful society’

It seems that for the OECD, the relationship between ‘individuals’ and developing a ‘successful society’ relies on a somewhat simplistic causal relationship. In the DeSeCo report, it states the “...increasingly diverse and

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<sup>31</sup> Sometimes referred to as the Delores Report, after the Chair of the commission, Jaques Delores

inter-connected world” is the result of globalisation and modernisation. Therefore,

All OECD societies agree on the importance of democratic values and achieving sustainable development. These values imply both that individuals should be able to achieve their potential and that they should respect others and contribute to producing an equitable society. This *complementarity of individual and collective goals* needs to be reflected in a framework of competencies that acknowledges both individuals’ autonomous development and their interaction with others (OECD, 2005, p.7, emphasis added).

Individuals are therefore to be educated to become life-long learners, and this is to be achieved through the development of key competencies. The sum total of individuals educated in this way, exercising good decisions based on astute readings of their contexts, will result in a society that can “face collective challenges” (OECD, 2005, p. 9).

As previously stated, the important threads of concern are: balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability, and balancing prosperity with social equity. In other words, nations need to weave together economic productivity, ecological sustainability and social cohesion (which is inclusive of equity and human rights) within democratic processes. These intertwined threads make up the simplistic, but immensely influential conception of a nation’s ‘success’ as a 21<sup>st</sup> century entity.

The rationale that a society’s economic, social and political success hinges on educating certain competences within learners which will provide in-built mechanisms for them to interact with a conscience within society remains overly simplistic. Peters and Marshall (2004) argued that in terms of the previous curriculum (*The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*, Dept of Ed, 1993) their ‘autonomous chooser’ was “a unit in an enterprise and consumer-driven market reality” (p.119) and the activity of the individual is “the primary way to improve both society and the economy” (p.121). It would appear that this notion still persists in the new curriculum framework; however, there appears to have been a shift. The autonomous chooser is now

part of an important interacting simplistic duality. He/she is an astute, resilient life-long learner, value-laden participatory citizen within a global, inter-connected world – whose informed choices secures him or herself, and at the same time benefits wider society. This is indeed an “altered conceptualisation of students and the world they are entering” (Benade, 2011, p.152).

What accounts for this shift from the earlier neo-liberal reforms of the 1990s which were so evident within *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Dept of Ed, 1993)? It is Benade’s (2011) contention that the curriculum that emerged in 2007 was “... the product of third way policy making” and that third way thinking “... is an ideological framework distinct from neo-liberalism” (p.151-2). According to Codd, (2005b) the change to a Labour government in 1999 marks a turning point away from “the competitive market approach ... towards a more cooperative, more inclusive, and more equitable education system” (pp.8,9). This was a reflection of political, social and economic developments occurring in Great Britain about the same time, informed by so-called ‘Third Way politics’. Codd (2005b, p.9) describes this as a way of thinking that brings together “... the renewal of civil society, inclusiveness and social responsibility, but also embraces individualism, economic freedom and globalisation”. In his critique of this shift he demonstrates that this was not so much a shift away from neo-liberalism, but rather its consolidation, and that the state remained committed to “... the neoliberal agenda of globalisation, albeit globalisation with a social face” (2005, p.9). With reference to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007), Benade (2011) describes,

...the New Zealand Curriculum as a third way policy that attempts to bridge the gap between aims of education that have a principles-driven and social outcomes agenda and those that stress preparation for successful participation in the economic life of the country (p.152).

Having identified the main diversity discursive formations and other related discourses and then made important connections to curriculum policy, what

is the link between diversity and the discourse of 'building a responsive education system'?

### ***Diversity and 'Building a Responsive Education System'***

In the forward of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007, p.4), the Secretary of Education (at the time of its release), Karen Sewell, states that,

The previous curriculum, implemented from 1992 onwards, was our first outcomes-focused curriculum: a curriculum that sets out what we want students to know and to be able to do. Since it was launched, there has been no slowing of the pace of social change. Our population has become increasingly diverse, technologies are more sophisticated, and the demands of the workplace are more complex. Our education system must respond to these and the other challenges of our times. For this reason, a review of the curriculum was undertaken in the years 2000–02 (MOE, 2007, p.4, emphasis added).

This chapter has endeavoured to provide greater conceptual clarity for diversity. It has also tried to reconstruct via discourse analysis what Wetherall (2003, p.285) described as the "... additional sets of underlying relations that determine the actual use of particular words or phrases in particular contexts". Diversity has been analysed as a set of discursive formations and, as a consequence, has examined "... historically produced, loosely structured combinations of concerns, concepts, themes and types of statement" (Marshall, 1994, p.125) that make up the structures of diversity discourses. It can be argued that the very specific diversity discourses which emerged in the New Zealand education policy in the first five years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are directly related to the global influences which have shaped education revision and reform.

In New Zealand, addressing diversity (as an adjective) within the education system is about addressing the gap in learner outcomes. This is more than an issue of social equity. Rather, it is an issue affecting New Zealand's progress as a competitive, knowledge economy. Economically and socially marginalised social groups are not conducive to the social cohesion that is an integral part of a successful (in OECD terms) society. Therefore *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) reflects New Zealand's pragmatic (rather than

aspirational) view of itself: as working collectively and collaboratively with other like-minded developed nations within the global arena, committed to building education systems that will strengthen economic competitiveness. Four inter-twined elements are recognised as being essential for this: democratic processes, economic productivity, ecological sustainability, and “social cohesion, equity and human rights” (OECD, 2005, p.5). This last inter-twined element can also be seen as a conception of the term ‘diversity’.

## **Chapter Five**

### **What does Pasifika Education mean to the New Zealand Ministry of Education?**

This chapter addresses the research question ‘What does Pasifika education mean to the New Zealand Ministry of Education?’ It presents an analysis that endeavours to determine how the Ministry of Education (MOE) has constructed Pasifika peoples as a multi-ethnic group in New Zealand as well as their education and development. The study examines policies that focus on the education of Pasifika peoples across all the sectors. These policies are brought together and analysed as the national policy framework for Pasifika education in New Zealand.

Such an analysis, however, requires a more detailed backdrop of Pasifika peoples as a multi-ethnic group in New Zealand society. This builds on and extends the overview of Pacific/Pasifika peoples (and the terminology used to identify them in the New Zealand context) presented in Chapter One. The extension takes a particular focus on education, socio-economic positioning and Pasifika within Auckland.

#### *Education and the economy*

The implications for Pasifika, as a multi-ethnic group, of having such a youthful population are significant. Based on conservative population projections, it is likely that by 2026, one in five New Zealand children will be Pasifika, and, within the youngest workforce age band (ages 15-39), one in eight workers will be Pasifika (MPIA, 2010).

This has enormous implications for the education system and its various sectors. By 2021, the Pasifika population is projected to increase to 414,000 (an increase of 58%) or 9.2 percent of the New Zealand population. It has been projected that by 2040, the majority of students in New Zealand primary schools will be Maori and Pasifika, and that such a change will “... occur within the working life of teachers who are currently being trained or



inducted into teaching” (Alton-Lee 2003, p.5). Given that almost 70 percent of Pasifika peoples live in the Auckland region (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p.2), the impact on early childhood centres and schools in this region will be immense.

A significant proportion of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand are located in lower socio-economic roles and positions. This is a socio-historical location, one that reflects the Pasifika migration story. The main migration flows from the Pacific occurred in the late 1960s through to the mid- 1970s. Migrants from the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau were New Zealand citizens by right of birth and had unrestricted access, due to their specific colonial histories with New Zealand. This was not the case, however, for Samoans, Tongans and others. During the 1960s, the growth in the production sector of the New Zealand economy created a need for cheap, unskilled or semi-skilled labour which could not be met internally. With most Pacific nations limited in both the economic and educational opportunities available for their own citizenry, New Zealand was quick to tap this ready labour pool, managing inflows in response to the ebb and flow of its capitalist economy (Ongley, 1996).

The main features of Pasifika people’s shared experience of migration to and settlement in New Zealand, particularly from the late 1950s through to the mid-1970s, was submission to the same political, social and economic forces of the times – forces which led to “... the concentration of Pacific Islands immigrants in lower socio economic positions” and the fostering of “... negative stereotypes about their abilities and motivations” (Ongley, 1996, p.33). Pasifika peoples were culturally different from the dominant European heritage or Pakeha members of their new homeland, therefore a degree of racial categorisation was inevitable. This generated disturbing perceptions of Pasifika as “social problems” in areas such as “criminality, delinquency, unemployment and welfare dependency” (Ongley, 1996, p.33).

Based on its analysis of Statistics New Zealand information, the MPIA (2010, pp. 28, 29) has described the Pasifika population as “a population with less financial wealth” compared to other ethnic groups in New Zealand:

Pacific peoples, on average, fare less well against the key socio-economic indicators of education, employment, personal income and home ownership than the New Zealand European population although there are some indications that the gap is less marked for the New Zealand-born Pacific population.

In terms of education qualifications, Pasifika have the lowest proportion of degrees or higher qualifications, which links strongly to poorer outcomes for Pasifika in the labour market. Thus, in terms of employment, the rates of participation in full-time and part-time work are higher for Europeans and Maori. Pasifika have the highest rates of unemployment. The lower economic and income levels account not only for poorer educational outcomes, but also for poorer health outcomes and workforce participation. Pasifika have the lowest proportion of all ethnic groups for earning more than \$50,000 and the second highest proportion earning under \$10,000 per year. Another consequence of lower income is that Pasifika have the lowest rate of home ownership “an important component of personal wealth” (MPIA, 2010, p.29).

Fortunately, since the mid to late 1990s and up to the present, there have been some exceptional individual achievements among Pasifika peoples in areas such as sports, the visual and performing arts, popular music and culture, literature and politics. These have served to balance public perceptions. Given that the Pasifika population is moving into its fourth generation of New Zealand born and raised, the media and state agencies, by and large, no longer see Pasifika as an immigrant population (Siataga, 2011). There is a growing and increasingly visible Pasifika middle class – which, ironically, now makes it problematic to use ‘blocked mobility’ arguments. Writing in the late 1990s, Macpherson stated that “... the presence of role models encourages Pacific Islands parents ... to regard personal rather than structural factors as the obstacles to success in fact when there is compelling evidence that the latter play a very significant role ...” (1996, p.139).

### ***Auckland and Pasifika***

Pasifika are unevenly distributed throughout New Zealand in terms of settlement. Two-thirds live in the Auckland region (67%), with the next

largest Pacific population groups living in the Wellington region - approximately 13 percent. The third largest is the Waikato region at four percent (MPIA, 2010). Pasifika peoples have also established smaller but no less vibrant and cohesive communities in other cities and towns throughout New Zealand, but overall, settlement is predominantly in the North Island.

The size and location of the Pasifika population in Auckland (New Zealand's largest city with a population of over one million) is nationally as well as regionally significant. The number of Pasifika living in the Auckland region equals 177,936 (based on the 2006 census) constituting almost 14 percent of Auckland's population. This figure lends itself to the claims (noted in Chapter One) that Auckland is the world's biggest Pasifika city (Stats NZ & MPIA, 2010; Sutton & Airini, 2011). Fifty percent of Auckland's Pasifika population identify as Samoan; 23 percent as Tongan; 20 percent as Cook Island; 10 percent as Niue and five percent (collectively) as Fijians, Tuvaluan and Tokelau (Sutton & Airini, 2011). The specific demographic patterns, therefore, of Auckland Pasifika are of great interest to educators.

According to Sutton and Airini (2011), one in four infants born in Auckland is Pasifika and, by 2021, there will be an estimated additional 87,000 Pasifika people. Pasifika Aucklander statistics not surprisingly reflect national Pasifika statistical patterns in that 37 percent of Pasifika Aucklanders are less than 15 years of age, and almost 57 percent were born in Auckland. Auckland is also where one can expect the overall national population projections of fairly rapid increase for Pasifika to have the greatest impact.

In terms of early-childhood, 85 percent of Auckland Pasifika five year olds attended early-childhood centres in 2010 compared to 98 percent of Pakeha children. Although participation figures have increased for Pasifika children, these remain of concern as they still lag behind other groups in terms of parity.

In terms of schooling, 72 percent of New Zealand Pasifika school students are in Auckland, and of these, almost 68 percent are enrolled in Decile 1 to Decile

3<sup>32</sup> schools. Sutton and Airini (2011, p.3) state that “Not all schools have delivered quality education outcomes for Pasifika students”, a broad assertion but supported by evidence most recently produced by the Education Review Office (ERO) in its report on priority learners in New Zealand schools (ERO, 2012). Currently, there is a strong policy and practice emphasis on numeracy and literacy (Telford & May, 2010). Only 69 percent of Auckland Pasifika students reached Year 11 literacy and numeracy standards, however compared to almost 75 percent of the Auckland total (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p. 3). This reinforces on-going concern, especially given poor Pasifika-specific outcomes in reading, mathematics and science in the international PISA tests of 2009. Another source of concern is that Pasifika boys are in the lowest performing groups on international tests such as PISA.

These school level patterns impact on National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)<sup>33</sup> outcomes, which in turn impact on after-schooling pathways – particularly pathways into tertiary education and training. In 2009, 60 percent of Pasifika Auckland school leavers had achieved NCEA Level 2 or higher, compared to almost 74 percent of all Auckland school leavers. While this is indicative of a positive increase compared to earlier years, Sutton and Airini pose the question “Is this pass rate trending up fast enough?” (2011, p.3). What is particularly intriguing is that at a national level, 81 percent of Pasifika stay at school until they are seventeen years old – a retention rate that exceeds Maori and Pakeha students. Within school, however, Pasifika students tend to take longer to acquire NCEA Level 1 and Level 2, and do not necessarily remain at school to accomplish Level 3. Achievement of Level 3, however, is what “makes a successful move to

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<sup>32</sup> Deciles are a way in which the New Zealand MOE allocates funding to schools. A school’s decile rating indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. The lower a school’s decile rating, the more funding it gets.

<sup>33</sup> NCEA is the main qualification for secondary school students in New Zealand. It comes in three levels which are done over Years 11 to 13. NCEA is for all students – those who are planning to go on to university, apprenticeships, vocational training or seeking employment

tertiary education more likely” (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p.3). In 2010, just 24 percent of Pasifika Auckland Year 13 students achieved university entrance, compared to 59 percent of Pakeha students.

So what do the figures say about Pasifika students and tertiary education? It appears that the problems and concerns evident at the lower levels of the pipeline remain pertinent at this level as well. For example, while “more young Pasifika enrol in tertiary education than other groups ... one third of these enrol in foundation level ... reflecting lower school achievement” (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p.4). In relation to degree level programmes, issues and concerns relate to enrolment, retention, participation or engagement, and success. For example, “Pasifika enrol in degrees at half the rate of non-Pasifika and are less likely to complete a degree by age twenty five” (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p.4). This is reflected in only four percent of Pasifika Aucklanders holding degree level qualifications, and one percent holding post-graduate degrees. This compares to just over 14 percent of all Aucklanders holding a degree and just over five percent a post-graduate award.

One of the fundamental differences that holding a qualification, particularly higher-level qualifications, makes is employment prospects. For working age Pasifika Aucklanders almost 22 percent were unemployed in September 2011, compared to the Auckland total unemployment rate of 7.5 percent. If focus is placed on young Pasifika Aucklanders aged 15-24, almost 30 percent are unemployed. Without doubt, “recession hits Pasifika hard” (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p.4).

Sutton and Airini (2011, p.2), however, make an effort to describe these and other statistics about the socio-economic location of Pasifika in non-deficit, positive terms, indicative of their respect for Pasifika as a “growing economic and voting power”. They take into account, for example, that in 2030, it is projected that 25 percent of new entrants to the Auckland job market will be Pasifika. Given that the Pasifika median income in June 2011 was estimated to be \$390 per week (compared to national median wage of \$550), then “If

Pasifika wages were similar to non-Pasifika by 2021 there would be an estimated \$4 billion increased value to the New Zealand economy” (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p.2).

It is of little wonder that the national and Auckland-specific statistics have led to considerable emphasis being placed on the importance of addressing the education of Pasifika children across the three formal education sectors of early-childhood, compulsory schooling and tertiary education. As ERO (2012, p.1) has stated “...the learners most at risk of not achieving in New Zealand schools are Pacific students”.

### *Identity and Pasifika*

It is important to bear in mind that after more than four decades of settlement in New Zealand, there is considerable diversity under “the Pasifika umbrella” (Alton-Lee, 2004, p.21). The points of difference are not limited to one or other of the seven (or more) Pacific-heritages that a Pasifika person might lay claim to. There is also considerable diversity within groups: between those who are younger and those who are older; between those who are recent migrants, and those who were born and raised in New Zealand; as well as those who see themselves first and foremost as members of a particular village or island community of some island nation within the Pacific Region. There are also differences shaped by socio-economic background or status. Other important points of difference which intersect include: religion, gender and language (Samu, 2006). High levels of inter-marriage account for the following 2006 statistics relating to multiple-ethnic identification: 36 percent of the total Pasifika population identified with more than one ethnic group. This breaks down to: 36 percent of Samoans (39,762); 47 percent of Cook Islanders (27,252); 26 percent of Tongans (13,017); 52 percent of Niueans (11,613); 45 percent of Fijians (4,434); 50 percent of Tokelauans (3,432); and 22 percent of Tuvaluans (576) identifying with more than one ethnicity (MPIA, 2010). In Auckland, 28 percent of Pasifika adults and almost half Pasifika children under the age of five have more than one ethnicity (Sutton & Airini, 2011, p.2).

In New Zealand, ethnic identity for the census is a matter of self-identification, and one can select more than one ethnic category including the non-ethnic category of 'New Zealander'. There is more to identity and identification, however, than self-selecting ethnic or cultural group affiliation and other features relating to age, gender and socio-economic status. For Pasifika, additional features of individual identity might include the ancestral village or island origins of one's extended family as well as language and dialect.

Another very important feature of identity is whether one was a born and raised in a Pacific nation or in New Zealand (or elsewhere). This is, arguably, a highly significant dimension of Pasifika identity that is possibly undervalued, and underestimated, by educators. It is forging new and unique identities of 'Pasifika'. New Zealand-born and New Zealand-raised Pasifika young people have developed unique forms of expression and identification since the late 1990s. They demonstrate a creative, assertive self-determination and are growing in numbers. They strive to be bicultural or multi-ethnic *on their own terms*. This should have highly significant implications for policy makers, implementers researchers PLD provision and, as a line of discussion, will be examined in more depth and detail later in the chapter.

Having provided further depth and detail to how Pasifika are situated in New Zealand, this chapter will now examine national education policies.

### ***National Policy Framework for Pasifika Education***

Prior to 1996, the development of national education policy with specific goals and targets relating to Pasifika learners and their communities was ad hoc and fragmented. Coxon and Mara (2000) provide useful descriptions and critique of policy at the time. The fragmentation ceased with the release in 1996 of *Ko e Ako 'a e Kakai Pasifika* (Ministry of Education, 1996), the first national strategic plan developed by the MOE for the education of Pacific peoples (MOE, 1996). In 1998, the Ministry reported against the goals

contained in this plan. According to Tongati'o (2010, p.266), the report showed that,

...small shifts were beginning to be made in participation in early-childhood and tertiary education and initial shifts in school leaver qualifications. These results indicated that the plan was heading in the right direction but that there was a long way to go towards closing the participation and achievement gap between Pasifika and other populations.

It was, therefore, a significant set of developments which lay the foundation for a more coherent and comprehensive process for the MOE's work relating to the education of Pasifika people.

Lesieli Tongati'o<sup>34</sup> undertook a robust and comprehensive critique (2010) of the development of education policy between the aforementioned progress report (MOE, 1998) and the culmination of the *next* stage of development, which resulted in the first *Pasifika Education Plan* (MOE, 2001). Tongati'o's thesis provides a fascinating and detailed account of the internal processes involved along with the over-arching political and social context which shaped and influenced different stages of the developments. Arguably, one of the key contributing influences was the stance taken by the incoming (1999) Labour government via its 'Closing the Gaps (GAPs) strategy. This strategy prioritised Maori and Pasifika which, in Tongati'o's (2010, p.267) view, was significant for Pasifika because it was,

...the first time that a Government had explicitly prioritized this population in its work programme which meant that Pasifika was going to be considered deliberately across all areas of the public service. For many Pasifika peoples the GAPs strategy meant that Pasifika was being treated seriously and that their issues will be dealt with efficiently and effectively.

The outcome of such a high level, encompassing strategy was that the Ministry of Education was able to develop a Pasifika education strategy that

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<sup>34</sup> Dr Tongati'o is the Pule Ma'ata Pasifika of the New Zealand Ministry of Education. She oversees high level strategic planning and policy development as part of her role.



aligned with the GAPs strategy and which required approval from “... the highest level of government, by Cabinet”, which in turn “raised the stakes much higher” (Tongati’o, 2010, pp. 267, 268).

According to Tongati’o (2010, p.268) in the journey towards Cabinet approval the Ministry of Education needed to “... deliver Pasifika education more strategically through several processes ... [involving] ...well informed internal conversations” and the preparation and presentation of “robust papers”. Overcoming many hurdles, eventually a suite of six papers went “to Cabinet addressing the Pasifika work programme for early childhood through to tertiary education” (Tongati’o, 2010, p. 274). According to Tongati’o (2010, p. 274) “The Pasifika unit retained oversight over all papers to ensure coherency, Pasifika visibility and Pasifika being at the core of all papers”, which suggests a very deliberate and purposeful effort to ensure authentic Pasifika ownership, at least internally.

After Cabinet approval was obtained, the Minister of Education requested a new name for the policy. The first *Pasifika Education Plan (2001-2006)* was ‘born’ in 2000 and launched at three events around the country. In the Foreword, the Minister of Education stated,

I want an education system that lets Pacific children in New Zealand grow up with the same opportunities as all other New Zealand children ... The Government is committed to reducing disparities and improving the well being of Pacific peoples in the New Zealand education system ... We need to increase Pacific achievement in all areas of education through increasing participation, improving retention and focusing on effective teaching strategies (MOE, 2001, p.1).

These can be seen as aspirations sanctioned and approved at Cabinet level, and therefore more than ministry-level rhetoric. The most significant feature of this plan was its approach to high level strategic policy-making. According to the Secretary of Education’s comments within in the *Pasifika Education Plan (2001-2006)*,

The Pasifika Education Plan provides a coherent and integrated approach to coordinating all policies which aim to improve education outcomes for Pacific peoples: provides a platform for more strategic analysis of factors limiting education achievement; more effective and focused engagement with Pacific educators and communities; recognizes that what goes on in Pacific families has a profound impact on education outcomes; strengthen the relationships between education, employment, health, welfare and other social services; provides opportunities for Pacific peoples to understand and access policy (MOE, 2001, p.2)

The current educational policy environment is now more structured, comprehensive and accountable to the highest levels of government. More importantly, as a consequence, it is a policy framework that requires accountability from across all divisions of the Ministry of Education. Tongati'o (2010, p.v) acknowledges her colleagues in the Ministry of Education "...who have totally embraced the 'everyone is responsible for Pasifika education' mantra". This approach to Ministry of Education policy development is credited for providing the necessary support that has enabled many Pacific peoples to share "...some of the exciting changes and success in the education system over the past decade" (Education Review Office, 2012, p.2).

A description and discussion of the current policy framework shaping education for Pasifika peoples will now be presented. The following national policy statements and documents were analysed:

- *Statement of Intent 2009-2014*
- *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017*
- *The Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015*
- *The National Education Guidelines* (inclusive of National Education Goals; Foundation Curriculum Statements; National Curriculum Statements; National standards; National Administration Guidelines)
- *Pathways to the Future: Nga Hurahi Arataki 2002-2012* (A Ten Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education)

### ***The Pasifika Education Plan 2013-17***

The *Pasifika Education Plan* (PEP) provides the Ministry of Education with strategic direction for improving education outcomes for Pasifika peoples in

New Zealand. It articulates the goals and targets the Ministry of Education has set for early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education. The PEP 2013-2017 is the fifth iteration of the plan.

One of the first measurable successes of the first five-year plan (*Pasifika Education Plan 2001-2006* (MOE, 2001) was achieving its participation targets, although achievement levels remained a concern. The second plan, the *Pasifika Education Plan 2006-2010* was re-launched in 2008 as the *Pasifika Education Plan 2008-2012*, as part of a “concerted effort to step up” the Ministry of Education’s efforts to improve education outcomes and to “extend the time frame of the plan to 2012 to align it to other key education strategies, such as *Ka Hikitia*, the Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan, and the Tertiary Education Strategy”<sup>35</sup>. When National took over government in 2008, the plan was revised again, resulting in the *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012*. Arguably one of the key features of this revision was the incorporation of the National Standards in literacy and numeracy. The current plan is the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017*.

In the Foreword to the latest Plan the Minister of Education gives a brief summary of the efforts to date to improve outcomes for Pasifika learners (presumably under the goals of the previous PEPs). Overall, outcomes appear to be positive, since the Minister states that “ ... Pasifika learners’ participation, engagement and achievement in education have improved markedly during the last five years” (MOE, 2012, p.2). The Minister, however, also expresses the view that these positive developments need to increase in pace as well as urgency “...in sustainable and collaborative ways between parents and teachers, community groups and education providers” (p.2). According to the Minister this will happen through,

... increasing participation in quality early childhood education to drive higher literacy, numeracy and achievement of qualifications in schooling, which in turn will contribute to higher participation and completion of qualifications in tertiary education, resulting in the

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<sup>35</sup> See [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/pasifika\\_education](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/pasifika_education)

greatest *social, cultural and economic benefits* (MOE, 2012, p.2, emphasis added).

Pasifika Education Plan Monitoring reports provide a national and a regional picture of levels of progress of Pasifika learners, as measured against the PEP's goals and targets and allows the MOE to monitor implementation of PEP. For example, in the first monitoring report (released in mid-2007, and based on the first PEP) positive progress was identified in relation to most targets for the compulsory sector, but not for tertiary (MOE, 2007).

The current plan makes explicit the importance of working in partnership with other agencies, particular those that are involved in education such as The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC), the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Careers New Zealand, the Education Review Office (ERO), and the New Zealand School Trustees Association as well as the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA). The PEP, however, is not mandatory for education organisations and early childhood centres and schools. Tertiary education organisations (TEOs) are not directly accountable to the MOE for the implementation of any aspect of the PEP. What is interesting, however, is that according to the Minister of Education, the current PEP intends to "...lift the level of urgency by keeping up the momentum achieved to date, increasing the responsibility and accountability of everyone in the education system" (MOE, 2012, p.2). This is supported by a 'Message from the Secretary of Education' which is also (for the first time) a joint message with the Chief Executives of afore-mentioned 'Partner Agencies'. According to this joint message,

The PEP is the overarching education strategy from which other Education Partner Agencies Pasifika frameworks and strategies link e.g. NZQA's Pasifika strategy 2012-2015; TEC's Pasifika Framework 2013-2017 and ERO's Pacific Strategy (MOE, 2012, p.2).

These agency frameworks and strategies are not national policies, they are agency-based policies, used to guide their work and set their own expectations of accountability within their domains of work and influence. Arguably it is these agency-based frameworks that carry the real 'bite' of

accountability. They are mechanisms operating elsewhere, upon other systemic agents of change<sup>36</sup> (for example schools, universities, and private training providers). They operate via incentives or measures to ensure compliance, which in turn support the achievement of the goals within the overarching education strategy of the Pasifika Education Plan. This assertion will be evidenced through a closer examination of other policies (as follows).

### ***The Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015***

The current *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015* revoked and replaced *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012*. It is a key document in that it “guides the Tertiary Education Commission’s investment decisions, to maximise tertiary education’s contribution to New Zealand” (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010, p.3). It has an explicit focus on government’s expectations of tertiary education organisations (TEOs) in an economic environment that has,

...contracted significantly due to the global downturn and local recession curtailing government income at the same time as increasing the costs of social welfare and debt servicing. The recession is also raising demand for tertiary education (TEC, 2010, p.10).

The Strategy makes it clear that tertiary education provision is an investment but that resources are limited and, therefore, much is expected from tertiary providers in terms of efficiencies and economies.

The Strategy has four components to its vision, or long-term direction of the sector. These are: to provide New Zealanders of all backgrounds with opportunities to gain world-class skills and knowledge; to raise the skills and knowledge of the current and future workforce to meet labour market demand and social needs; to produce high-quality research to build on New Zealand’s knowledge base, respond to the needs of the economy and address environments and social challenges; and to enable Maori to enjoy education success as Maori.

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Systemic agents of change’ as defined in Chapter Two

Pasifika peoples are recognised as a group that is likely to require “targeted services” due to “low completion rates”, and tertiary services may need to be “tailored” in order to “ensure success in tertiary education” (TEC, 2010, p.10). This recognition reflects the component of the overall vision about opportunities for New Zealanders “of all backgrounds”, but it also signals that consideration will be given to selected groups, with distinctive backgrounds or needs. Short-term progress will be measured in terms of a number of priorities, such as: by targeting priority groups; improving system performance; and supporting high quality research that drives innovation.

Pasifika learners are identified as being a ‘targeted priority’, and there is a stated desire for more Pasifika students to achieve their qualifications,

While the last five years have seen a greater proportion of Pasifika people in tertiary education studying at bachelor level or above, they are still over-represented in lower-level study. Completion rates for Pasifika students are lower than for any other group (TEC, 2010, p.12).

The strategy states that education providers and industry training organisations (ITO) are expected to give due attention to their Pasifika students’ progress by getting involved with Pasifika community groups, and “improving pastoral and academic support, learning environments, and pathways into tertiary education” (TEC, 2010, p.12). It is not enough to increase enrolments - measures are also required to increase participation, maintain retention and achieve completion. TEOs that are unable to provide evidence in these areas (recruitment, retention, achievement of Pasifika learners) will likely suffer fiscal consequences and may not be allocated expected levels of government funding. Armed with specific investment and monitoring authority, one could argue that the TES strategy has power or influence over the PEP.

### ***The National Guidelines for Education***

These Guidelines set out the MOE’s expectations of schools. To examine them two questions are posed: first, what connections (implicit or explicit) does

this policy make to the knowledge economy discourse? Second, what are the implications of the Guidelines for Pasifika learners? Two components are focused on – the National Education Goals (NEGs) and the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs).

The first component to be considered is the ten National Education Goals (NEGs). Three goals appear to support a knowledge economy discourse: Goal Three refers to knowledge, understanding, and skills to enable New Zealanders to compete in a modern, ever-changing world (MOE, 2006); Goal Five refers to a balanced curriculum, but prioritises competency in literacy, numeracy, science, and technology; and Goal Eight relates to qualifications for post-school education.

Pasifika learners are not explicitly referred to in the NEGs. However, one part of the Guidelines holds interpretive potential: i.e. the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs). NAG One relates to the provision of teaching and learning programmes under which Boards of Trustees (BOT) are required to “identify students and groups of students who are not achieving, who are at risk of not achieving and who have special needs” (MOE, 2006). In addition, NAG Two states that BOTs are responsible for reporting on the achievement of groups they have identified in NAG One.

The monitoring of Pacific student achievement, thus, seems subject to schools’ discretion. The PEP is not mandatory for schools, and therefore does not compel compliance. However, in 2002, the ERO began to include specific questions about achievement of Pasifika students in primary and secondary schools. It now releases a series of biennial reports about how the schools reviewed in the two years prior to the release of the report, are improving educational outcomes for Pasifika students. The 2006 report identified two areas of school performance weakness: first, the low rates of collection and analysis of information on Pacific students’ achievement, attendance and

suspension rates<sup>37</sup>; and second, the effective engagement of schools with Pacific families and communities to improve the educational outcomes of Pacific students<sup>38</sup>. The 2012 report provides evidence that there has been minimal improvement in these key areas. Little wonder then that the ERO has prioritised the evaluation “...of schools’ performance in improving and accelerating learning for Pacific students” (ERO 2012, p.4).

It can be argued that such developments in the ERO’s review practices are likely to have more influence on schools’ stewardship of Pasifika student achievement than the PEP itself. This can be seen as an illustration of using the proverbial stick (rather than carrot) to persuade the proverbial donkey to move, or take the desired action.

*Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki (Ministry of Education, 2002).*

This was the 10-year strategic plan (2002-2012) for early childhood education in New Zealand. It included the Pasifika early childhood sector. One of the primary goals of this policy is increasing the participation rates of Pasifika learners and their families. Another is the state commitment to increase the number of qualified (and registered) Pasifika early-childhood teachers..

### ***Reflecting on the Overall Framework***

Critiquing policies requires an appreciation of the wider social, historical, economic and political context in which they are produced. For Pasifika peoples, the dominant influences on education policies are their demographic and socio-economic location within New Zealand, and the knowledge economy discourse. Compared with other nations of the OECD, New Zealand shows relative weakness. For example, in the OECD’s latest economic survey of New Zealand (2013) it stated: “ Incomes per head are well below the OECD

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<sup>37</sup> Of the 154 schools reviewed in 2005, only 17% were found to be collecting/analysing achievement information of Pasifika students. Only 21 % were collecting/analysing suspension and attendance information.

<sup>38</sup> ERO found only 20% of schools engaged effectively with Pacific families / communities



average, and productivity growth has been sluggish for a long time". This places economic competitiveness at risk. Focused education policy on Pasifika is therefore not surprising, given that New Zealand's economic development could be adversely affected, especially in the Auckland Region, if Pasifika education success rates are not improved. According to the former CEO of MPIA,

Enhancing outcomes for New Zealand's Pacific peoples is critical: a productive and prosperous New Zealand will be increasingly contingent on productive and prosperous Pacific New Zealanders. (MPIA, 2010, p.7)

Pasifika education, as constructed by the Ministry of Education, is arguably a government strategy to reconcile the growing impact of Pacific demographics within New Zealand's economic development. As shown in the earlier discussion about the *Pasifika Education Plan (2013-2017)* (MOE, 2012), the Ministry of Education considers this to be a matter of urgency and therefore requires an accelerated response across all the sectors.

### ***Principles and Guidelines Relating to Pasifika Education Research***

Research (particularly state-funded research and development) has played a significant role in building the knowledge base in order to develop on-going, targeted programmes that will strengthen and support the education of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand. Research, particularly good research, is also of vital importance for the development of national policy. This has several inherent challenges. As Baba (2004, p.98) stated "Those who have the funds own the research, determine the focus and directions of the research and the results".

Research and evaluation contracts are the main mechanism by which the Ministry obtains the quality information it requires for the various initiatives that it funds in order to address its strategic objectives. It can be expected that in such a policy environment, the Ministry of Education will continue to be a major source of funding for research and development that is explicitly

about improving Pasifika learner outcomes. Research and development is, in turn, used to rationalise the need for professional learning and development (PLD) of teachers and schools, and to shape how such programmes are to be designed. Very clear messages have been given to the compulsory sectors of education about the need to improve their performance – this is fundamentally about the performance of teachers and school leaders (ERO, 2012).

### ***What is Pasifika Research?***

The increase in education research activity focusing on Pasifika within New Zealand began in the mid-1990s. Much of this has been funded and driven by the MOE. Examples of projects contracted out to university-based research teams include: the evaluation of the Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara (SEMO) project in 1996; the Pasifika research guidelines and Pacific literature review in 2001; and, more recently in 2007, the evaluation of the Quality teaching research and development (QTRD) initiatives (a teacher inquiry initiative examining effective pedagogies for Maori and Pasifika learners across curriculum areas).

Given that much of this research is contracted out, there emerged recognition for the need to ensure that a consistent set of ethical principles were followed for educational research that involved Pasifika participants. Following internal discussion and debate (driven by the Ministry's own internal Pacific advisory structures) the Ministry of Education's research division contracted a team of Pasifika academic researchers to develop a set of ethical principles and guidelines. The resultant Pacific Research Guidelines, produced for the Ministry of Education by Anae, Coxon, Mara, Samu and Finau (2002), was never intended to be definitive; rather, it was conceived as a dynamic, evolving document.

Since its release, other sectors that also require research-informed policies and programmes to “involve specific [Pacific] ethnic groups ... as well as research that spans Pacific communities” (TEC, 2003, p.1) have developed similar research principles and guidelines. For the tertiary education sector

(which TEC oversees) the *Draft Guidelines for Assessing Evidence Portfolios that Include Pacific Research* was developed and released in 2003. Its purpose was to guide the review of academics research portfolios for the then-new, contestable Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF). The Health Research Council (HRC) released its *Guidelines for Pacific Health Research* in 2004 for the health sector. As the pool of experienced Pasifika researchers in New Zealand is somewhat limited, several key individuals were repeatedly consulted in the development of research guidelines and protocols for the other sectors.

Each of the guidelines for research intending to involve Pacific/Pasifika participants defines Pacific research, and states the overall purpose of research. These provide interesting and useful insights into the nature of such ethnic minority focused activities. For example, according to the Ministry of Education guidelines, Pacific research involves Pacific participants. Its role is: “to identify and promote a Pacific world view ... [and] interrogate the assumptions that underpin Western structures and institutions” (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Samu & Finau, 2002, p.7). This point implicitly recognises not only the possible tensions that may emerge between western and indigenous perspectives of social behaviour, but also validates and legitimates the inclusion of indigenous perspectives of research. Each of the afore-mentioned documents include statements that focus on the empowerment of Pacific/Pasifika peoples. Pacific research guidelines represent an effort to right the balance of power.

Selected Ministry of Education Pacific education research publications included in this analysis are listed below. Each is intended to inform and shape the Ministry’s own work and activities in relation of the education of Pasifika peoples across the early-childhood, compulsory schooling and tertiary education sectors. The selected research-related documents are:

- *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines* (MOE, 2002)
- “Working Paper in Progress on Strategies used for BES Knowledge Building that can Make a Bigger Difference for

Pasifika Learner Outcomes” (Iterative work in progress paper, MOE 2004a)

- *Guidelines for Generating a Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (Alton-Lee, 2004b).
- *Teu Le Va: Relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education* (Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf with Coxon, Mara & Sanga, 2010)
- *Pasifika Education Research Priorities: Using research to realise our vision for Pasifika learners* (MOE, 2012)

The Ministry of Education built on the Pasifika Research Guidelines via the development and release of *Teu Le Va – Relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education: A collective approach to knowledge generation and policy development for action towards Pasifika education success* (Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf with Coxon, Mara & Sanga, 2010). This milestone document led to another strategic development. In 2012, the MOE released a document that set out its research priorities for Pasifika education research, in relation to the current Pacific Education Plan, which was the PEP 2009-2012 at the time. Entitled *Pasifika Education Research Priorities: Using research to realise our visions for Pasifika learners* (MOE, 2012), it is intended to be read alongside *Teu Le Va* (Airini et al., 2010). It drew on the PEP 2009-2012 in order to “... identify five key areas (levers for change) that we need to know more about if we are to provide an effective education system for all Pasifika learners” (MOE, 2012, p.5). These so-called ‘levers for change’ are intended to inform the development of priority research questions that apply across all education sectors - early-childhood, primary and secondary, as well as tertiary education.

It can be argued that robust, rigorous and principled research needs to be an integral feature of Pasifika education – how else will those responsible for high-stakes decisions for the education of Pasifika learners avail themselves of quality knowledge and information to inform their processes? The Ministry of Education is without doubt committed to Pasifika education, considering its investment in research guidelines and theorisations about the research-policy relationships. It is also committed to research projects that are designed and carried out in principled ways because the explicit purpose

of the principles and guidelines is to ensure integrity with both process and product (the research outcomes).

*The Pasifika Research Guidelines* (Anae et al., 2002) make it clear that Pasifika peoples are to be enabled within every step of the research process – from framing the research problem, developing the research design (including the methodology) through to data collection, analysis, writing up the findings and dissemination of the research outcomes or results. This can be described as an important feature of the discourse of research in Pasifika education - one that is somewhat neglected and overlooked. This will be examined in a more comprehensive manner in the section that follows.

### ***Pasifika Education and Related Discursive Practices***

There are several key areas to reflect on in relation to the ways Pasifika education has been used in the policies described and discussed so far. These refer to recognising and responding to Pasifika identities; the breadth and depth of Pasifika education research guidelines; and the ‘urgency’ to address and fast-track improvements in Pasifika education success in order to reduce a significant barrier to New Zealand’s development as a knowledge economy.

#### ***The Politics of Pasifika Identities***

*The New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007) recognises the importance of student identity and goes so far as to state that as part of “our vision for young people” (p.8), the enacted curriculum within schools will ensure that young people will learn to be “positive in their own identity” (p.8). One of the eight principles or foundations for curriculum decision-making is ‘Inclusion’, which means that “... the curriculum ... ensures that students’ *identities*, languages, abilities and talents are recognised and affirmed” (p.9, emphasis added). This broad umbrella statement is inclusive of Pasifika learners. The signatories of the Message in *The Pasifika Education Plan* (2013-2017) recognise that in order to “lift achievement” one of the necessary factors is to “respond to the *identities*, languages and cultures of the different Pasifika groups” (MOE, 2012, p.2, emphasis added).

In any discussion of Pasifika diversities, the identity of Pasifika learners is recognised as being of significance and something essential to respond to pedagogically. As indicated earlier in this chapter, there is an important, more nuanced dimension to Pasifika identity which has a great deal to do with being New Zealand born and raised. 'It' appears to blend aspects of traditional culture with the urban and the contemporary. 'It' does not exist in any specific Pacific nation - rather, it emerges in various forms and stages of development within the migrant communities of Pasifika in New Zealand, Hawaii, the west coast of the USA and Australia. In the New Zealand context, 'it', as an identity platform, is attractive because it is safe – a person can be 'Pasifika' in ways that he or she wants to be. The conscious and deliberate construction of such a personalised Pasifika identity (particularly in personal identity development of young people) means it is okay not to be fluent in the mother (or father) tongue; it is okay not to be an expert in traditional art forms; and it is okay not to be knowledgeable of culturally based protocols. This important platform must not escape notice. It exists, it is vibrant, and it is becoming more and more distinct.

A Pasifika identity-montage affirms multiple-heritage; excuses partial cultural literacy and provides a degree of social credibility. It is inclusive (albeit selectively) of the historical and contemporary socio-political issues of Pasifika. Such identities may not be articulated clearly by young Pasifika learners in schools, and some expressions for individuals could be quite ephemeral. Whether they are listening to hip-hop artists such as Che Fu and Dei Hamo; wearing clothes from the Dawn Raid label; watching re-runs of the television animated comedy series *BroTown*; or reading young adult fiction such as Lani Young's (2011, 2012) *Telesa* series and poetry collections such as *Fast talking PI* by Selina Tusitala Marsh (2009) they are being exposed to, and participating in, the processes of new ethnic identity formations which are taking place amongst many New Zealand-born Pasifika peoples.

With respect to Pasifika identity, research started in the 1990s by Tupuola (1993, 1998), Anae (1998) and Pasikale (1996, 1999) who clearly identified the existence of different groups or 'types' of Pacific young people. Pasikale

(1996) called these 'identity profiles', and described them as follows: traditional, New Zealand-blend, and New Zealand-made. In other words, these profiles are based on the extent to which the individual Pasifika youth can relate to the cultural traditions and practices (including language) of their parents and/or grandparents. Pasikale describes the "interests and issues" of New Zealand born Pasifika peoples as being of 'critical' importance because of the high proportion of Pasifika in Aotearoa who are 'New Zealand born'. For her, the implications for schooling are:

...the images, information and stereotypes about Pacific Island people are rooted in assumptions based on the images of 'recent island migrants' ... [consequently] ... the displacement of the majority Pacific learners, especially in the formal educational establishments. By this I mean the assumptions (mostly bad) educators make about New Zealand born Pacific Island learners, who either fail to meet expectations or worse still, float by without any expectations or demands on them because of some misguided liberal attitude (otherwise known as the 'soft option'). Either way, human potential is not recognised or developed (Pasikale, 1999, p.5).

Pasikale (1999) continued her argument about the importance of identity to successful learning, by saying,

It is evident that how one perceives oneself provides the context for how one will proceed with learning. The literature suggests that for Pacific Island people, the sense of being (or identity) is influenced strongly by the environment. This has important significance for New Zealand born Pacific Islands people who are being socialised in a predominantly westernised environment (p.5).

She went on to say that,

...'identity' is a critical issue for many Pacific Islands learners, and understanding the issues can mean the difference to our positive cultural continuity and the alienation of a generation more comfortable with other forms of sub-culture. It can also mean the difference to continued academic failure and educational success based on the realities of future Pacific Islands generations. I have come to appreciate that 'identity' is not a static product but a process of constant navigation, based on a core of convictions that provide a foundation for self-acceptance (Pasikale, 1999, p.6).

It is important to note that the conclusions Pasikale draws are based on a qualitative research project called 'Seen But Not Heard' involving 80 Pasifika learners participating in what were then known as Training Opportunities Programmes (TOPs). The majority of the learners were youth who had not been successful with secondary school and had left before achieving any formal qualifications. As young people they seemed to be particularly vulnerable to issues around identity, and positioned to reflect quite deeply on what did and did not work for them in schools.

Other forms of documentation of Pasifika voices articulating their own constructions of personal identity include: the television documentary *Children of the Migration* (Rolla, 2004) and work by Pacific art historian, journalist and producer of TVNZ's *Tagata Pasifika*, Lisa Taouma. Contained within the promotion flier for a seminar<sup>39</sup> presented for the University of Auckland's Pacific post-graduate seminar series in 2006, is the following discursive event.

Pasifika youth in Aotearoa are increasingly visible in asserting a new brown identity where the catch cry is 'loud, brown and proud' - heard on the radio, seen on the TV. The impact that this Pasifika youth population is making particularly in popular culture is looked at in a 20 minute video piece on the perception and projection of Pacific identity in Aotearoa (Taouma, August, 2006).

The afore-mentioned video piece is a compilation Taouma made from stories aired on TVNZ's *Tagata Pasifika*. In the clip, a number of Pasifika people, teens to thirty-somethings, confidently stated the names they have given to the identities that they have constructed for themselves. Examples include: 'I am a Kiwi Samoan', 'I am a Pacific New Zealander', an 'Urban Samoan!' and so on. Be it traditional, blended or New Zealand-made, Pasifika identities are fluid, diverse and connected, even grounded, in this nation.

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<sup>39</sup> Entitled 'From Dusky to Dawn: Dusky maidens to Dawn raids'



### *The Politics of Pasifika Education Research Projects*

There has been “Increasing advocacy for Indigenous Pacific epistemologies and research paradigms” (Burnett, 2012, p.483) within New Zealand. This is apparent when research guidelines such as the MOE’s *Pasifika Research Guidelines* (Anae, et al., 2002) are examined closely. According to Burnett (2012, p.483), the effort

... to re-claim research agendas is a political response to the European beliefs and practices that have dominated research in New Zealand and the largely uneven flow of the benefits from this research to Indigenous people ...

The Ministry of Education’s research documents can be seen to be part of the small, but highly significant, literature base that reflects such a ‘reclaiming’ in terms of Pasifika research. The MOE guidelines, as well as those of other agencies, can be seen as being a crucial source of navigational tools for knowledge generation and dissemination. To reiterate, Pacific research is defined and the overall purpose stated in each set of guidelines. Invariably these include statements that focus on the empowerment of Pacific/Pasifika peoples.

These provide interesting and useful insights into the nature of such ethnic-focused activities. According to the MOE guidelines, Pacific/Pasifika research will involve Pacific<sup>40</sup> participants. Its role is to

...to identify and promote a Pacific world view ... [and] interrogate the assumptions that underpin western structures and institutions (MOE,2002, p.7).

One can argue that this point recognises the existence of underlying power relations which can affect not only provider-receiver relationships, but also (and of even greater concern) relationships between Pasifika and non-Pasifika peoples, and between decision-makers and decision implementers, within the research project itself.

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<sup>40</sup> The term ‘Pacific’ is used but reference is directed to Pacific heritage peoples in New Zealand

According to the MOE guidelines, Pacific research needs to begin by “... identifying Pacific values and the way in which Pacific societies create meaning, and structure and construct reality” (MOE, 2001, p.7). Identifying values and articulating them from a Pacific perspective is of crucial importance because the creation of relevant meanings for Pacific participants will engender a strong sense of ownership and personal commitment. This will lead to a better alignment between the personal-professional values of the individuals involved, and the values embedded in the project design, structure and implementation.

The HRC's Pacific research guidelines express similar views on the role of Pacific research and its starting point. According to the HRC, the primary role of Pacific research (in health) is to “... generate knowledge and understanding both about, and for, Pacific peoples” (HRC, 2004, p.11) and the main ‘source material’ for Pacific research will “... most likely be derived from Pacific peoples and from within Pacific realities –past, present and future” (HRC, 2004, p.11).

Both sets of guidelines (MOE and HRC) emphasise the essentialness of Pacific peoples’ social and material realities, as well as their worldviews and perspectives. That these are grounded on specifically Pacific values and principles is strongly advocated. Both the guidelines, however, include statements about the way Pacific research should be designed and structured as projects. For example, in the section about ‘research teams’, the MOE guidelines not only describes the possible types of research teams that can come under the banner of ‘Pasifika research’ but also states that Pacific management and control must be evident in any research project, at all levels. The HRC guidelines are even more explicit and comprehensive,

Pacific research requires the active involvement of Pacific peoples (as researchers, advisors and stakeholders) and demonstrates that Pacific people are more than just the subjects of research. Pacific research will build the capacity and capability of Pacific peoples in research, and contribute to the Pacific knowledge base ... (HRC, 2004, p.11).

The HRC (2004) guidelines conceptualise a continuum of possible structures for research projects, which have varying degrees of Pasifika participation, including decision making and management roles and positions. The structures range from 'Pacific relevance' to 'Partnership' through to 'Governance' (2004, p.6). The HRC guidelines appear to advocate that the ideal structure for projects is one where there is Pacific governance – that is, the team is Pacific-led, applies Pacific paradigms and models, focuses on Pacific populations, has Pacific outcomes, and exhibits Pacific ownership.

Of crucial importance is the articulation of Pacific values and ethical principles which should inform research projects and activities. For the MOE guidelines, the common Pacific values are: respect, reciprocity, communalism, collective responsibility, gerontocracy, humility, love, service and spirituality. For the HRC, the ethical principles are: relationships, respect, cultural competency, meaningful engagement, reciprocity, utility, rights, balance, protection, capacity building and participation. With the view that within some contexts, some values and principles are of more significance than others, which of these values and principles can be considered or argued to be of greater importance relative to others? The TEC's draft guidelines for Pacific research provide further insight.

The TEC's Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) set of draft guidelines for assessing evidence portfolios includes Pacific research and elaborates its definition of Pacific research. According to TEC, Pacific research must demonstrate "some or all of the following characteristics and should show a clear relationship with Pacific values, knowledge bases and a Pacific group or community" (TEC, 2003, p.2). The characteristics are paradigm, participation, contribution, and capacity /capability.

In terms of 'paradigm': Pacific research is to be conducted in accordance with Pacific ethical standards, values and aspirations, such as responsiveness and reciprocity. It involves research processes and practices that are consistent with Pacific values, standards and expectations and includes methods, analysis and measurements that recognise Pacific philosophy, spirituality

and experiences. It also includes data derived from the broad range of Pacific knowledges and experiences.

In terms of 'participation' (and mirroring HRC, 2004): Pacific research involves the active participation of Pacific peoples (as researchers, advisors and/or stakeholders). It demonstrates that Pacific people are more than just subjects of research and it recognises and validates the relationships between the researcher and the 'researched'. It also ensures engagement of the Pacific community in the initial stages of the research.

In terms of 'contribution': Pacific research has a demonstrable impact on Pacific communities and contributes to and enhances the Pacific knowledge base in all subject areas. It contributes to a greater understanding of Pacific cultures, experiences and world views and is relevant and responsive to the needs of Pacific peoples. It also protects and contributes to Pacific knowledge, development and advancement, and is responsive to changing Pacific contexts.

Finally, in terms of 'capacity and capability': Pacific research builds the capacity and capability of Pacific researchers and enhances the capacity of relevant Pacific communities to access and use the research. All in all, "... research that falls within the broad ambit of Pacific research, as outlined above, may be undertaken by Pacific and non-Pacific people" (TEC, 2003, p.3). One can argue that the TEC characteristics are also principles, and have a degree of congruence with the some of the 'Pacific values' described by the MOE guidelines, and some of the ethical principles identified and described by the HRC guidelines.

As principles, participation, contribution and capacity building (as elaborated in the TEC definition of Pacific research) provide what can be considered as the three core or central values in education research projects. One can argue that a project will be strengthened and given integrity as a Pasifika education project when core principles/values such as these are made explicit, and clear connections are made to demonstrate how these inform the design of

research project. This study holds to the view that Pacific/ Pasifika research must be explicit as a “counter-hegemonic” tool and actively engage in what Smith (2004, p.5) calls “the decolonisation project in research”.

The brief literature review presented above reflects elements of such a decolonisation project, the intent of which is the production of ethical, quality research to inform both policy and practice. Such an agenda is not necessarily a motivating factor for the Ministry of Education, of course, but when the MOE guidelines for Pasifika education research are viewed as part of a progressive set of developments, generated and driven by state agencies to oversee the research practices of contracted research work then robust standards and expectations can be set and justified. That is, justified in relation to how research that involves and impacts on Pasifika peoples ought to be designed and carried out, and how the findings are disseminated and used.

Individuals and collaborative teams that bid for Ministry of Education research and development contracts that focus or target Pasifika learners are expected to take the MOE guidelines for research and its research priorities (2002, 2012) into account. What is of concern, however, is the extent to which researchers not contracted by the Ministry of Education draw on and use such guidelines to inform their own research efforts involving Pasifika peoples. Up until recently, no similar guidelines informed approval processes for potential research involving Pasifika participants in universities. All New Zealand universities have robust human ethics approval processes and procedures, but these do not necessarily interrogate research proposals to the depth that an explicit set of Pasifika research guidelines would. An exception to this is the University of Otago. In November, 2011, the university council approved the *University of Otago: Pacific Research Protocols* developed on its behalf by Bennett, Bryant-Tokalau, Sopoaga, Brunton, Witte and Weaver (University of Otago, 2011). The document draws on four pre-existing Pasifika research guidelines, including the MOE’s *Pasifika Research Guidelines* (2002) and the HRC (2004) guidelines for Pacific research. All research proposals at Otago University seeking ethics approval

for research that involves Pacific/Pasifika peoples, and potentially impacts on Pacific/Pasifika communities, are now required to address and respond to these guidelines.

*The Unseen Politics of Pasifika PLD education projects*

Interestingly enough, at the level of the MOE, there have not been similar developments (in terms of guidelines) relating to education projects that focus on professional learning and development (PLD) – particularly PLD contracts targeting teachers and schools with high numbers of Maori and Pasifika students. This also includes PLD contracts that employ Pasifika staff. Such contracts are ‘won’ by potential providers who have prepared comprehensive proposals in response to calls from the Government Electronic Tenders Service (GETS). The project designs are expected to be informed by evidence-based research of effective practice.

Upon successfully winning a Pasifika-focused PLD contract, providers (which can be education consultants/companies; university-based education support services; or consortiums of independent consultancies and universities) are likely to seek and employ facilitators with proven work-based expertise with Pasifika learners and teachers. Invariably this involves the recruitment of experienced Pasifika teachers and educators on fixed-term contracts, and teachers from other cultural backgrounds with proven commitment to working with Pasifika learners and communities. These teachers may be employed in schools and occupy positions of considerable responsibility, such as a deputy or associate principal, a departmental head or, in primary schools, a syndicate leader. Or, they may be employed in tertiary institutions, in roles relating to student learning support, or community outreach. Regardless, they are experienced professionals, with recent if not immediate school-based experience. In order to be involved in what is often regarded as a unique opportunity to make a difference for Pasifika learners at the interface of teaching and learning, potential facilitators will apply for leave of absence from their school/university-based positions for a year.

There are several possible concerns relating to such PLD projects and the involvement or employment of facilitators with a commitment to the education and development of Pasifika learners. These concerns emerge from the three core principles for research discussed earlier in this chapter: participation, contribution and capacity building.

It is possible that such PLD projects are not structured in ways that enable full *participation* of Pasifika facilitators (and those with an explicit commitment to Pasifika learners and their communities) across all aspects of the project, including project design and project management. What is then problematic is that if the programme is rigidly applied, with little or no room for Pasifika facilitators (and the like) to apply their own professional judgments regarding delivery, they may not be positioned to *contribute* in the ways they feel are important - in ways informed by their own personal and cultural values. Such a situation is similar to a scenario of a teacher carrying out a lesson plan developed and written by someone else; a facilitator delivering a PLD programme composed of aspects he/she does not feel ownership over is likely to experience feelings of confinement, maybe even entrapment.

It is important to note that it is highly probable that Pasifika facilitators (and the like) consider taking on these roles because they see such work as a being a unique opportunity to make a contribution to the education and development of Pasifika communities - as well as an opportunity for personal growth. The motivation, however, for this particular form of *capacity-building*, particularly for Pasifika educators, may rest on culturally-informed notions of service, rather than notions of individualistic career advancement.

This study suggests that guidelines, similar to those developed for Pasifika education research, may be useful, even necessary, for education PLD projects. Sanga (2003) and Nabobo-Baba (2003) are Pacific academics and educators who have carried out micro-analyses of international education

projects funded by donor agencies, such as NZAID<sup>41</sup> and AuSAID<sup>42</sup>, and carried out in the Pacific Region. Their work is relevant here because they draw attention to the nature of human relationships, particularly between local insider counterparts and outsider consultants (Nabobo-Baba, 2003). Parallels can be seen with the role of Pasifika facilitators (and the like) and the relationship between themselves and the providers that rely on them to successfully deliver PLD programmes.

According to Nabobo-Baba (2003, p.88),

A relationship is only significant if it impacts on others, particularly those who are party of the relationship ... I would press the notion of relationship further by saying that human relationships are the most important cultural value in society – Pacific people value their relationships and maintaining good relations is of paramount importance.

One cannot assume that in a professional context, respectful and reciprocal relationships automatically ensue, especially when there is strong likelihood that one party holds quite specific culturally informed expectations of human relations that contrast with the other party's views. For instance, the Pacific/Pasifika facilitator is in a hierarchal relationship with his/her employer (the provider or funder of the oft-time high stakes project) and at the same time responsible for building relationships with teachers (of different ethnic backgrounds), and possibly Pasifika learners, at the interface within schools.

Sanga (2003, p.48) clearly signals that primary responsibility for the tenor of the donor-recipient relationship lies with the donor agencies. He argues that it is important that donor agencies reform the way they relate to others both internally within a project and externally. He states,

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<sup>41</sup> New Zealand Agency for International Development

<sup>42</sup> Australian Agency for International Development



... we find that decades of donor-recipient interactions have not resulted in *greater autonomy, strengthened capacities*, sustained policy communities and *leadership* ... (emphasis added).

Going further he says, “Instead, donors have continued to *control* educational agenda, overloaded local institutions with aid activities and preoccupied limited resources with *imposed frameworks and value system*” (Sanga, 2003, p.48, emphasis added).

In the absence of guidelines and protocols, MOE-funded PLD projects targeting teachers and leaders of Pasifika learners risk succumbing to similar problems Sanga identified, regarding donor agencies and their ways of operating within Pacific nations. Issues of control, and the imposition of external frameworks and value systems on Pasifika facilitators, are unlikely to reflect principles such as participation, contribution and capacity building. If such principles were to truly underpin projects, far more empowering, mutually enriching professional relations are likely to ensue. The objectives of such projects should also include “adding value to others by giving confidence, encouraging growth and motivating people towards autonomy” (Sanga, 2003, p.48) both internally, for Pasifika project facilitators, and externally, in terms of the teachers and students at the interface.

The literature and Pasifika research guidelines (MOE, HRC and TEC) that inform and guide Pacific/Pasifika research are valuable resources for the development of principles and guidelines for PLD education projects involving Pasifika peoples, which ultimately target Pasifika learners and their communities. One can argue that without a set of principles and ethical guidelines, Pacific education projects of this nature will be at risk of not fully achieving their intended aims and objectives.

According to the current *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-1017* (MOE, 2012, p.2) a “Pasifika connected way of working ... highlights the importance of Pasifika collective partnerships, relationships and responsibilities ...”. Pasifika research guidelines recognise the importance of this. PLD projects need to as well – otherwise, such projects are at risk of failure or ineffectiveness. With

respect to PLD projects, this means the involvement of Pasifika peoples in more than facilitators' roles. Overall, Pasifika people need to be involved in *all* stages leading up to, and including, implementation. If the project design does not involve the facilitators – who form the vital interface between the programme and the teachers and school leaders, and are expected to believe in and deliver the PLD - how can such projects be achievable?

This chapter has deepened knowledge and understanding of the context of Pasifika within New Zealand, particularly in relation to education. That is, the context that national education policies, and subsequent initiatives, are developed to respond to. Structures, such as guidelines for research and statements prioritising research areas (in relation to policy priorities), are intended to support the Ministry of Education's efforts to access and use robust, culturally relevant research. The Ministry of Education has over a decade of concrete experience in developing a strong, comprehensive and iterative policy framework for the education of Pasifika peoples; in gathering robust information with which to monitor and evaluate developments and outcomes related to policy; and in gaining new knowledge through research about effective school-based practices and conditions that are anticipated to make a difference for Pasifika learners and their communities.

An important set of political discourses has emerged as a consequence of globalisation and has resulted in the often uncritical acceptance and use of terms such as the 'global economy' and the 'global market-place'. Such terms belong to the discourse of 'knowledge economy', which has had a profound impact on the education system of Aotearoa New Zealand. Economic globalisation has increased the need for a developed nation, such as New Zealand, to become more internationally competitive. According to Marshall (2000), the achievement of this goal, from the government's perspective, is through a "knowledge revolution" which involves accelerating developments in information technologies and improving the role of research, science and technology in the creation of knowledge. Smith (2004) describes this discourse as:

... very much a privileged and privileging discourse that positions particular kinds of knowledge creation, approaches to knowledge and systems of knowing as more desirable and worthy of support because of the perceived economic benefits to be derived from such developments (p.4).

Understandably, the governments of such economies have specific and focused expectations of the role of education in such developments.

For the New Zealand Ministry of Education, the discourse of Pasifika education situates Pasifika students as 'subjects', based on their categorisation as a targeted group of learners for whom their (Pacific) identities, languages and cultures is of significance to their learning, and therefore their achievement. This is in stark contrast to earlier Pacific migrant parents, who were advised by their children's teachers in the 1970s to speak only English to their children as this would help them meet their 'learning needs' (achievement, success), as well as ensure a more rapid integration into New Zealand schools and society.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education has established certain 'truths' about the education of Pasifika learners, in a context of the pressing urgency to secure New Zealand as a knowledge economy and the rising demographic profile of Pasifika within its population, particularly in the Auckland Region (arguably, the nation's economic engine). This reflects some of the key features of discourse subscribed to by this overall thesis - the acquisition of authority for the topic, a sense of embodying the 'truth' about it and constituting the 'truth of the matter' at a historical point in time (or historical moment).

Is this the only way to view the education of Pasifika peoples? Are there alternatives already in existence? The next chapter, which concludes Part 3, answers the questions 'What is Pacific education?' 'What does it mean?' and looks towards the Pacific Region for theorisations. The critique and discussion presented is facilitated by a far more explicit self-reflective authorial writer/researcher voice.

## **Chapter Six**

### **What *IS* Pacific education? What does it mean? Critical Reflections from the Pasifika Margins**

The train of thought and the theorising that follows is guided by a set of questions posed by Wadell (1993), on behalf of a group of Pacific academics and scholars, in response to Epeli Hau'ofa's (1993) seminal essay 'Our Sea of Islands'. With reference to this essay Coxon (2011, p.6) states,

Hau'ofa developed an influential vision as an alternative to what he described as "the economic and geographic deterministic view of a very narrow kind"... constructed by "experts" from Pacific Rim institutions and agencies. He maintained that they constantly typified the small Pacific island states in terms of what they lacked – portraying them as small, poor, isolated, dysfunctional and doomed.

The greater danger and risk of such perceptions was the effect on Pacific peoples, in particular young, impressionable Pacific people studying and learning at the universities within the region. According to Coxon, he saw such views as,

...perpetuating Pacific peoples' own bleak perceptions of their dependency and subordination to the powerful rim nations. This he maintained was denying the reality emerging from the "astounding mobility" of Pacific peoples over the previous few decades. From his perspective when writing in the early 1990s, he saw both a revitalisation of the pre-colonial historical connectedness of Pacific Island peoples, and the development of extensive and expansive new connections with the countries of the Pacific Rim (2011, p.6).

This issue of perception and agency in relation to the contemporary progress and development of Pacific nations and societies (be it social, economic and political) was indeed challenging. The set of reflective questions that Hau'ofa's peers at the University of the South Pacific (USP) asked were:

Who is at the helm? Who sets the course? Who reads the sky and searches the horizons for signs? Is it us? Or is it someone else? Who are we? Are we satisfied, even conscious of the way we are going? (Waddell, 1993, p.xv).

These questions are powerfully relevant questions for Pacific peoples in Pacific Rim locations, such as Aotearoa New Zealand (Pasifika), when re-framed in terms of our aspirations and our expectations of formal education and the global forces that shape the provision of that education, such as the knowledge economy-driven, Western democratic states that we call home. Examples of re-framing include:

- Who are we? Are we satisfied, even conscious of where we are going?

Do we, as Pasifika know who we are – and not just in terms of all-too familiar social indices and demographic statistics? Are there other ways of knowing ourselves and enhancing our self-awareness as Pacific peoples who have become an integral part of nations and societies far away from our ancestral homelands? Our economic and social realities are very different to that of our kith and kin in the Pacific nations we also call home. Do we know where we are going as residents and citizens of the powerful, ever-changing societies we have migrated and settled into? Do we know where we are going as members of Pacific families and clans that have existed for eons and have a settlement scope that supersedes political borders and boundaries?

- Who is at the helm? Who sets the course?

When it comes to our education in New Zealand, who sets the plan, the agenda? In terms of education policy that sets the course, and in terms of grass-roots level decision-making, is the national course in alignment with how we are trying to guide our children and families? Are we mindful of the implications across our familial networks - those that we can map within this nation, across the Pacific to our heritage homelands, and beyond to other points of the Pacific Rim?

- Who reads the sky and searches the horizons for signs?

Do we have the knowledge and skills to monitor and analyse the social and economic contexts that shape and influence national policy? Are we skilled in the approaches that the state's experts use? Are we developing our own skills, in order to be able to discern, perceive and 'read' the context in astute

ways, relevant and meaningful to us? Do we have the capacity to engage in meaningful ways? Do we have the qualifications, skills and expertise to be positioned where the power is, where the decision-making takes place? Do we participate proactively in those processes that shape and influence decision-making and decision-makers?

In order to work through the relevant discourses and conceptualisations found within the literature, the imagery of Polynesian navigation that Wadell (1993) skillfully used, when he posed the afore-mentioned set of questions to his colleagues, will be drawn on to develop an overarching metaphoric frame to assist in deriving understanding and creating meaning from the analyses carried out for this chapter.

First of all, however, this introduction will share some key features of oceanic wayfinding - the ancient knowledge and skill of non-instrumental navigation and voyaging used by the ancestors of Pacific peoples. This is done in order to enable the reader to better appreciate the metaphoric nuances.

### ***In the Domain of Powerful Learning***

In more recent times, my own interest and relative knowledge of oceanic wayfinding, as practiced by ancient Polynesians in order to traverse the Pacific Ocean and establish their island homes, has been enhanced by two distinct education encounters. One was a major museum exhibition held in New Zealand, and the second was a conference keynote address. In 2006, the Auckland War Memorial Museum presented the highly successful exhibition, *Vaka Moana – Voyages of the Ancestors* to New Zealand audiences before it was taken overseas on tour. Some of the key points about *vaka* (ocean going vessels) explained by the *Vaka Moana* exhibition included<sup>43</sup>:

- “Vaka were the world’s first ocean-going craft. Not until thousands of years later would successful ocean-going vessels be developed in other parts of the world.”

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<sup>43</sup> See Auckland Museum website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/vakamoana/>

- “Vaka were traversing the ocean highways of the Pacific long before the people of Europe had ships or the skills to venture out of sight of land.”
- “For the people of the Pacific, vaka were more than just boats: they were the material and spiritual vessels that had carried people – and their way of life – to new lands across the sea.”
- “A vaka’s construction needed the sanction of chiefs, the blessing of the gods and combined effort of the community.”

Further, some of the key points about navigation and navigators that were explained included:

- “The exploration and settlement of the Pacific islands was deliberate and purposeful rather than haphazard and accidental.”
- “It was an incredible feat and at its centre stands the extraordinary figure of the navigator. His sophisticated navigational knowledge and skills enabled these people to sail the Pacific and settle its myriad tiny islands.”
- “The navigators were not merely in tune with their environment ... they were literally a part of it.”<sup>44</sup>

Many of the key historical facts that caught my attention and imagination in 2006 came to life and emerged as more contemporary realities for me through a second education encounter, which took place in 2007. I attended the Pacific Education Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii and listened to the last keynote speaker, Nainoa Thompson, Executive Director of the Polynesian Voyaging Society<sup>45</sup>. His expert address held an audience of over a thousand teachers and educators from around the Pacific enthralled with stories of the voyages of the Hokule’a and the powerful connections he made to contemporary education and learning of Pacific peoples.

At the centre of the history and vision of the Polynesian Voyaging Society stands the extraordinary figure of Pius Mau Piailug of Satawal in Micronesia. He was approached in the late 1970s and asked to teach a group of mainly Hawaiians how to build traditional vaka and how to wayfind, in preparation for an open sea voyage from Hawaii to Tahiti. At the time, Mau was one of the few men living in Micronesia, or anywhere else in the Pacific, who knew and

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<sup>44</sup> See: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/vakamoana/>

<sup>45</sup> [http://pvs.kcc.hawaii.edu/index/founder\\_and\\_teachers/nainoa\\_thompson.html](http://pvs.kcc.hawaii.edu/index/founder_and_teachers/nainoa_thompson.html)

practiced ancient navigation skills. He was a master navigator, mariner and dedicated teacher, whose own people showed little interest in learning and practicing these skills. According to Nainoa Thompson, who was one of the original group of Hawaiian student-sailors and apprentice navigators, the experience of working with Mau was about “being in the domain of powerful learning”. In this conference presentation, he said that Mau “took us back through time, to heritage ... knowledge from the past ... deep into ourselves”.

Mau’s contribution as a master navigator in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not limited to the revival of traditional skills and knowledge, or even the cultural revival of the Hawaiian people. In one of the many editorials and obituaries written to honour Mau when he passed away in 2010, Baybayan stated the following:

Mau Piailug, in his teaching opportunities among the many voyaging organizations here and throughout the Pacific, never identified himself or his students as being different or belonging to the labels that are imposed by the many experts who feel the need to define people by geographical boundaries.

For the pupils he generously shared his time with, Mau viewed and treated us as an oceanic ohana [family], defined not by an ocean that separated us, but rather an ocean that joined us around common traditions and a passion for an island lifestyle.

While best known for his navigational ability to wayfind, and an even greater skill as the consummate mariner, Mau was also a teacher dedicated to sharing unselfishly.

His lessons revolved around the central social theme that knowledge had no value unless you pass it on, and that navigation/ wayfinding gained its value not simply from one’s abilities as a master seafarer, but in the *ability of the practitioner to transfer that skill into becoming a leader and steward within his or her community* (2010, emphasis added).

The stories and experiences of Mau and the voyages of the Hokule’a under the sponsorship and direction of the Polynesian Voyaging Society demonstrate the contemporary value, validity and relevance of Pacific



wayfinding in terms of learning sacred (deeply revered and respected) knowledge that leads to leadership conceived as stewardship.

This chapter is organised as follows. The first section examines the main social constructions of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is followed by an analysis of two contrasting global perspectives of education and the macro-level context. A detailed discussion and critique of the theorisations and conceptualisations underlying an influential conception of Pacific education that has developed within the Pacific Region, known as the Re-Thinking Pacific Education Project, provides the substance of the remainder of the chapter.

### *The Contemporary Voyagers*

A few years ago, in 2005, amidst the flurry – no, the whirlwind - of issues relating to structural change in my place of work, a colleague used a term, which at the time, was in common usage. Perhaps organisational whirlwinds of this kind create perceptual spaces that make the ‘norm’ perplexing – but I left our meeting mentally ‘stuck’ on the term she used. I had to give it some careful consideration. It was ‘Pasifika’. One of the particular ways that my colleague tended to use this term was when she was commenting on the relative merits of an organisational process or procedure. If the said process was congruent to her cultural values as a person of Pacific heritage, she might say ‘that is Pasifika’ or even, ‘that is the Pasifika way’. Or, if the practice and its underlying values did not appear to be congruent, the comment that was passed would be ‘that is not Pasifika’.

This almost taken-for-granted assumption of a unifying set of shared values and expectations amongst my Pasifika colleagues, bore a very strong resemblance to the phrase, even the discourse of, ‘the Pacific Way’ that has been used within regional organisations and settings in the Pacific for over thirty years. I thought it would be useful to examine the origins of ‘the Pacific Way’ discourse and examine the extent to which it could be related to the discourse of ‘Pasifika’.

### *'The Pacific Way': Mara's Way or Crocombe's Way?*

The term 'the Pacific Way', according to Professor Ron Crocombe (1976), was first 'launched onto the international stage' by the then Prime Minister of Fiji, Sir Ratu Kamasese Mara in an address to the United Nations in 1970 – an address that took place shortly after Fiji gained political independence from Britain. Crocombe speculated, in his treatise of the concept, that the term 'The Pacific Way' was of wider use and relevance in the Pacific Region because "...it satisfies both psychological and political needs, in that it helps to fulfil a growing demand for respected Pacific-wide identifying symbols and for Pacific unity" (1976, p.1). The term itself was not intended to imply homogeneity - the diverse Pacific nations and peoples that fall under its banner are NOT all the same. According to Crocombe, the term was developed and has been used within the region in those instances and occasions when "... the common interests of all the islands peoples can be served by collaboration ..." (Crocombe, 1976, p.1).

Lawson (2010), however, has investigated the Pacific Way discourse in terms of the underlying assumption that it is a postcolonial discourse, originating from an eminent indigenous Pacific leader and statesman at the time of Fiji's independence from Britain, and interpreted and transmitted as such by a well-established Pacific academic and observer. Her critique poses a number of issues and challenges – namely the relationship between contemporary indigenous knowledge construction and meaning making, western theoretical frameworks, and those thinkers, scholars and intellectuals in the Pacific Region (such as Crocombe) whose work has been influential for different sectors.

Regardless of the actual origins, Crocombe's interpretation of Mara's words has resulted in a well-established, useful discourse in the Pacific Region. It can be argued that a similar need exists for such collectivising terms and discourses for Pacific peoples located in the metropolitan centres of Pacific Rim nations such as New Zealand (Samu, 2007). In other words, much like Mau's approach to passing on his knowledge and skills to all Pacific peoples

who expressed desire and interest, the discourse of a Pacific or Pasifika Way (or of an oceanic family, or a Pasifika family or kainga) has the power to facilitate an organised and collective response to deal with oppositional contextual forces. Whether the term or phrase is Pacific Islanders, Pacific peoples, or Pasifika, the usage of such terms, at best, “encapsulates both unity and diversity” (Airini et al., 2008, p. 47).

### *Charting the currents*

As Martin (2007) has pointed out:

...our world is in flux. The electronic revolution, the emergence of a global economy, the waves of immigration, the breakdown of class and gender barriers, and the myriad liberation movements: these and more have unmoored traditional social, economic, and cultural relations. In consequence, educational metamorphoses are now daily events (p. 2–3).

Chapter Four described and discussed New Zealand and other OECD nations’ efforts to develop formal education systems that can be responsive to the demands of globalisation and modernisation. The next section of this chapter aims to contrast such a powerful and dominant perspective of education provision with a deeply influential and arguably Pacific perspective of education participation.

### *World enlargement and education*

Migration, or the movement of people, is one such “transfer across international boundaries”, usually “driven by the desire to find a better life” (Banks et al., 2005, p.21). Migration is seen, through a lens of globalisation, as an important process for labour distribution and the extension of the consumer global market. However, Hau’ofa (1993) presents an alternative point of view of such processes at the macro level.

Many Pacific people map their worlds in terms of the location of their extended families. These maps frequently include New Zealand, Australia and the west coast of the United States of America, where parents, aunts and uncles, brothers, sisters and cousins reside. Modern technological advances

in telecommunications and air travel have helped strengthen these familial networks. Traditional socio-cultural obligations are maintained by the flow of remittances, generally from the Pacific Rim homelands of Pacific migrant communities to their Pacific country of origin, via the convenience of electronic transfers. There is also a counter-flow of cultural wealth such as *tapa* (traditional cloth made from mulberry tree bark), *tivaevae* (traditional quilts) and *ie toga* (fine mats) which are an intrinsic part of life events, when family members travel to visit one another for weddings, funerals, and church openings. Hau'ofa (1993, p.6) conceptualised this process as “world enlargement”. Conceptually, the worlds of Pacific peoples are much larger than the geographic spaces and the international boundaries to which they are confined. World enlargement is, arguably, a Pacific perspective of globalisation.

Migration is an important historical and in many cases, a contemporary and on-going causal factor to the enlargement of a Pacific family's world and is usually driven by aspirations for a better life for the migrant and for those left behind. For Pacific migrants to New Zealand and other Pacific Rim countries, this aspiration has included the desire for better educational opportunities for their children (Fairburn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003). With the establishment and growth of vibrant first, second and even third generations (often referred to as ‘the New Zealand-born’), cultural and social inculcation of such an aspiration continues. Success in education equates to improved qualifications, which in turn enhances employment prospects. Improvements in income result in families maintaining, even improving their contributions to their familial networks. Education is often seen by Pacific families as a means to maintain their collective status and security. To be successful “schooling has become an important means of serving the different social units that we have certain obligations towards” (Samu, 1998, p.244). The search by Pacific peoples for opportunities in Westernised formal education systems can be viewed as a feature of world enlargement that is driven by specific, non-Western cultural values and expectations.

Of the two perspectives (Helu's world enlargement and its expanded view of the world, and globalisation with its shrinking world) the latter discourse of the knowledge economy dominates because it is the state that provides the formal education system that serves society. Pacific peoples may still espouse belief in the importance of formal education but the motivation is to benefit the collective, the extended family (or *aiga*<sup>46</sup>) rather than the self. This reality of an enlarged Pacific worldview appears to be in tension with the knowledge economy discourse and the key drivers underlying national education policy for Pacific peoples. These were identified and discussed through the analysis of the national education policy framework for Pacific peoples in New Zealand in Chapter Five. This education policy analysis is also revelatory in terms of how Pasifika peoples are constructed, as well as the education issues and concerns that preoccupy the state and, subsequently, influence the practice of key systemic agents of change.

*Looking for the frigate birds, looking to the stars*

The application of different perspectives, without doubt, can enable powerfully provocative insights. I ask the question: What is the relative worth and value of different prisms of perspective – Western theories and Pacific and Pasifika conceptualisations - in challenging habits of mind (particularly our own), and developing greater self-awareness in relation to economic, social and cultural flux? Especially in relation to the formal education Pasifika families are experiencing within Aotearoa New Zealand?

Western theoretical frameworks may be useful, enlightening, even inspiring; but these theoretical approaches and constructs should not be the only influences on the process of conceptualising Pacific experiences. Indigenous and minority scholars have engaged in what Smith (2004, p.8) described as “multiple challenges to the epistemic basis of the dominant scientific paradigm of research and these have led to the development of approaches that have offered a promise of counter-hegemonic work”. I have looked up,

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<sup>46</sup> Samoan word for 'family'

out and beyond the metropolitan setting in which I live, and the academy in which I work, searching for ideas and insights that I can draw on from Pacific thinkers, scholars and academics, particularly from those who have established formidable regional and international reputations. First-generation Pacific intellectuals (in terms of the academy and publications in English) made their mark in the 1970s and 1980s within the Pacific region, with writing that Wendt (1976, p.59) described as “a revolt against the hypocritical/exploitative aspects of our traditional/commercial and religious hierarchies, colonialism and neo-colonialism and the degrading values being imposed from outside and by some elements in our societies”. Such intellectuals include Albert Wendt (1976, 1980), Epeli Hau’ofa (1993) and Ron Crocombe (1976).

Although these thinkers were responding to circumstances and conditions of another time and place, their ideas can serve as conceptual tools that can lift and illuminate our thinking about ourselves and our multiple realities within the metropolitan societies that we now live within and contribute to. These particular Pacific thinkers belonged to a specific environment that Wendt (1976, 1980) and Hau’ofa (1993) have conceptualised as ‘Oceania’ They became the creative and critical voice and conscience of a region of island nations, “a multiplicity of social, economic, and political systems all in different stages of decolonisation” (Wendt, 1980, p.xiii). This environment included the academe, and involved research that “in its broadest sense” is an “organised scholarly activity that is deeply connected to power” (Smith, 2004, p.5). They were in tune with these environments and were confident and unafraid of articulating their ideas and views.

As educators located in universities in Pacific Rim nations, their ideas and insights not only encourage emergent Pasifika scholars to think in alternative and uniquely “Pacific” ways, but they also lend credibility and support to such scholars’ tentative (and under-exposed) efforts to create their own paradigms of meaning and analysis. In the discipline of education, the number of Pasifika lecturers and academics in Aotearoa New Zealand is small. Although they are experienced tertiary level educators, course

developers/coordinators, and even administrators, many have some way to go before achieving full-acceptance by the academy as scholars and academics. As Smith (2004, p.10) stated, “Publication is what gets academics promoted hence the expression ‘publish or perish’. This is an academic game deeply embedded in academic institutions and is extremely difficult to transform” (p.10). Nabobo-Baba (2004, p.19) expresses similar sentiments:

Publishing is where the ultimate power lies, for what good is research if it is not published; this is entry into academia. Entry into academia is where a lot of ‘silence’ takes place. Our Pacific strategies of dethroning silence must therefore include strategies to publish.

For some emerging Pasifika scholars and academics, the challenge of strengthening one’s academic performance and profile, and progressing within the academe is driven by the desire to contribute leadership and service in the construction of the material and intellectual vessels that can carry Pasifika peoples to better, improved ways of life. Given such aspirations, however, what are Pasifika doing in order to forward their own course? The discussion now moves on to an exploration and critique of an ideal, contextualised, and therefore relevant, 21st century model (much like a metaphoric *vaka*) of education for Pasifika.

The next section describes and examines a non-instrumental conceptual tool which, arguably, represents a form of collective self-determination. It draws on a conceptual framework for re-thinking and re-framing Pacific education within the Pacific Region.

### ***Re-thinking Pacific / Pasifika education***

There are those who have been re-thinking and reconceptualising education in the Pacific (for the Pacific, by the Pacific) in a movement that has been “sailing the Pacific Ocean for the past ten years”<sup>47</sup> This movement began with the first gathering of educators and scholars from the Region at a colloquium

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<sup>47</sup> From flier promoting the ‘Re-Thinking Pacific Education Initiative for & by Pacific Peoples (RPEIPP)’ Pacific Regional Symposium “A Decade of Re-thinking Pacific Education” December 7-8, 2011, University of the South Pacific, Suva Fiji

hosted by the University of the South Pacific, Suva Fiji, in 2001. In addition, there are others, such as myself, who have watched, listened, read and studied Re-thinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific Peoples (RPEIPP) from afar – literally and figuratively on the edge and from the Rim. On the edge as a passive observer at conferences; a reader of Re-thinking Pacific Education publications; and an unnoticed yet attentive registrant within the Network of Pacific Educators (NOPE) online community. And from the Rim in terms of my location as an educator living and working in Auckland, the largest city of the Pacific Rim nation of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Re-Thinking Education project is a programme of work and effort that has primarily been focused on the education systems and nations of the Pacific Region. My interest in the Re-Thinking Education project has been in terms of (i) how it could contribute to the way educators, particularly Pasifika educators, might be able to re-think the education of, and for, Pasifika; and (ii) how it can provide general principles for ethical practice when I travel into the Pacific Region and carry out professional work as an education advisor and consultant.

The critical reflections shared in this section are from two different situated roles or positions, each shaped by a specific context. One is my role as ‘an insider educator’, a university-based educator of some fifteen years, located in New Zealand and working primarily in response to issues and concerns relating to the education of Pacific peoples *within* this country. This illustrates ‘for Pasifika by Pasifika’ *within* the context of New Zealand. The other position I reflect from is as an ‘outsider’ education consultant *from* the Pacific Rim (New Zealand) – an outsider who periodically travels into the Region to work on curriculum and teacher development projects funded by overseas aid agencies. Arguably this could illustrate ‘for the Pacific, by the Pacific’ but more precisely it is *for* the Pacific by the *Pacific outsider*. What these two different sets of reflections have in common, however are the theoretical lens that is used, which is based on the conceptual components of the ‘Tree of Opportunity’ metaphor of the Re-Thinking Education in the Pacific project that emerged in 2001.



### *The 'Tree of Opportunity': Philosophy and Principles*

In 2001, Pacific educators gathered in Fiji in a now historic meeting of hearts and minds in order to re-conceptualise Pacific education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They saw the purpose of Pacific education as assisting in “the survival, transformation and sustainability of Pacific peoples and societies” (IOE 2002, p.3). The primary goal was to “ensure all Pacific students are successful and that they all become fully participating members of their groups, societies and the global community.” They recognised Pacific education as a process “firmly rooted in the cultures of Pacific societies” because this cultural strength will “permit incorporation of foreign elements” in ways that maintain Pacific learners’ identities. They also recognised this as a process that must scrutinise the values and assumptions underlying formal education and development. They called this concept the “Tree of Opportunity” (IOE, 2002, p.3).

An important and obvious difference between the education of Pasifika in New Zealand and the shared education priorities and concerns of the nations of the Pacific Region is that Pasifika peoples are a significant minority group in New Zealand. Decision-making rests (in principle) with the democratic process, and the extent to which Pasifika peoples - as a multi-ethnic group in this society - are perceived by the state and public institutions as having needs and concerns which, if unchecked, will impact negatively on New Zealand’s efforts to be economically competitive globally as a knowledge economy. A minority position also impacts on the ability of Pasifika communities to lobby, and to ensure meaningful representation within state agencies, government departments, and the government as a whole.

Pasifika are well-established in New Zealand. They have been a part of this society (in terms of significant, noticeable numbers) since the mid-1960s. However, in terms of targeted attention to their education by the state, this only became evident in the mid to late 1990s after, arguably, damning Education Review Office (ERO) reports on the quality of education provided in suburbs with high concentrations of Pasifika and Maori peoples. By the

late 1990s, significant amounts of money were being directed into research and development by the Ministry of Education, with high profile, high stakes projects such as *Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara* (the SEMO Project); and *Achieving in Multicultural High Schools* (the AIMHi Project). The first five-year *Pasifika Education Plan* for Pasifika peoples was released by the Ministry in 2001 (MOE, 2001). Its successor plans have become a crucial part of the national policy framework for the education of Pasifika peoples (refer to Chapter 5).

Despite being actively involved in the education system of this country since 1993, and welcoming such critical developments in national policy and research, I began to take into consideration the possibility of complacency on the part of Pasifika educators such as myself (Samu, 2010). If Pasifika educators become too comfortable with developments in policy and practice (across all sectors and at all levels) then it is possible that initiatives intended to enhance participation and achievement of young Pacific learners will be ineffective. To provide some guidance towards developing a process of authentically Pasifika (somehow) intellectual critique, I turned to the (then) radical perspectives of Pacific academics and scholars mentioned previously - such as Wendt, Hau'ofa and Crocombe (Samu, 2010). Their work was persuasive in advocating the importance of critiquing our own actions and condition as Pasifika peoples. This is important because of "the hypocritical/exploitative aspects" of foreign or external elements as well as "some elements in our own societies" (Wendt, 1976, p.59).

After studying and reflecting upon the 'Tree of Opportunity' metaphor (IOE, 2002) I could see it as having the potential, as a set of ideas, for transformative shifts in thinking. The metaphor seemed to reflect "... a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships" (Hauofa, 1993, p.7). It was certainly helpful in that it provided conceptions that enabled thinking in alternative and uniquely 'Pacific' ways which were, at the same time, rigorous, challenging and critical. My colleagues and I expressed the view that an important outcome of that landmark conference of 2001 was a much needed 'rich and robust

conceptualisation' to inform policy and practice for Pasifika peoples in New Zealand "... because it is informed by Pacific aspirations, and perspectives" (Samu et al., 2008, p.147).

### ***Examples of Practice: New Zealand and Beyond***

Mara, Siteine and I drew on this model to re-think and conceptualise Pasifika education in New Zealand for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to write a chapter for a textbook for Bachelor of Education (primary and early-childhood teaching) students. Drawing on the key parts of the 'Tree of Opportunity' metaphor we contextualised them for New Zealand. We stated that the purpose of this conceptual adaptation is our survival and sustainability as Pasifika peoples (citizens, residents) in New Zealand. We expressed the expectation that the education and development of Pasifika peoples must enhance Pasifika transformative capability, as well as the education success of learners, in order to help them serve their families and contribute to New Zealand society. Such an education must be grounded in the diverse Pasifika cultures of New Zealand, and ensure consistent critique of the values and assumptions underlying education policies – those that specifically target Pasifika peoples, as well as those that are more generic, and directed to all (Samu et al., 2008).

There have been a number of occasions when I have left the Rim to work as an educator within a Pacific nation (for example Samoa, Tonga and Nauru). I do so as an education consultant in school curriculum and teacher development, usually for a bilateral aid project. I have drawn on the 'Tree of Opportunity' metaphor to develop guiding principles (as a set of professional ethics) to inform my perspective and subsequent efforts as an advisor and consultant with a commitment to education and development within the Pacific Region.

### ***Insider, Outsider and Back Again***

Contrasting the Pacific/Pasifika education contexts in which I work requires recognition and the explication of my situated-ness in each one. Doing so requires one to be open-minded and give attention to details. For example,

when I began a consultancy in Samoa in 2002 (my first such project) my brother informed me in no uncertain terms that, as a Samoan resident in New Zealand, I could not expect ready acceptance by my local counterparts, or assume that I had legitimacy and validity for the role. The fact I was born and raised in Samoa, that I had studied overseas on a series of government scholarships and had returned home to serve in the schooling system as a teacher for a period of time would count for very little. In his view, I had lived and worked overseas long enough to relinquish any entitlements as an insider. Periodic visits home to see family, apparently did not count. It was a blunt, somewhat brutal, lesson from my insider brother, a son who had returned home following his studies - and stayed.

When I travel into the Pacific Region for short-term work or attend conferences, I situate myself as an outsider. I am at the edge or margins of a sphere of influence and activity powered and driven by insiders – usually someone assigned to work with me as a local counterpart. I have the potential for meaningful contribution, yet I still have a responsibility to develop an understanding of “the values and belief systems that underpin the behaviours and actions of individuals and institutions, and the structures and processes they create” (IOE, 2002, p.1). This is vital knowledge for careful negotiation inwards, to ensure the development of working relations that facilitate and support “the survival, transformation and sustainability of Pacific peoples and societies” (IOE, 2002, p.3). The potential success of the collaborative work is dependent on acceptance by, and cooperation with, insiders.

At home in Aotearoa New Zealand, however, I have no doubt regarding my legitimacy as an insider. My credibility (both personal and professional) rests on years of service as a teacher, teacher educator, academic and researcher with a specific focus on the Pacific migrant populations and their progeny. I do not stand at the margins, respectfully looking inwards, and problem-solving how best to make my way forward. I am in the midst of this context, working with others to “support our survival and sustainability as Pacific peoples and enhance our transformative capabilities” and contribute to “the

success of our learners within this education system” (Samu et al., 2008, p.147). It is particularly important to critique the values and assumptions underlying education policies and initiatives that target Pasifika peoples (Samu et al., 2008, p.147) given the complex issues of social and political marginality. As Freire declared,

In order to communicate effectively, educators must understand the structural conditions in which thought and language of the people are dialectically framed (1970, p.69).

One can argue that such structures include liminal positioning *within society* (for example the persistently lower socio-economic status of a significant proportion of Pasifika peoples compared to the rest of New Zealand’s population) and *within social groups* of society (for example, inter-generational differences within Pasifika-specific groups). Regardless of the structures that have caused marginality, I agree with hooks’ (1988) perspective. She considers marginality to be a

...site of radical possibility, a space of resistance ... a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is found not just in words but in habits of being and the way one lives (p.156).

Such an appreciation is the outcome of critical analyses which challenge habits of mind and deliberately displace taken-for-granted assumptions. Such a critique can lead to an enhanced capacity to transform the way one ‘sees’ one’s world and the social relations operating within it. As hooks (2004, p.157) points out, this in turn “... offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds”.

In this process, one is at the helm, constructing and pursuing meaningful solutions. This creates ownership, even agency, over one’s carefully deliberated and purposeful way forward.

So where and how can these core conceptualisations, shaped by the ‘Tree of Opportunity’ influence the two afore-mentioned positions of insider and outsider? How can these be refined and developed further as a hybrid

manifestation? How can such a refinement enable a more focused agenda of transformation and ownership of both process and product with respect to education of Pacific/ Pasifika peoples?

### *After Pondering*

In some ways the ‘Tree of Opportunity’ metaphor, and the hybrid adaptation developed by Samu et al. in order to vision Pasifika education in New Zealand, are simplistic conceptions that further theorisation will strengthen. Despite the absence of complexity, however, the hybrid has stimulated thinking. For instance, I may think I can recognise and prevent undesirable “foreign or external elements” (IOE, 2002, p.3) being grafted into an education initiative for Pacific/Pasifika learners. What if, however, those elements have Pasifika origins? What if they are based on narrow, unproblematic and uncontested conceptions which have escaped testing and critique because, somehow, we have internalised ‘for the Pacific, by the Pacific’ (or ‘for Pasifika, by Pasifika’) to mean that if the source is our own leaders and thinkers, unconditional acceptance is implicit?

Years ago, whilst situated as a radical intellectual voice in the decolonising Pacific, Wendt argued that individual dissent is important because “...without it our cultures would drown in self-love” (1976, p.52). A milder, 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent to self-love is self-satisfaction or complacency, the danger of which is dysconsciousness or uncritical habits of mind (King, 1991). Such mind sets unintentionally justify inequity because the existing order of things is accepted particularly when some aspects of the way things are emerge as a result of the exercise of our agency – or specifically, the decisions made through the exercise of agency by people accepted as our leaders and authority figures. I suggest a more rigorous theorisation of the ‘Tree of Opportunity’ metaphor of education could incorporate three additional components: conscientious critique; conceptual precision; and oceanic agency.

The components will be described and discussed using the complex relationship of Maori and Pasifika in education as an illustrative example.

### *Conscientious Critique*

This type of critique is required if one is an insider entrenched within one's professional and cultural networks of relations. For example, the discourse of *tuakana-teina* is advocated by some Pasifika academics and leaders in education, as being the ideal conception to shape the working relationship between Maori (as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) and Pasifika (Airini, Anae, & Schaaf, 2008). *Tuakana-teina* is the Maori conceptualisation of the relationship between older siblings (*tuakana*) and younger siblings (*teina*). Older siblings lead, guide and mentor younger siblings. Younger siblings listen, show respect, defer and follow. This, in itself, is not foreign to Pasifika peoples - it is a deeply rooted cultural value within many indigenous cultures of the Pacific.

Maori trace their ancestry to the islands of the Pacific so it is not uncommon in formal ceremonies for Pacific/Pasifika visitors to be welcomed and greeted as *tuakana* or elder sibling (Teaiwa & Mallon, 2005). According to Teaiwa and Mallon, however, outside of formal occasions and "beyond the romanticised narrative of mythic Polynesian kinship, in the reality of 'immigrant' incursions on finite local and national resources", the relationship is more one of "ambivalent kinship", the roots of which are "issues of precedence, rights and equality" (2005, p.210, 208). The ambivalence surfaces at different times and situations as "a denial of kinship; or an assertion of seniority within the kinship model; or it may produce moments where the representation of a 'united happy family' may feel the most comfortable and appropriate" (Teaiwa & Mallon, 2005, p.208).

One way of operationalising the *tuakana-teina* conception is that Pasifika situate themselves as *teina* (the younger sibling), and therefore must relate in terms of passive respect and deference to their *tuakana* (Maori as older sibling). This is something I have accepted and taken for granted. I have a personal obligation (I am Maori through my mother) and a professional commitment to honour the Treaty of Waitangi and support Maori efforts towards achieving equity and social justice as the indigenous people New

Zealand or *Tangata Whenua*. I concur with Foliaki (1994) that “the push for Maori rights has benefitted Pacific Island people” (p.102). But the questions I have begun to ask are: Does this mean that such support must be uncritical and unconditional at all times and in all instances? Does it mean that Pasifika educators must prioritise Maori initiatives, and only when these are in place and functioning smoothly, pursue an explicit Pasifika agenda?

I remain committed personally and professionally to the Treaty of Waitangi. In reality, however, the relationship between Maori and Pasifika is not a simplistic binary. There may be times of tension when Maori and Pasifika are located within state-funded initiatives intended to enhance educational success for both groups of learners, as well as times when Maori and Pasifika are located within the same education organisations and entities. The common denominator of both scenarios is the presence of an external adjudicator or decision maker – the mainstream funding source and/or institutional authority. More often than not, the external adjudicator is Pakeha or European. In 1994 Foliaki expressed the following view:

I think whatever advantages Maori people, or attempts to address disadvantages, also advantages Pacific Island people down the line. So my support for Maori issues is not only because Maori are right, and I believe it is right to address injustice, but it is in the best interests of Pacific Island people both now and in the future. I suppose some Pacific Island people say. ‘Why further down the line? Why not at the same time?’ *The answer to that lies with those who have the power to make decisions.* It is not Maori who are holding up decisions (1994, p.102, emphasis added).

A key feature of such complex shared spaces is that overall decision-making, even setting the terms of engagement, lies with the external adjudicator.

It can be argued that the *tuakana-teina* conception creates a perceptual stalemate, which Pasifika may feel prevented from moving away from, because they perceive (rightly or wrongly) that the pursuit of their own agenda may place their *tuakana* at risk. This can result in slowness to take action until Pasifika have ensured that their desired course of action will not impact negatively on Maori or undermine their status within that shared



space. Furthermore, external adjudicators, as a reflection of their commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi (and being in a position of authority) may feel obligated to consult first with Maori about Pasifika-related proposals and initiatives before approving. This is entirely appropriate within the *tuakana-teina* conception, but it can have the effect of involuntarily silencing Pasifika. This raises several questions: Does this mean that critique and analysis has no place in the *tuakana-teina* relationship? What about the presence of the decision-makers and holders of the purse strings of both Maori and Pasifika education and development? The dilemmas are multi-level, cultural and structural. A deep and careful approach to critique requires a staunch commitment to transparency, openness and most importantly the willingness to identify and then challenge ways of thinking and interacting that are suppressive.

### ***Conceptual precision and transformation***

There are times, as revealed in the previous illustration, when there is a need to create appropriate space and structures to enable rigorous theorising of some of our more complex relationships. New complexities with equity implications are emerging in the context of Pasifika education that polite, respectful deference cannot address. There is a need for conceptual clarity - not uncomfortable, awkward silence in public forums accompanied by privately muttered expressions of frustration - and the development and application of sharper conceptual tools and discursive practices. As Pasifika we need to have a voice, because to be involuntarily silenced is oppression. The outcome of conscientious critique creates opportunities for the pursuit of precision in understanding and articulating the phenomenon to which a concept refers. When conceptual precision is enhanced transformative change in attitudes and underlying values and beliefs can occur. In addition, different ways of thinking, seeing, and articulating the complicated, changeable world can take place.

There is an important need, therefore, to rethink and reconceptualise relations between *Tangata Whenua* and *Tangata Pasifika* (Pasifika peoples in

New Zealand) in order to develop relevant, practical and equitable foundations for decision-making. New ways of working together need to be conceived; not necessarily based on Western democratic lines but, perhaps, more along the ancient lines of *whanaunga* (genealogical relationships). Even more importantly, such conversations should be held directly with Maori – forthright, honest conversations held away from the gaze of ‘The Other’ - in order to develop a better understanding, not only of our differential obligations and responsibilities to the Treaty, but also our mutual responsibilities as *whanau* (family, relations). The Maori concept of *whanaunga* offers possibilities to both Maori and Pasifika committed to working together as brothers and sisters of *Te Moana Nui-a-Kiwa* (the Pacific).

### ***Oceanic Agency***

In New Zealand, control of the structures for the overall provision of education and research do not lie in the hands of Pasifika communities, although many such structures and processes provide opportunities for Pasifika consultation and even management at high levels. So, how can Pasifika peoples respond and exercise agency? Particularly, in ways that shape and influence the processes that affect their education and development in New Zealand, at least at the level of individuals and collectives? In other words, how might Pasifika peoples’ capacities be enlarged, in order to take charge of their own social and economic development?

According to Quanchi (2004, p.2), research by several Pacific and non-indigenous scholars on “locally valued ways of thinking, learning and organising knowledge” has focused on how these might contribute to the social and economic development of Pacific communities in the Pacific Region. These researchers are keen to “affirm not only that indigenous epistemologies are alive and well, but also that they are relevant and useful to the societies and peoples to whom they belong” (Quanchi, 2004, p.3).

Pasifika scholars have made similar efforts in the quest for valued ways of thinking, learning, and organising knowledge in and for the context of Aotearoa. The efforts of Samu, Mara and Siteine (2008) to adapt the ‘Tree of Opportunity’ conception and the efforts within this thesis to theorise it further are valuable examples. The value of the conceptual work of Pacific scholars is in “...the promotion of indigenous epistemologies [where] there is strong emphasis on *Oceanic agency* and its potential application in development policy and practice” (Quanchi, 2004, p.3, emphasis added). Oceanic agency, therefore, involves the development and use of contextualised epistemological frameworks to rationalise and enable proactive, meaningful engagement with education processes and practices. It is shaped by conceptual precision and transformation that occur as a consequence of conscientious critique. Oceanic agency does more than facilitate ownership – it leads to empowerment.

The RPEIPP<sup>48</sup> Symposium held in December 2011 was “... an opportunity to bring the RPEIPP Vaka back ashore to take stock, mend sails, re-set directions and find fresh winds” (IOE, 2011) after ten years. Whether one is an insider or an outsider, taking stock should include re-thinking the familiar and the taken-for-granted. Deep and critical analyses can open our eyes to not only that which needs repair, but also that which might need outright replacement. Replacements may include new relationships, new ways of relating to one another and others on similar journeys. Yes, directions may require re-setting – hence the need to be alert and ever watchful of benevolence, complacency and dependency. In order to ‘find fresh winds’, astute theoretical lenses from both the west (or ‘other’) and Pasifika /Pacific theorisations and paradigms need to be used and applied - so that, in whatever setting or context, we may continue the journey with integrity, clarity, wisdom, creativity and compassion without sentimentality. This study agrees with Wendt in that,

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<sup>48</sup> ‘RPEIPP’ stands for Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific Peoples. Refer to <http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=10885> for details of the 2011 symposium

Pride, self-respect, self-reliance will help us cope so much more creatively with what is passing or to come...must try and assume control of our destinies, both in utterance and in fact (Wendt, 1976, p.51).

This is a unique and contextualised challenge for 21<sup>st</sup> century Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## 4. Exploring Strata, Seams and Ruptures

*Beneath the great continuities of thought, beneath the solid  
homogenous manifestations of a single mind or a collective  
mentality one is now trying to detect the incidence of interruptions.*

*Michel Foucault, 1972, p.2*

## **Chapter Seven**

### **What does education mean to Pacific women?**

#### ***Tala Mai Fafo 1: Learning in the Classroom***

Formal education is perceived by Pasifika peoples in positive ways and terms. It is regarded as a vital, highly valued process through which to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to enable achievement of certain collective (material, socio-cultural) aspirations (Equal Employment Trust, 2011; Mara, 2006; Tongati'o, 2010). This chapter will demonstrate the persistence of this perspective across time and contexts (including Samoa) through an examination of the meaning of education for Pacific people, with a particular focus on Pacific/Pasifika women. The use of authorial voice will be distinct and obvious in some parts of the discussion.

This chapter applies the seminal ideas of philosopher of education Jane Roland Martin to extracts from the (auto)biographic narratives of selected Pacific women (including my own). The narratives are published and are therefore secondary sources of information. The narratives are referred to as stories – more specifically as *tala mai fafo*, which in the Samoan language literally means 'words from outside or afar'. For the purposes of this study, each *tala mai fafo* and the analysis it generates is presented as a case (as in a set of arguments). The selected *tala mai fafo* are inclusive of time and space and collectively contribute to the development of the overall argument presented within this chapter.

Each *tala mai fafo* was examined carefully using Martin's ideas about education and cultural metamorphoses (2007) in order to produce socio-historical analyses of women's first-hand experiences of education, and to cast light on the effects of specific aspects of their experiences on personal change, culture and identity. Comparisons were made across three different generations of personalised education experience in order to identify and theorise any pronounced differences and similarities. A secondary outcome of the analyses has possibly been a much needed challenge to habits of mind, "particularly our own as Pacific educators and researchers, well-established

now in our metropolitan homes away from home” (Samu, 2010, p.1). The overall analysis presented an opportunity to re-visit and re-think the ongoing processes of formal education that have shaped different generations and to learn from the cross-connections between them all.

The first section of this chapter reviews Jane Roland Martin’s ideas relating to education, transformation, and the effects on identity and culture. The second section considers education and change and examines the question: What does formal education mean to Pacific people? More specifically, what does formal education mean to a selection of Pacific/Pasifika women? As well as exploring some of the challenges of change at the personal level, the discussion considers how selected Pacific/Pasifika women responded to changes wrought by their school and classroom-based experiences with formal education, and identifies and then explores the commonalities and differences. The final section of this chapter examines the discernible differences across time and space in terms of the meaning of education for Pacific/Pasifika women.

### ***Jane Roland Martin’s Philosophical Reflections on Education and Change***

In *Educational Metamorphoses: Philosophical Reflections on Identity and Culture* Martin’s (2007) ideas on education and change provide a metaphorical magnifying glass through which to gain a sharp, clear image of the effects of education on change, particularly in terms of an individual’s culture and identity. She states,

Throughout history and across cultures education, defined broadly, has changed the way we humans walk, talk, dress, behave, view the world, and live our lives. In other words, it has utterly transformed us (2007, p.1).

She argues that while there is acknowledgement of education’s transformational power, education is often “portrayed as no more than a matter of small, incremental changes...” (2007, p.6). She refers to such

changes to an individual as 'metamorphoses' but argues that these metamorphoses are not one-off events because,

... our world is in flux. The electronic revolution, the emergence of a global economy, the waves of immigration, the breakdown of class and gender barriers, and the myriad liberation movements: these and more have unmoored traditional social, economic, and cultural relations. In consequence, educational metamorphoses are now daily events (Martin, 2007, p.2-3).

### ***Educational Metamorphoses, Identity and Culture***

According to Martin's (2007, p.6) theorising, metamorphoses involve change in what a person knows as well as change to "... who that person is ...". Since change can either be negative or positive - "... for the better or the worse" (Martin, 2007, p.3) - change as transformation can be "unwanted or undesirable" and Martin asks if these specific types of metamorphoses can be avoidable. She also identifies and discusses the radical "unacknowledged" changes to personal identity that come about via metamorphoses that lead to "improvement" (2007, p.3), whatever that might be, or however it may be defined. One of the most revelatory constructs of her framework is "the dual character" (2007, p.3) of such changes, and how these unacknowledged components remain hidden when education is discussed, thought about or approached in more simplistic ways - for example, as a series of incremental changes or as the achievement of a specific academic qualification or milestone.

Martin (2007) sees education metamorphoses as having two dimensions - an inner dimension (to do with personal transformation, or identity) and an outer one. She terms the outer dimension of change (when it occurs) "culture crossings" (2007, p.2), and explains that these can be either internal or external. An example of an internal culture crossing steered by education is when a child leaves home to study for a professional qualification. Each time the child returns home for the holidays he or she may find they have less and less in common with family and old school friends. Martin illustrates her critique with an experience she had with one of her most promising graduate



students. He came to tell her he was withdrawing from his studies because he believed that the more educated he became, the less he had in common with his family. His was a conscious choice against an internal culture crossing, one which involved changes - even risks - to the meaningful relationships he had with his family and acceptance and belonging within his working class Irish American community.

Another example of an internal culture crossing is learning a profession such as law. Some of the attributes of success are, arguably, often considered as male characteristics, such as aggressive competitiveness. In learning to be a successful lawyer, a woman may subjugate her (arguably) more feminine qualities and characteristics. Alternatively, she may experience a tension between assuming the kind of disposition that serves her best in the workplace and her ability to 'leave' such a disposition 'at the office' and replace it with one more conducive to her familial relationships when she returns home.

External culture crossings, on the other hand, involve learning how to live successfully within a new culture and society. A person may experience an external culture crossing when he/ she migrates to a new country and may involve assimilation, integration, adaptation or accommodation. External culture crossings can also occur when one marries into a very different culture, when a socio-cultural border is crossed. Martin argues that culture crossings are not necessarily one-off events and that internal and external culture crossings are not exclusive of each other. A migrant, for example, might experience a number of different internal crossings after the initial external culture crossing. This is not to suggest, however, that the process is a linear one. Martin (2007, p.110) describes life as "a chronology of changes or a series of educational metamorphoses" Moreover she explains, "... a linear model according to which the end state of one educational metamorphosis erases and replaces the end state of a previous one does not do justice to all the facts" (2007, p.111). Martin reflects on how "education can involve addition, subtraction and transformation more or less simultaneously" and

refers to this dynamic composite of experiences as “replacement and coexistence” (2007, p.111).

Of particular interest to this study is her treatise on the concept of ‘cultural stock’ and the effects of education metamorphoses or culture crossings on this stock. Analysing this concept facilitates a deeper understanding of the complex, dynamic interplays that occur within the process of educational metamorphosis or culture crossings. In defining culture in broad terms, Martin recognises that knowledge, skills and attitudes, modes of thinking, and patterns of behaviour are all “items of culture”. Items of culture are therefore items of social and cultural stock. The nature of ‘stock’ in this context is similar to commercial or business stock – a measureable substance, or the net worth or value of an enterprise. Thus for Martin, individuals’ social and cultural stock can be either assets or liabilities in culture crossings. As Martin points out in a later publication, her use of the term ‘cultural stock’ rather than ‘cultural capital’ is deliberate. She states,

I should stress that I use the term “cultural stock” rather than “cultural capital” ... because “capital” prejudices the vitally important question of whether the stuff of culture is valuable and “stock” does not (2011, p.10).

### *An Initial Critique of Jane Roland Martin’s Conceptions*

My subsequent exploration of Martin’s work (2002, 2007, 2011) on these and related themes focused on their applicability and relevance for reflecting on Pacific/Pasifika peoples and their experiences of formal education. While much of Martin’s arguments are exceedingly useful and relevant, there are several underlying assumptions which can be considered as shortcomings. The first of these is Martin’s use of the term ‘choice’; the second is Martin’s use of the term ‘motivation’ (which I consider to be related to choice); and the third relates to the notion of cultural stock itself.

#### **‘Choice’ and Individual Decision-Making**

Martin discusses the role and place of choice, and lack of choice, when an individual undergoes a culture crossing and transformation (2007). Careful

consideration of the notion of individual choice from a cultural perspective, particularly from the perspective of some traditional Pacific cultures, renders Martin's use of the term problematic. In such communal cultural contexts, individual choice-making is a misnomer. In many Pacific cultures the basic unit of society - and oft-times identity formation - is the extended family. Individuals make choices but, more often than not, the choice that is made favours the collective because individuals define themselves in terms of the collective. In other words, an individual makes a particular choice - often for a greater collective cause or good - because the individual is driven by a desire to place others' expectations, values, and feelings before his or her own. This is the essence of personal identity.

This is illustrated in the documentary *Our Small World* (George Andrews Productions, 2005) where the eldest daughter of the Puka family reflects on the challenges she experienced when she returned home to Fakaofu Atoll in Tokelau as a young adult, after several years of living in New Zealand. It was a difficult transition for her and matters came to a head when her parents censured her on the way she dressed and her drinking and smoking. The young woman thought about it and realised she had to make a choice - between what made her happy and what made her parents happy. She chose her parents' happiness. Her reason was simply "because I love my parents"; it was not based on her belief in the correctness of their views. For some Pacific cultures, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is the collective, and authority figures from within that collective, that shape and define personal identity and therefore the choices that an individual makes. The choice is still an individual choice, still a personal choice - it is just a choice that prioritises the collective.

### **'Motivation' as inherently inspirational**

Martin uses the term 'motivation' in ways that are unintentionally deceptive and therefore the term requires deconstruction. It is a term that carries the underlying assumption that a positive attribute is being experienced which accounts for certain types of individual choices and decisions. I am of the

view, however, that a person can be motivated by a range of attributes and emotions, and not all of them clear and simple. Some might be motivated by ambition, by lust, by panic or by fear, but motivation can also be derived from an over-powering sense of duty and obligation to an external entity and authority that is a primary source of personal identity. It might be someone or something, an individual or a collective such as one's race, one's community or one's family. Such commitment can be a powerful motivator in terms of an individual's choices and their responsibility to see that choice through.

To experience such motivation is to experience pressure, anxiety and stress, and in no way can such a motivation be assumed to be simple and straightforward, let alone inspiring. Indeed, such motivation can be heavy and burdensome with long lasting effects. In the play *The Songmakers Chair*, by Samoan writer Albert Wendt (2004, pp 50, 51), 47 year old Fa'amau responds to his mother's complaints about his tendency to be silent, unforthcoming and uncommunicative. She tells him "Every year you say less and less ... As a boy you out-talked all of us". He responds,

You want me to talk, Mum, so let's talk. Why did you send me to boarding school? ... For years I've wanted to ask but didn't want to hurt you. Now I *need* to ask you.

His mother, Malaga, answers, "We wanted the best for you, Mau..." to which Fa'amau replies:

Why didn't you ever ask me if I wanted to go? ... I was the only one of five PIs<sup>49</sup> there ... I was scared a lot during the first years. Afraid of shaming us ... I retreated, Mum. Didn't want to put a foot wrong. Remember the recurring phrases and words in my reports: 'reticent', 'tends to withdraw', 'shy and uncommunicative'. To be accepted we had to excel at Kiwi male things, especially rugby ... I didn't even like sports. Our first fifteen coach was an uncouth, loudmouth bully, but because rugby was God in Kiwiland at that time, they adored him!

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<sup>49</sup> 'P.I.' is the abbreviation for Pacific Islanders

The first time you visited me I wanted to beg you to bring me home but as usual, I lost courage. I have even less courage now.

The character of Fa'amau is a university educated teacher and school principal, the first in this migrant Samoan family to be successful in the New Zealand education system. He is not a fluent Samoan speaker, and is uncomfortable with aspects of both the *faaSamoa*, and the dominant European culture of New Zealand. His is a life built on a foundation of pleasing his parents and others – this was his motivation, despite the great personal cost.

### **A Cultural Stock Exchange, or Quality Control?**

A further underlying assumption relates to Martin's conception and use of the term 'cultural stock'. Martin focuses on the cultural items that the person undergoing the transformation is required to, or may feel compelled to acquire during the process. For example, in a statement about the necessity of defining culture in broad terms, she states:

Besides concealing the broad spectrum of cultural stock that a person *acquires* when undergoing a radical identity change, narrow definitions of culture obscure the social and cultural implications of the multiple educational metamorphoses we all experience (2007, p.80 emphasis added ).

She does not, however, examine in depth and detail what might happen (besides replacement) to the cultural stock that is already there. What if there are deeply embedded cultural items such as a specific set of values which have a strong influence on the way that the transformation is experienced or negotiated? What if such values are used consciously, even deliberately, as a form of quality control, therefore shaping the spectrum of cultural stock that is acquired?

In her autobiographic, critical reflection of her education experiences, Tanielu (2000) describes how she won a scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of the South Pacific, in Suva, Fiji. Tanielu, born and raised in Samoa, was married to a church minister and had three

young daughters, the youngest an infant. To take up her studies in Fiji she had to leave them all behind in Samoa. She writes

The odds were against me in making this decision. Most people were against my taking up the scholarship. The usual 'logical' explanations, that the mother's first priority was her children and husband, the baby was too young to be without its mother, it is not right for a minister's wife to go off like that on her own and so on, made me more determined that I was not going to pass up the opportunity to further my education. I was responsible for my own choice and I had the ability and power to choose my own response even against all odds (2000, p.58).

Tanielu describes what drove her to make such a great personal sacrifice at that time of her life - her motivation - as being the desire to gain an education that would enhance her teaching career and which "in the end, would benefit not only me and my family *but many others*" (2000, p.58, emphasis added). She was committed to the culturally informed value of service to others. For Tanielu, the purpose of pursuing higher education was *for a greater cause*, the collective good, and it was that particular value, or 'item of cultural stock', that grounded her in this educative experience. A further important item of cultural stock was also critical. Tanielu explains, "As a woman, I had respect for myself and believed I could do better and go further; and no one was going to take that self-respect away unless I let them. My determination paid off, *supported wholeheartedly by my husband and my parents*" (2000, p.58 emphasis added). This is an example of radical action from a traditional cultural role model (that is, a Samoan church minister's wife and young mother). To go away alone (and overseas) to gain a university education required significant leverage of culturally endowed values - such as *tautua* (service) - as well as the active approval and support of Tanielu's immediate family.

Some forms of cultural stock are inherent, fixed, unchangeable and therefore present difficult-to-surmount liabilities for culture crossing. Such stock might include skin colour or racial features or, more specifically attitudes and beliefs that are associated with certain physical characteristics. These issues

raise questions relating to how the society one is crossing into manifests social constructions associated with skin colour To consider this more closely, one must first take into account Martin's use of the concept of culture.

Martin defines and uses 'culture' in very broad terms. For her,

[culture] ... encompasses the institutions and practices, rites and rituals, beliefs and skills, attitudes and values, worldviews and localized modes of thinking and acting of *all* members of society over the *whole* range of contexts (Martin, 2002, p.13, emphasis added)

Her use of the term culture is "akin to the anthropologists" because "... they do not dream of limiting their sights to some small subset of practices and accomplishments" (2002, p.13). Anthropological studies of culture can be inclusive of what might be considered 'high' culture - a group's highest, most developed forms of cultural expressions employed and enjoyed by the elite - as well as "... popular culture - the art, music, literature, humor, sporting events that are consumed by ordinary people" (Martin, 2002, p.13). Anthropological approaches to culture also consider material culture as well as "...countless other items, too ... [such as] ... an artisan's craft, a mother's daily lessons to her offspring in the three Cs of care, concern and connection ..." (Martin, 2002, p.13). Martin makes it clear that "Not everything in a culture's stock counts as *wealth*, of course, for the term *wealth* like the term riches, carries with it a positive assessment". Cultural stock comprises both assets and liabilities, including "cultural practices that should not under any circumstances be handed down as living legacies to future generations". She named such practices as "...racism, poverty, terrorism, child abuse, lynching, wife beating, and physical and psychological torture" (2002, p.11).

While I agree that cultural stock includes assets and liabilities, there are severe limitations in viewing a liability such as racism solely in terms of it being an undesirable cultural practice. However, when viewed in terms of ethnicity as opposed to culture, the conceptual vista that is presented enables far greater clarity of the impact on identity (individual and group) that certain culture crossings might take.

Spoonley (1993) defined ethnicity as "... essentially an identity that reflects the cultural experiences and feelings of a particular group ..." (1993, p.36). He maintained that for an ethnic group to exist, "... there needs to be *cultural* practices or beliefs that *define it as different* from other groups in society' (1993, p.37, emphasis added). He further developed these ideas by saying that in "... the case of ethnic groups, there needs to be some collective consciousness of difference and of being related to others who share those differences. For most, this difference is culturally defined" (1993, p.37).

However, merely *having* these cultural characteristics does not constitute the identification of an ethnic group. It is *how* these shared features have been *harnessed and used* in the pursuit of the group's social, political and economic interests that qualifies the place of culture within ethnicity. According to Pearson (1996, p.248),

Ethnicity ... is a specific form of cultural distinctiveness and boundary formation grounded in beliefs about social connectedness and descent that often shapes political discourse and action. So ethnic group formation is not a universal condition but a possibly ephemeral, political instrument used to shape relations of 'them' and 'us'.

Other theorists have also identified and examined the political nature of ethnicity, and argue that ethnic differences do not need to take distinctively cultural characteristics. They can include class differences and ideological differences (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992).

There are also other means by which "the limits of what constitutes 'us' as a group and 'me' within that group" are made (Pearson 1990, p.17). Spoonley cites 'common experience' as one means of ethnic identification - giving the example of African Americans, who "asserted a new black consciousness and created a sense of unity where little had existed before" (1993, p.37). This began in the 1960s and has continued over the intervening decades. He describes the process of establishing new ethnic identities as 'ethnogenesis' and, in the wider relational context of New Zealand, the forging of new identities has been quite pronounced amongst many New Zealand-born Pasifika peoples, such as Samoans (Anae 1995). The African-American



example of ethnogenesis clearly demonstrates the “malleable” (Spoonley, 1993, p.38) and shifting nature of ethnicity; just as social-and economic (not to mention political) circumstances and conditions may change, so too can the effects these have on different social groups, particularly those positioned demographically, and in terms of socio-historical location, as marginal.

Take, for example, the effect of a socially constructed set of beliefs about an ethnic group: typically a set of stereotypical beliefs that contribute to the collective, externally constructed identity of that group. Such identity formations tend to originate within groups in relatively privileged positions and it is their constructed beliefs about minority groups that become part of the ‘cultural stock’ of that society. How *individuals* within ethnic groups *respond* to such shifts in the societies they are located within becomes a crucial factor to the process of ethnic identification. In the keynote address to the gathering of social studies teachers (see Educative Encounter One in Chapter Two) I explained how I personally tend to respond to diversity and difference:

At first contact, the lenses I see through first are my particular cultural ones. While I have multiple heritages, Samoan is my strong side. The first cultural lenses I see with are shaped by the Samoan values, beliefs and experiences that I am embedded with. This does not mean I am unable to see through other cultural perspectives. It's just that there are times when my first response is as a Samoan ...

Sometimes I ‘see’ others and situations relative to the social and historical position of Pasifika as a multi-ethnic group in this country. I did not know what it is like to be part of a social group that carried labels such as ‘under-achievement’, ‘marginalised’ and even ‘tail-end’ until I migrated to New Zealand from Samoa. Such labels do not apply to me personally. They are irrelevant as descriptors for many members of my immediate family. But irrespective of our individual situations, the general political, social and economic realities of the third largest ethnic minority group (Statistics New Zealand, 2001) in New Zealand are a part of the collective identity of this group as members of New Zealand society (Samu, 2004a, pp 8-9).

Part of the reality of crossing over into New Zealand society as a Pacific immigrant involves dealing with the burden of such expectations or identity markers. While aware of the negative nature of this item of cultural stock, I did not allow it to define me at a personal level at that time; but this is not the case for all individuals of Pacific heritage.

In the first half of his spoken word (a form of performance poetry) entitled *Brown Brother*, seventeen year old Joshua Iosefo, a Samoan-Niue school student and prefect, detailed some of the negative stereotypical labels associated with being an urban-based New Zealand Pacific young person. (see also Taula, 2012).

I am brown. Brown like the bark of the palm tree – bark of palm tree that supports my heritage. Brown like the table of which my family sits and eats upon. Brown like the paper bag containing burgers and fries by which my people consume. Brown like the mud on a rugby field by which my people play ...

My demographic is: high school cleaning ladies, fast food burger making, factory box packing, rubbish truck drivers, bus drivers, taxi drivers, sober drivers, living off the pension joy-riders. I am a drop out ... (Iosefo, 2012).

In the second half of his performance Iosefo counters these stereotypes and asks,

But can anyone explain? Will there ever be a time when our representation goes deeper than putting our own people to shame? Will the stereotype of illiterate, misbehaved, unintelligent, Polynesian still be the same? Will it ever change? (Iosefo, 2012)

The challenge he poses is not directed to those responsible for generating and reproducing such constructions, but rather to those within the ethnic group who accept and internalise this negative stock item as part of their identity. Iosefo states his view on this in no uncertain terms: "I'm just sick and tired of my people always thinking that they belong at the bottom of the food chain, brown brother". Instead he urges his peer group to resist such negative identity constructions and identify with alternative items of cultural stock.

Are we not more than a F.O.B<sup>50</sup>? Immigrants from the islands in search of a J.O.B? Are we not more than the eye can see? Can we not move mountains from A to point B? Are we not more than ... gamblers at a poker machine? Are we not more than – than our fathers at the T.A.B<sup>51</sup>? Are we not capable of attaining a Bachelors, a Masters or a P.H.D? (Iosefo, 2012)

What is interesting is that he informs his target audience that certain items of cultural stock traditional to many Pacific cultures - such as the love and support of family, and the teachings and values of Christian faith - are significant assets in the pursuit of far more hopeful and aspirational representations of themselves (Iosefo, 2012). For example, he asserts

You can do all things through Christ, Philippians 4:13. You are more than capable. And I don't say that to make you feel better, I say that because I know. Cause your creator told me to tell you so. You will go places, you will tell stories, so do not feel afraid or alone for your God and your family and your home will forever be inside the marrow of your bones. So do not fret, do not regret. For where you go, you take us with you (Iosefo, 2012).

Skin colour is a significant item of cultural stock in New Zealand society – not in itself, but because stereotypical beliefs and expectations are associated with skin colour and other expressions of phenotype. In New Zealand, race matters. It is a significant marker of ethnic group identity and can play multiple roles in culture crossings instigated by education.

### ***Education and change: What does (formal) education mean to Pacific women?***

If we consider 'formal education' then our focus invariably turns to the providers, such as government and private early-child education centres, schools and tertiary institutions. Others might include the churches and church auxiliary programmes, community education, professional

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<sup>50</sup> F.O.B. means 'fresh of the boat', a somewhat derogatory reference to recent arrivals from the Pacific Islands, with little familiarity with western/ New Zealand norms of behaviour, dress and limited fluency in English language.

<sup>51</sup> T.A.B. refers to the Totalisator Agency Board. In New Zealand, this Board is responsible for legal betting

development and learning programmes, and training courses provided by organisations and institutions for their employees. Regardless of the form of the provision, according to Snook (1972, p.103)

We do in fact tend to use the term ‘education’ in a favourable sense. To speak of someone as educated is normally to praise him. To call someone an educator is to commend his work. Education carries a plus sign ... It is a key term that carries notes of approval.

Pacific Polynesian peoples considered the western formal education institutions introduced during the missionary era in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in highly favourable terms (Coxon, Foliaki & Mara, 1994). With specific reference to Samoan culture, western formal education was appropriated into the traditional Samoan cultural framework over the twentieth century. The acquisition of western formal education (expressed as formal qualifications) is highly favourable within the *fa’asamoa* (or Samoan way) but from a deeply cultural embedded framework, as will become evident in the series of *tala mai fafo* - (auto)biographic narratives of selected Pacific/Pasifika women - presented in this next section.

Figure 5 presents details of the authors of the *tala mai fafo* in order of appearance:

**Figure 6: *Tala mai fafo* in presentation order**

	<i>Author</i>	<i>Source</i>
1.	A selection of 20 <sup>th</sup> century women leaders in Samoa	<i>Tamaitai Samoa: stories of Samoan women</i> , edited by Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop (1996)
2.	Lonise Tanielu	‘Education in western Samoa: reflections on my experiences’ in <i>Bitter Sweet: Indigenous Women In The Pacific</i> (2000).
3.	Lita Foliaki	‘Commonalities and Diversities’ in <i>Education is Change: Twenty Viewpoints</i> (1991)
4.	Tanya Samu	‘Learning alone and disconnected’, unpublished auto-ethnographic analysis, cited in Samu (2011).

5. A young New Zealand born Samoan university student      Unpublished personal communication, cited in Samu (2011).
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### ***Women Leaders' Experiences Samoa, 1945-1955***

*Tamaitai Samoa: Stories of Samoan Women* (Fairburn-Dunlop, 1996) is a book with the overall purpose of recording the stories of selected Samoan women who lived during the twentieth century. The aim was to gather the narratives of as wide a group of women as possible and included teachers, secretaries, a planter, a nurse and a Registrar of the Lands and Titles Court among others. In terms of their roles and responsibilities in their adult lives, they were collectively:

- daughters of pastors, administrators and planters
- rural women, urban women
- those schooled in Samoa, and those who spent some school years in New Zealand
- untitled women and those who hold chiefly titles
- all active in their church affairs

The book attempts to show changes in women's lives through different life stages, as well as changes in family fortunes – the perceived good times and the bad times – and how the women responded to and dealt with change. The narrative of each story-teller covers three to four generations within her extended family. The time period spans from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through to the 1990s.

In analysing and identifying patterns from the various narratives or stories, Fairburn-Dunlop (1996, p. vii) found that,

Each story emphasizes the enduring and all-embracing strength of the customary ways (as shown in the family systems and how these are nourished by *tautua* [service] and acts of love and reciprocity) and how women's roles are very firmly set in these family systems'.

These strengths can be seen as cultural assets or stock (when applying the lens of Martin's theories and ideas). Other patterns that Fairburn-Dunlop found included the role of fathers. Each woman described having a significant

relationship with her father and acknowledged her father's influence on her life. Many described their father as actively supporting and encouraging them with aspirations that were never limited by their gender or being daughters. Getting married, raising children and being involved with church, village, and extended family - as well as paid work in government departments - were all activities motivated by a strong sense of service (*tautua*), and a personal identity of being daughters. Their successes, their efforts, and personal reputations as daughters of the extended families they were born were into. Her first allegiance and the definer of her personal identity through her genealogy, was her own family. Faithfully serving the family one marries into also reflects well on the reputation and standing of a daughter's birth family.

In sharing stories of their formal education, each woman in the collection describes her experiences as challenging, particularly when attending the more competitive schools in Apia. Learning English was cited as a particular difficulty. Those who went overseas on scholarship to New Zealand also describe challenges associated with language, social adjustment and homesickness. However, their descriptions of how they coped are quite simple, quite pragmatic. According to To'oto'o Pulotu<sup>52</sup>

Despite my homesickness, I learnt to rise above the difficulties I encountered by adjusting myself to my new environment. Our headmistress was a great help and I valued the experience I gained from this school. She taught me not to let my new environment overwhelm me.

It would appear from these accounts that the women who went overseas to New Zealand for further education on government scholarships in the 1950s and 1960s were women with strong personal identities, deeply rooted in their Samoan language and culture. For example, Suia Matatumua Petana<sup>53</sup> stated

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<sup>52</sup> In Fairburn-Dunlop (1996), p.117

<sup>53</sup> In Fairburn-Dunlop (1996), p. 154

I never took a *matai*<sup>54</sup> title, but my sisters Fetaui, Moana and Eni have titles. They are each very capable women and play very public roles in Samoa. I suppose, compared with them, I look like the quiet one in the family. People often ask me what it is like living in a family of such assertive strong women. I say to people, 'Is that how they appear to you? To me, they are just my sisters.' My sisters are strong, but they are strong with a purpose. It's not for themselves. They are doing what we have always been taught to do: serving.

Many of the women story-tellers who went overseas for schooling did so with the intention of returning, because they were committed to building up their nation. They, and their families, would have been well aware that they were part of the New Zealand administration's efforts to prepare Samoa for independence (scheduled to take place in 1962). According to Namulauulu Galumalemana Netina<sup>55</sup>,

The women scholarship students were encouraged to be teachers, nurses or clerks, while the boys took plumbing, medicine and later law and those sorts of programmes. That's probably why so many women have held top education posts in Samoa: because our best women students went into education. I have never regretted being a teacher

When To'oto'o Pulotu returned home, married with children, her extended family stepped in to help with child care enabling her to work as a teacher. She said<sup>56</sup>,

In fact my father would get angry if I stayed home from work to watch a sick child. He would send me to work reminding me to be honest about the work I was doing for the government because it was the government that had sent me to school [referring to her education on scholarship in New Zealand] .

In using Martin's conception of cultural stock and the process of education, it would seem that for these women, their individual personal identities were defined by their families, the *fa'asamoa* particularly the cultural value of

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<sup>54</sup> A *matai* title is a chiefly title, bestowed on individuals in an extended family deemed worthy of the responsibility, and who have demonstrated considerable service to the family. Such titles can be, in principle, held by both men and women; however, they tend most often to be bestowed upon men.

<sup>55</sup> In Fairburn-Dunlop (1996), p. 132

<sup>56</sup> In Fairburn-Dunlop (1996), p. 119

service to one's family and one's nation. The experience of going away in the 1950s to experience a western education, sometimes going three or four years without even a home visit or holiday, did not challenge, threaten or change these women's inner dimensions in any significant way. Were external culture crossings required? Yes – learning English, adjusting to a new climate and lifestyle, making new friends, and adjusting to settings and contexts in which there were few, if any, other Samoans or Pacific peoples. One participant described “I learnt how to muster, ride horses, preserve fruits ... various tasks associated with farming life in New Zealand” (Fairburn-Dunlop, 1996, p.117).

### *Education and Culture Crossing: Samoa in the late 1960s/early 1970s*

Lonise Tanielu (2000) describes her formal education journey from early childhood through to post-graduate studies. She began attending pastor's school or *Aoga Faiifeau*, when she was three years old. This was when, in the early 1960s, she was first introduced to the competitive nature of formal schooling in Samoa through exams. She explains (2000, p.49),

These formative years were to shape my lasting impressions of what formal education is about: sitting still, keeping quiet, listening carefully, speaking only when asked, being rewarded with the stroke of a stick or broom for misbehaviour.

This approach to schooling children continued in the village primary school she attended. She describes and discusses how “the tendency for children to compete in school often interfered with their capacity to adapt when cooperation was needed to solve academic problems” (2000, p.52). In her view, cooperation was reserved for co-curricular activities of school life, such as “entertainment, feasting and cleaning purposes, learning dances and items, preparing food and beautifying the school for special occasions” (2000, p.52).

The process of formal education in a rural, village setting was unproblematic for Tanieleu and her peers, given the clear division between classroom learning and informal experiences outside the classroom. Formal schooling was highly revered by all, much of the instruction was done in the Samoan



language and the small community meant that children knew each other and their families well. Everyone, including children, knew exactly what they had to do, what was expected of them and where they were heading. Tanielu (2000, p.53) writes,

Despite the restrictions and rigidities of my education during those years, they were some of the most memorable times in my life and I continually reminisce about those good times. Life during these years was not all mechanical and routine. There were opportunities for us as children to think and act independently and creatively, especially outside the classrooms.

It is interesting that these other forms of learning were in settings outside that of the formal classroom. Such settings included traditional children's games outside – such as making balloons from the buds of a certain tree, swimming games in the lagoon, marble tournaments, making homemade dolls and, in the evenings, traditional story-telling by grandparents. Tanielu (2000, p.54) explains,

Story telling is an old Samoan art. It was part of our oral literacy and traditional education....Grandparents played a vital role in the education of their grandchildren as they were the story teller. This story telling served very significant purposes ... handing down of cultural, historical and moral values; the acquisition of cognitive skills of comprehension, listening and critical thinking, numeracy skills, concepts of height, depth and volume ... Story telling was a great equaliser also. It served as a leveling device when the old and the young alike shared experiences without paying heed as to who ought to speak first or have the last say. It was an informal time in which the children were not expected to sit up straight or keep still. We could lie down and we could ask questions.

It can be argued that the tradition of story-telling by older generations and informal learning from experiences of play and exploration balanced the dour, austere learning conditions and experiences of the formal classroom. It was not until Tanielu won a place at the prestigious government secondary school in town that she experienced what one can describe, in applying Martin's framework, as her first education metamorphosis.

The shift from the familiar village school setting to Samoa College was a culture shock. In order to take her place (earned via successful national exam performance) she had to move to Apia, the capital of Samoa, and live with a relative during school terms. The many changes that Tanielu and other students from rural areas had to adjust to included: school leaders and teachers who were *palagi* (European); a strict English-only speaking policy; rules regarding truancy and attendance; and protocols such as standing to attention for daily flag-raising ceremonies. Tanielu (2000, p.55) writes “For me and no doubt other rural students, having to adapt to a new school as well as an urban life-style, was alienating ... Any confidence that I had, and the novelty of attending the top school in the country, soon wore off”.

Tanielu describes the Samoa College classroom situation as very different to the one that played such a strong socialising influence on her formative years. This was a classroom environment facilitated by a New Zealand-trained teacher who “encouraged us to do well, to participate in class and group activities and to ask questions if we did not understand” (2000, p.55). Tanielu, however, was a student reluctant to speak out, let alone in a language that she did not feel competent in; she was a student who spoke only when asked. She also states that “The fear of getting put on detention for speaking Samoan overcame any desire to ask questions” (2000, p.55). As Tanielu explains (2000, p.55),

My past informal and formal education taught me not to query anything. My days were then mostly spent listening to the teacher and doing book work. In the absence of any verbal participation in class and group activities, I perfected my listening skills. I did not like this relatively new way of learning where we were encouraged to think independently, be creative, express our thoughts, work independently in doing problems and think far ahead. I liked it better when we rote learned times-tables, poems and notes and recited them in class, copied work off the board and called out answers in unison.

Reflecting back, many years later as an experienced educator, Tanielu states that,

The transition from the village and district schools to Samoa College left a learning gap that needed bridging – and regrettably at that time, no one recognised and supported children in such a situation to develop the semantic resources and essential schemata to close the gap (2000, p.56).

Tanielu's experience is interesting in terms of an external culture crossing because it was a crossing into a very different type of classroom setting. Her physical move was from a rural village in Samoa to a better resourced school in the capital town of Samoa (Apia) organised and run by New Zealand expatriate teachers. This would have been in the late 1960s, soon after Samoa became independent from New Zealand. Her anxiety and fears of breaking language rules, and perhaps more importantly, her fear of failing or not doing well and letting her family, and even her village down, affected the young girl in terms of how she saw herself. Her loss of confidence became a real consequence.

### ***Education and Culture Crossing: New Zealand in the Late 1960s/early 1970s***

At about the same time that Tanielu was immersed in the changes wrought by her new education experiences within her homeland, Lita Foliaki (1992) was a new arrival from Tonga to Auckland, New Zealand. As a high achieving and only daughter, her parents and family sent her to a Catholic boarding school, in the belief that they were doing the best for her. Reflecting on her experiences, she writes,

I could not join in the discussions because I did not speak English well enough, but more than that I did not know how to debate, or understand the process that was going on. I wanted the teacher to say what were the correct opinions, and she did not do that.

I became very confused, then I began to feel very dumb. I believed that the other students perceived me as dumb, and maybe they did. Unfortunately, I think the teachers may have thought I was dumb too. When one is the only non-white person in the classroom and one is the “dumbest” in the class, one begins to think that the two factors are connected. There are probably very few schools in Auckland today with only one Polynesian student in the class, but I think the only difference is that instead of one Pacific Islands student at the bottom

of the class, there is now a group of Pacific Islands students at the bottom of the class, thinking the same thing that I did (how many years ago?)...

The added problem is that *neither the teachers, nor my family, knew what I was going through*. My family would have been quite shocked to hear of the discussions that went on in the school and they would not have been able to help. The problem of connecting “feeling dumb” with one’s race is that one thinks that one cannot overcome being dumb because one cannot change one’s race. The parents, before they came to New Zealand, had no sense of racial inferiority and believed that the children could achieve anything, that we could be academically very successful. However, *when the children go to school they very quickly acquire the opposite belief about themselves ...* And so many children do not make it in the academic game. It is depressing and disappointing for the parents, but it is also very depressing and disappointing for the child because the child actually shares the parent’s ambition (1991, emphasis added).

This experience can be analysed both in terms of an external culture crossing and as an internal change. Changes to the internal dimension are not so obvious to others, even those who we are close to, and it is this inner dimension that I wish to focus on in this example. The inner turmoil of a young girl, the only Tongan and the only Pacific Islander in the classroom, was one of associating her inability to connect to what was going on with ‘being dumb’ or unintelligent. In this process of education, a profound change was experienced: one which led a young, isolated girl to acquire the belief that she was a failure because she was ‘dumb’. Moreover, being ‘dumb’ had something to do with being Tongan – an unchangeable birthright – and therefore her chances of academic success in that school, even her chances of educational success in New Zealand, were minimal. This self-perception at that time was a consequence of Foliaki’s first metamorphosis. It may not have been a permanent outcome of the experience, but it was in itself a significant and influential negative liability to have gained from that early encounter with in the classroom of an elite Catholic school in New Zealand.

### ***Education, Culture Crossing and Identity: Wales 1981-1983***

For a period of four years (1978-1981) the European Economic Community or EEC (now the European Union, or EU)<sup>57</sup> offered the Government of Western Samoa one full scholarship to an international senior secondary school in Wales, UK. The *tala mai fafo* in this section is based on my reflections as the Samoan student who was selected by the Western Samoan Government Scholarship Committee to attend this school in 1981. The school, Atlantic College, was the flagship of the United World College (UWC) movement established in 1962 by educationalist Kurt Han. The vision of the UWC movement was to bring “together young people whose experience was of the political conflict of the cold war era, offering an educational experience based on shared learning, collaboration and understanding so that the students would act as champions of peace” (UWC, 2012).

In Samoa, applicants for the scholarship were by school nomination only. Nominations were on the basis of ‘all roundness’ as well as academic performance. The leaders of my school, Samoa College, put my name forward and, having met the criteria of all-roundness (I had performed well the previous year in the New Zealand School Certificate examinations, was a participant in school athletics, and served as a head prefect) I was selected by the Scholarship Committee from all the other students nominated by their respective secondary schools.

The full, all-expenses-paid scholarship was the only secondary school scholarship offered to a British rather than New Zealand school at that time. Successful student selection was a source of pride for the individual school and further enhanced the school’s reputation. As I later explained,

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<sup>57</sup> The EEC, created in 1958, focused on fostering economic cooperation between member European nations based on the idea that economic interdependence would discourage conflict. The name was changed in 1993 to European Union. Refer [http://europa.eu/about-eu/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/index_en.htm)

The send-off by my school, let alone my extended family, was amazing. Off I went, the ‘cream of the crop of Samoa’ (or so said Mrs To’oto’o Pulotu, the senior mistress of my school). I was going to ‘bring victory to the family’ (or so said my Great Aunty Ita). Off I went, to a school where the Chairman of the Board was the Prince of Wales, his mother the Queen of the Commonwealth was the patron, and all my potential friends would come from more than fifty different nations of the world. Off I went, literally half a world away, to live and learn at a school (with its own castle) located in rural south Wales, overlooking the Bristol Channel. I was excited, and very confident (Samu, 2011, p.17).

Unfortunately the classroom-based learning experience in this new environment did not lead to successful academic outcomes in my first year, far away from home. Much like Tanielu’s (2000) experience, any confidence that I had arrived with from Samoa, and the novelty of attending a top international school, soon wore off. I described the situation thus: “By the end of the first term I crashed and burned as far as academic achievement was concerned, and spent the next eighteen months struggling to figure out how to at least pass my examinations and NOT return home a failure” (Samu, 2011, p.17).

At that time, in the 1980s, the ethos of the international school emphasised the importance of global service, international relations, and the superiority of western democracy, capitalism and individualism. As I reflected years later,

The young person I was then struggled to connect to such an ethos and to feel a sense of place within the school community, particularly when some of the students and teachers from so-called developed nations perceived me, and others from developing nations, as the undeserving members of the economic elite of the various Third World nations that we called home. In such a setting, my culture and my world view was an anomaly at the very least (Samu, 2011, p.17).

I also described my general response as a learner within that education community as a silencing, and a withdrawal. According to the school

yearbook entry I wrote in my final year, “I did not share with those who did not ask – I thought they did not want to know” (Atlantic College, 1983, p.17). Silence and uncertain withdrawal – a similar response to what Tanielu described in relation to her experience at Samoa College.

Final examination success did eventuate at the end of the two years. I expressed the belief that “I passed because (i) I was driven by an awful fear of disappointing my extended family and (ii) the influence of two gruff, brusque male, white teachers” (Samu, 2011, p.17), who exhibited understated sensitivity towards students in the “situation of immigrants in both the narrow and broad sense of the term” (Martin, 2007, p.151) and somehow managed to help the student I was then feel a sense of place and belonging in their classrooms and in their subject areas. This will be reflected upon further, in depth and detail, in Chapter 9.

### *A First-Hand Experience from New Zealand 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

The following is an extract from a letter written by a young New Zealand-born university student to Samoan journalist, Tapu Misa, in response to a newspaper opinion piece Misa wrote about differential entry criteria and scholarships for Maori and Pasifika university students (Misa, 2009). The student wrote,

Thanks so much for writing that piece ... I really appreciate it. It’s such a sore subject with many of my peers, it’s resented so much ... I found that there was a lot of anger and annoyance at the perceived free ride for M/PIs<sup>58</sup>, through the scholarship and the quotas.

That anger and frustration can make one who is eligible for them feel really guilty and shamed. I was really self-conscious at school prize-giving at the end of my last high school year when I publicly received recognition for the CAT<sup>59</sup> scholarship for the first time. In the months previous that resentment has been voiced frequently, and here were those same people, at prize-giving, watching me ...

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<sup>58</sup> Maori / Pacific Islanders

<sup>59</sup> An informal reference to The University of Auckland Chancellor’s Awards for Top Maori and Pacific Scholars

But there's a bigger picture. Always the bigger picture. When I read your article I was really pleased that you pointed out that trend of a growing PI population but a lagging proportion of those who are highly educated. DUH PEOPLE. I knew when I took that scholarship that there were societal expectations. You get the scholarship so you can contribute to your community. That's the way I've always seen it. I don't think any non-Maori/PI people who voice resentment see that clearly, or are in a position to see that clearly, which in turn annoys me to no end.

One of the things that keeps me going with my studying is I like to think that it's never only about me, that other people are depending on me and in a wider view there's a whole population depending on the PI contingent at University. That's a bit rich, but <shrug>... whatever I do with my degree it'll be used in some way that I think will best be a contribution to my Samoan/Pacific Island Community. Corny, but yeah (Personal communication, 2009).

The student forwarded a copy of her email to me and its contents were a source of surprise. While I could identify in her espoused belief that her education should be used to contribute to her people (in other words, 'serve'), I could neither understand nor relate to the peer pressure and tension that she described. How can winning an academic scholarship, a watershed in one's education journey, be a source of embarrassment, guilt and shame? I realised the reason why I could not relate personally to this particular education experience is that currently, for young Pacific women growing up and becoming educated in New Zealand, theirs' is a very different reality. And as in young Foliaki's (1991) experience, their teachers or family may not know or understand what they are going through. I am of the view that this warrants closer consideration – given that the young woman who chose to share this email with me was my own daughter.

Pasifika young people living and growing up in 21<sup>st</sup> century New Zealand are part of a minority group, but the minority they are members of is not the educated elite of a developing Pacific nation. Rather, they are members of the second largest multi-ethnic migrant community in a westernised, developed nation - a nation that has only claimed a Pacific national identity for itself in fairly recent times. They are members of a minority group with a unique,



distinctive socio-historical location in this country – a chequered history at that, in terms of ways in which wider society has perceived them. For example, an education publication from 1976 published by a division of New Zealand Newspapers Ltd, opens with the statement “For years New Zealanders have been vaguely aware that the 78,000 Pacific Islanders living here have special problems and in turn create problems which we have not yet found a way to handle” (Shortland Educational Publications, 1976, p.3). Twenty years later (when the Pacific population of New Zealand was over 200,000, and almost half were New Zealand born), Ongley (1996) stated, in his more academic and measured needs analysis, that the Pasifika population,

.... ought to be a focus for policy-makers and strategists in facilitating those communities to contribute even more to the fabric of the New Zealand society (1996).

A decade after that, in an editorial for *The New Zealand Listener*, Stirling (2006, p.5) stated that “Pacific peoples are immensely innovative ... they are upbeat achievers ... they are a formidable national asset”. Interestingly, at that time, the Pasifika population stood at almost 270,000, with about 60 percent being New Zealand born and raised.

Pacific peoples are now very much a part of New Zealand society. At least from the media’s perspective, Pasifika peoples no longer seem to be constructed in exclusive terms such as ‘us’ (New Zealanders) and ‘them’ (The Islanders). There are however in existence social constructions acting as social and cultural liabilities which form the realities of subscribing to a Pacific or Pasifika identity in New Zealand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are items of social and cultural stock that contribute to making this group different in terms of education, relative to the rest of New Zealand society. Internal crossings, at least in the intermediate term, may still be fraught with unique tensions.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **What does education mean to me as a Pacific/Pasifika woman? *Tala Mai Fafo 2: Encounters from both sides of the Interface***

This chapter addresses the research question relating to the meaning of education to Pacific/Pasifika women. The previous chapter contained *tala mai fafo* that centred on school and, particularly, classroom encounters experienced by selected Pacific/Pasifika women across time and space. This chapter continues the focus on the classroom and school. Three narratives are first presented which draw on encounters experienced by one woman – myself - across time and space.

The chapter builds on three personal narratives, the analyses of which attempt to identify and re-think some of “the social factors that operate in the constitution of individual experience” (Dewey, 1938, p.21). The purpose of these analyses is the development of deeper knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence the development of self-efficacy within those learners who perceive themselves as different; as somehow ‘on the margins’ in relation to their teachers and their peers within the classroom.

To begin, this chapter presents a condensed exploration of the literature relating to story-telling as a form of auto-ethnographic research in education. This is followed by the narrative analyses. Narrative One provides an important reference point in that it provides information and insight on familial up-bringing and background. Narratives Two and Three focus on encounters in the classroom – one from the perspective of student, the other from the perspective of teacher. The two encounters discussed are: (i) my experience as a student at an international school in the United Kingdom in the early 1980s; and (ii) my experiences as a teacher in a multicultural, lower decile west Auckland secondary school in New Zealand, which took place just over a decade later (1993-1995).

Each narrative has primary documented evidence to support it - such as personal journal entries; a sibling's blog-published memoirs of shared childhood; and extracts from a university, postgraduate research assignment. Finally, the outcomes of the analyses are discussed in relation to the research question: 'What does education mean to me as a Pacific/Pasifika woman?' Authorial voice will feature strongly in this chapter.

### *Authorial Voice and the Politics of Personal Knowledge*

Buzard (2003) presents a critique of auto-ethnography as a research method and raises questions about the extent to which a person's personal experience qualifies him or her to act as a cultural insider and a spokesperson for others who are situated or located in similar circumstances and conditions. These are important concerns. With respect to myself, I am confident about my legitimacy as cultural insider, but I would not presume to be a representative authority and thus able to speak for any broad socio-cultural group.

Buzard's critique raises important reflective questions relating to researcher voice, visibility and place/space, including: Who am I speaking for and what am I speaking to - in terms of one's situated-ness or, more precisely, the place from which one speaks? An additional question is: What am I speaking of and *how* am I doing it? An important methodological tool for addressing such questions is the writing of stories and metaphors. According to Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011, p.5), auto-ethnography is achieved by

...first discerning patterns of cultural experience evidenced by field notes, interview and/or artefacts, and then describing these patterns using facets of storytelling (e.g. character and plot development), showing and telling, and alterations in authorial voice.

The writing and crafting of stories (as accessible texts) is an important feature of this methodological approach, which also enables the researcher to:

... reach wider and more diverse mass audiences that traditional research usually disregards, a move that can make personal and social change possible for more people (Ellis, et al., 2011, p.5).

Producing written metaphors for and about self is another feature – one which enables “*new ways of viewing the self* within the changing process of one’s life” (Grumet, 1991, p.101, emphasis added ). Metaphors can generate alternative perspectives which, in turn, open up possibilities for new explanations and innovations in action.

Grumet (1991) has problematised ‘the story’ and critiqued it (whether written about self or about others) in terms of what she describes as the ‘politics of personal knowledge’. She first considered ‘the story’ as a tradition of art before understanding it as a form of research. In her critique, she argued that a Marxist perspective would see stories as art separated from everyday activity, a destructive separation of feeling from action, “a process of alienation that divides what was hitherto integrated in the experience of the citizen and of the community” (Grumet, 1991, p.68). Interestingly, she also critiques the ethnographic perspective of the use of story in research, seeing “... the narrative as a cultural symbolisation that contributes to the continuity and shaping of life of a community”. Whether aesthetic or anthropological, each of these “discourse traditions ... understands storytelling as a negotiation of power” (Grumet, 1991, p.68). *How* that story is understood or interpreted is a matter of perspective. Whatever values, beliefs or standpoint informs a particular perspective reflects the power to create or make meaning.

Grumet draws attention to the ‘risky business’ of telling stories – once given (or shared) they cannot be retrieved. Once a story is told, orally or written, it is placed in the public, or a trusted domain. Once done, the teller (or author) has no control over what becomes of that story. According to Grumet,

Every telling is a partial prevarication, for as Earle (1972) argues, autobiographical consciousness and autobiography never coincide. That voice inside our heads has no grey hair, no social security number, no dependents ... It is that part of subjectivity that is never

encapsulated in any act of consciousness but always escapes to come and see and speak again: what Sarte calls the “for-itself” (1966); Husserl, the transcendental ego (1960) Schafer, self-as-agent (1976) ... Our stories are the masks through which we can be seen, and with every telling we stop the flood and swirl of thought so someone can get a glimpse of us, and maybe catch us if they can (1991, p.69).

Ellis' (2009) views of the nature of stories and story-telling are somewhat similar to Grumet's. Ellis holds concerns that her auto-ethnographic products (her stories) might be seen by readers as fixed and directive, in terms of how they should be interpreted. She describes how such a concern influenced her to further develop her writing in order to “... write revised and re-visioned stories that called forth other stories and showed the self in motion, refusing to be finalised” (Ellis, 2009, pp.374-5).

### *Storytelling as Understanding Self*

Stories and storytelling can be used as narrative “... forms of research in education that honour the spontaneity, complexity, and ambiguity of human experience” (Grumet, 1991, p.67). Holt (2003) concurs and described a manuscript he wrote in which he tried to “tell a story” rather than produce a heavily theoretical piece. He stated that “qualitative researchers need to be storytellers, and storytelling should be one of their distinguishing attributes” (p.20).

In my efforts to better understand story-telling, or narrative, as a legitimate form of recognised educational practice and research, I stumbled upon an article about journal and diary writing (Cooper, 1991). As a consequence, I discovered that I was a ‘diarist’ -a writer of stories about (my)self - and, as a consequence, a person with many years of data gathering and analysis experience (research). Diarists keep diaries / journals and I have kept a journal since I was fourteen years old. My journals represent almost thirty-five years of telling (but NOT sharing) my own stories and, according to Cooper, in doing so, I have been connecting my present self with my past selves. As Cooper eloquently states,

These past selves have evolved to form a present collective self. This present self can be discerned through a journey back in time, a journey that threads the past selves, like beads on a string, forming a necklace of existence, a present complex whole. Keeping a notebook is one way to keep in touch with our past and present selves. A notebook, a diary, or a journal is a form of narrative as well as a form of research, a way to tell our own story, a way to learn who we have been, who we are, and who we are becoming. We literally become teachers and researchers in our own lives, empowering ourselves in the process (1991, pp 97, 98, emphasis added).

Such arguments about journal writing as a form of story-telling position the writer as carrying out a form of research into his or her own life. When relating this to myself, I learned that when I write, I am like “... researchers who withdraw to a special place, taking our myriad selves with us and writing up our observations” (Cooper, 1991, p.110). Cooper goes on to state that,

Journal writing can serve ... as a form of intense self-reflection and self-analysis which enables the development of a narrative sense of the self, past and future, in an attempt to embrace all the pieces of self in some ultimate sense of the whole (p.110).

Is this not akin to participant observation ethnographic research? Documenting observations, conversations over extended periods of time, and then reflecting on them in terms of their meanings? Or even more precisely, is this not auto-ethnography? Cooper identified other forms and strategies of autobiographic writing that serve in similar ways to journal and diary writing. These include unsent letters and metaphors. Writing letters that one does not intend to send is a way of telling a story in the context of a particular relationship – where one is free to be as deeply honest as one needs or wants to be. According to Cooper, such letters “allow diarists the freedom to write deeply, to dig below the surface of a relationship, and this can become powerful tools in helping to understand one’s self in relation to others” (1991, p.100). She described metaphors as “condensed telling”. Producing metaphors in writing for and about self enables “new ways of viewing the self within the changing process of one’s life” (1991, p.101). Metaphors can

generate much needed alternative perspectives, which in turn can open up possibilities for new explanations and innovations in action.

Primary texts (blogs, a journal entry, extracts from a research assignment or a draft article) are the discursive events that inform the following narratives. Each narrative (as a form of storytelling) is an example of text or language in use.

### *Narrative One: Family as Enclave*

The first narrative begins with a family and a childhood based in Apia (the 1970s through to the early 1980s), in what was then Western Samoa (but now Samoa). These childhood experiences, at a general level, share important commonalities with the family experiences of the twenty Pasifika women interviewed for a doctoral study which examined the social interactions of Pasifika women within New Zealand tertiary institutions and the impact on ethnic identity. According to Mara,

The Island-born and New Zealand-born women share similar stories of a relatively protected and family focused upbringing, characterised by encouragement to strive for goals, for applying one's best effort to anything attempted, to complete what they start, and, most of all, the pride that would be brought to their families when they succeeded academically (2006, p.202, emphasis added).

Mara developed a research tool that was based on Cornell and Hartmann's (1998) proposed framework for group ethnic identity development. She applied it in her study of the experiences of Pasifika women in tertiary education. Integral to the framework is the notion of construction sites of identity, within which particular ethnic group features shape or influence identity construction. Such features include: social capital, human capital and symbolic repertoires. These features are relevant to describing the context of my family life in Samoa in the 1970s and 1980s.

A blog by writer (and my younger sister) Lani Wendt Young (2012) about her memories of her (our) childhood growing up in Samoa, is the main, primary data source used to 'snap-shot' our shared "family focused, relatively

sheltered upbringing” (Mara, 2006, p.202). I draw on her self-publication in order to describe, analyse and reflect on how family, extended family and church were important construction sites for learning important values and practices which were more often than not, explicitly reinforced at school. Martin’s theory of education as encounter (2011) identifies the values and practices gained as items of cultural stock. The upbringing described in Young’s blog shaped my self-efficacy (including my personal identity) as a learner before I left home (Samoa) for the first time, at the age of seventeen.

Young composed a list of fifty fondly remembered and humorously described memories of her childhood circa the 1970s – 1980s. Eight broad descriptive categories were identified and applied. Each of Young’s memories is sorted into one or more categories (see Figure 6). The categories are: direct or indirect reference to traditional Samoan cultural practices and language; distinctions about life in a town or urban area; social class differences; extended family relations; nuclear family life; schooling experiences (including co-curricular activities); experiences related to being part of an organised religion; and food. Family-related memories (including extended family experiences) account for most of the memories in this snapshot, thereby making up 38 per cent of the list. This is followed by food at 18.4 per cent (experienced in social settings and contexts, presumably with friends and family), followed by schooling at 13.1 per cent.

**Figure 7: ‘Fifty Childhood Memories’ (adapted from Young, 2012<sup>60</sup>)**

50 Favourite Memories	Culture & Language	Urban	Class	Family Relations	Schooling	Religion	Family Life	Food
76	5	8	6	6	10	4	23	14
(In total)	(6.6%)	(10.5%)	(7.9%)	(7.9%)	(13.1%)	(5.2%)	(30.2%)	(18.4%)

<sup>60</sup> <http://sleeplessinsamoa.blogspot.co.nz/2012/06/fifty-memories-of-samoa-for-fifty-years.html> Retrieved June 12th 2012



The content of each memory was analysed to arrive at the following summary description of the family.

The father is Samoan and the mother is from New Zealand. She came to Samoa “... as a very new, very 'refined', very beautiful young bride (wearing white gloves no less)” (Young, 2012). Despite the father’s Samoan cultural, linguistic heritage and background, family life is monolingual – only English is spoken in the home. Domestic family life is in many respects deliberately mono-cultural, and westernised. Young writes, “... we never spoke Samoan at home, because my Dad believed that English was the language that would take us places”. In her view, “At the time - he was right”.

The father’s occupation as a university administrator provided for the family’s economic security and provided other benefits for his children – it meant that “We lived on an agriculture University campus and students had fruit orchards everywhere which we weren't really supposed to be helping ourselves to” (Young, 2012). The parents were committed to the national development of Samoa – because they “...chose to stay in Samoa and raise their six children there, even though the lure of distant shores was strong”. The parents never considered permanent migration to New Zealand or anywhere else.

Although urban-based, the family occasionally spent weekends in Lefaga, the rural district where the extended family comes from, and from which the father’s *matai* or chiefly title originates. Some aspects, therefore, of Samoan culture have been incorporated into family life albeit selectively. Young describes meeting the cultural obligations of being the daughter of a *matai* as “Getting called on to be the *taupou*<sup>61</sup> every time my Dad had some kind of village *matai* event because the REAL *taupou* of the village (aka, my big sister) was at school overseas”. Tensions are occasionally evident in the

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<sup>61</sup> A *taupou* is the titled daughter of a Samoan high chief or *matai* and is expected to carry out ceremonial duties and responsibilities for and behalf of the extended family

parents' efforts to manage different cultural expectations and perceptions as revealed in some of Young's memories.

The extended family is a significant influence, with two elders in particular (the grandfather and his older sister) as influential patriarch and matriarch. Both elders were explicit in their expectations of the children, as reflected in the Bible verse that the grandfather selects for his grandchildren to learn and recite: "Practicing our lines for White Sunday. 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right'". Young is particularly close to the great aunt. She writes: "Visiting Great-Aunty Ita, who named me, who tells everyone, all the time that I'm going to do amazing things - become a nun, marry a pastor, or be a lawyer". The family are active participants within an organised religion – Young's list (2012) includes the memories of: "Three hours of church every Sunday. My little sister giving her Sunday school teacher a heart attack, telling her 'I've decided to be an atheist'".

Books are an important feature of this childhood – books the father brought home from his overseas business trips, as well as books the children borrowed from the only public library. Young lists "Getting dropped off at the Nelson Public library for the entire afternoon - the only place I was allowed to go all by myself when I was eight years old ... Really nice librarians bending the rules and allowing me to borrow twenty books at a time." Schooling is important to both the children and the parents. High levels of academic achievement are expected by the parents – for example: "The dreaded report cards. The parents' responses, 'You only came first in THREE subjects? What about the other two?'"

Young's reminisces of imaginative play outdoors (for example, "Making my little brother push me around in the wheelbarrow while I give orders to the little sisters as we make scarecrows to put in the yard") and looking up to two older siblings as in "Waking up early on Independence morning to go watch our big brother and sister march in the parade" add to the impression of familial closeness. Young (2012) describes another adult within the household, who helps care for the children and household, whilst both

parents work – “our other mother”. She and the younger siblings are particularly close to her.

In a western context, many of these features of material life would locate the family as upper middle class. In the context of a small developing nation, however, the family reflects membership within the educated elite. The childhood experienced by the children of this family was without doubt family focused and sheltered. In many ways it was atypical (an anomaly even) when compared to the social norms and practices of most other Samoan families. Regardless, such childhood experiences were a source of specific social and human capital as well as symbolic repertoires (Mara, 2006). Using an alternative perspective, this shaped the cultural stock (Martin, 2011) acquired by the children before they first left home. The next section of this chapter identifies and critically examines these in more depth and detail.

### *After Pondering*

How and why is this family and the education of the children (bearing in mind Martin’s broad conceptualisation of education) atypical? It was an undoubtedly strong, family focused, religion-based upbringing where values such as obedience for parents and respect for elders were a priority. Given however, the setting of the urban capital of a developing Pacific island nation (in the 1970s-1980s), it was also an upbringing in which the children were deliberately socialised contrary to many of the cultural and social norms that surrounded them. The family lived as a nuclear family, most times without extended family members, in a suburb of Apia, in a European style house, with a European/westernised lifestyle. They spoke only English in the home. The children were actively encouraged in creative play, recognised by early-childhood educators as “...a cornerstone to children’s learning and development and considered as the necessary core to curriculum for young children” (Leaupepe, 2010, p.2). The children were also encouraged to read. These were undoubtedly value-added experiences outside of the classroom that nurtured the imagination as well as deepened literacy in English. The

education agents outside formal schooling were the parents, extended family elders (grandfather and great aunt), the public library, the church, and to an extent, school.

Like many parents both in Samoa and other parts of the world, the parents constructed a home and family life that reflected their hopes and expectations for their children, and what they believed was best preparation for adulthood. They accepted that leaving home and going away - overseas (for further education) - was a necessary part of that adulthood, and they made decisions that made sense to them in order to prepare their children for that inevitable stage of their lives – leaving home, for the purpose of seeking further education. It was inevitable that this would entail leaving the nation for either Fiji, or a Pacific Rim nation such as New Zealand or Australia.

To a large extent, until it was time to leave home and go away overseas for further education, the children were unaware of their family as an anomaly in cultural and social terms. According to Mara (2006, p.204), with reference to the Pasifika participants in her study,

Then, as they began to venture out from the enclaves of family and church, into other social institutions and key construction sites of ethnic identity, as described by Cornell and Hartmann, ethnic group boundaries and meanings came into sharper focus. ... what the women took with them from their family and church lives also had an influence on the social interactions and social constructions that took place within their tertiary institutions.

I have drawn on Mara's (2006) understandings of the primordialist view of ethnic identity formation, particularly in terms of cultural indicators. This was done in order to reflect more deeply on the implications of my particular family upbringing on my sense of self when I first left the enclave of home and family on my first foray overseas. These indicators include: recognising a physical place of origin; lineage; a collective memory of migration; and the embodiment of diversity – such as physical features or race.

In terms of an indicator of geographical place of origin: for me, it was (and is) Samoa. If pressed further, I would specify Apia, the capital and main urban area - or more specifically - Alafua the part of Apia in which my family still reside. In terms of lineage: it is my father's line, his family name and all the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins (both living and deceased) who are part of that lineage. When I first left home, this shaped my sense of self and provided the all-important marker of who I was in the eyes of other Samoans. It remained important for years as I began living in New Zealand as an immigrant.

In terms of a collective memory of migration: I did not carry one in my first foray way from home. This is because the collective memory of migration for my family, and many of my extended family members, was based on non-permanent experiences overseas for schooling and training. Growing up, I was aware that other people left Samoa permanently to live elsewhere (especially New Zealand or the United States) to provide better opportunities for themselves and their children, but this was not the case for my family. We were positioned to compete effectively for the limited opportunities that existed in Samoa for education and training (e.g. via government scholarships). We accepted the conditions of such scholarships -that is to return and apply our knowledge and skills within various parts of the public service sector including, in my case, secondary school teaching.

As for implications on identity formation of physical appearance (race): beyond my immediate family, the wider population of Samoa was dominated by Samoans. Samoan culture and language was vibrant and strong; and Samoan men and women occupied the whole spectrum of professional, trades and service roles within the economy. In the more micro-setting of my competitive, exam-orientated secondary school, there were a handful of *palagi* students from New Zealand and the United Kingdom, children of expatriate professionals, contracted to work for either government or one of the diplomatic missions. Samoan students, however, numerically dominated, and were situated across all levels of achievement. Most of the teaching staff,

across all subjects areas were qualified, degree holding Samoans. These patterns set the norm in terms of my perceptions.

Being the offspring of a mixed-race marriage did mean, to an extent, that we were regarded as different to the majority of our peers in school. I would argue, however, that rather than physical features such as skin tone, hair texture and other expressions of phenotype, the difference that counted the most was the association with socio-economic privilege.

This essentially summarises the social and human capital (or cultural stock) I was equipped with when I left home for the first time for further schooling. While I may not have lived the life of a 'typical' urban Samoan, I certainly assimilated core cultural values, such as the pre-eminence of family and faith; respect and obedience to one's elders and authority figures; and service to others via roles such as daughter, grand-daughter as a diligent and conscientious student. These shaped and added to my symbolic repertoires: a fluency in English (my first language); a familiarity with - and a degree of acculturation to - basic western material norms; and an academic achiever (based on success with New Zealand external qualifications). I had internalised the high expectations of family and teachers - my success was their success, and in turn, an important means for enhancing familial and school reputations. I would say that my sense of self and self-efficacy was defined by these roles and responsibilities.

### ***Narrative Two: First Foray Away from Home***

When I left home at the age of seventeen, in 1981, it was a move into an international senior secondary school (described and discussed within one of the *tala mai fafo* in Chapter Seven). It was my first institutional education encounter without parental presence, involvement and more importantly, close adult supervision.

I left my home and family, and literally travelled half a world away to study in a liberal, co-educational residential school. I describe it as 'liberal' because there was no uniform, smoking and drinking were allowed at designated

times and places, and teachers expected students to address them by their first names. And these were just a few of the obvious differences this new community presented compared to home. A rigorous academic programme was in place (based on the International Baccalaureate, or IB examination) with additional mandatory participation in one of seven social and community services – inshore lifeboat, cliff rescue, beach rescue, extra-mural (outdoor education programmes for external groups of youth and children), social service (working with the elderly or disabled children), volunteering for the community arts programme and the school farm. The majority of the student body was on scholarship and over sixty different nations from around the world were represented. Each of the two year levels (the equivalent of Years 12 and 13, or Forms 6 and 7) had approximately one hundred and twenty students.

I experienced many cultural shocks but my greatest shock had nothing to do with the change in climate, or the language of instruction (English), or the diversity of my fellow students, or the debilitating social effects of Margaret Thatcher's recession-distressed economy on the Welsh settlements and communities in the immediate vicinity of the school community. Instead, it had everything to do with the overarching culture of the school and the micro-culture of the classroom, in terms of teaching and learning.

When my final academic year finished at the end of May 1983, I delayed my return home to Samoa (to the dismay of my father yet with the encouragement of my mother) and went backpacking around Europe with two friends from the school, Andrew and Yasmin<sup>62</sup>. During that time, aged nineteen, I kept a journal where, in some of my entries, I reflected on my experience at the school and tried to make some initial sense of it all. What follows are two reflective journal entries written soon after I had completed my studies.(Wendt, 1983).

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<sup>62</sup> Names have been changed / pseudonyms have been used

The first journal extract describes a discussion I had with my travelling companions after we arrived in Venice, Italy. Andrew was from Hong Kong and Yasmin was from the Arabic north of Sudan. Like me, Yasmin had a bicultural background and upbringing, due to her Danish mother. The conversation took place two weeks after our departure from the school; we were all nineteen. Some other school friends are mentioned in the extract: Leonard and Arden, from Senegal; and Kris from Botswana. Please note I have transcribed the hand-written journal entries verbatim and have not addressed the grammar or writing style in any way. It is the voice of my nineteen year old self, reflecting retrospectively on an aspect of that first foray away from home.

June 14th 1983

But I have to describe an argument I had with Andrew ... Okay. On our first night in Venice, after putting our things away in the YH<sup>63</sup>, me, Yasmin & Andrew had dinner at an Italian restaurant (we ate pizza again)...What did I argue with Andrew about? I argued (in the sense of discussing 2 different views about one thing) with him about Atlantic College, and the people who came out or existed there who were or were not 'successes'. You see, both Andrew and Yasmin have come out of that experience keen, thankful and committed to the AC ideal. They carry an attitude of gratitude about AC – they give the impression that its an idealistic, saintly sort of a place, without faults. They give the impression that those who haven't come out idealistic and thoughtful (eg Leonard, Kris) haven't taken the responsibility of AC seriously. Their attitude (which I don't think they realise) or impression that they give (Yasmin, Andrew that is) is one of pity, and the self-confident superiority that I resent so much. Overall, I tried to convince Andrew AC doesn't fully incorporate these individuals who haven't been exposed to the richness and variety that many others (eg Europeans) have, whether conscious or unconscious. How are such people as myself, Arden, Kris expected to want to know things like Theory of Knowledge if we aren't led to feel that we can cope; that its enriching, etc? ... How are people to form a questioning attitude over something which has never ever penetrated our minds before? Something so different, that you're frightened over it and you think you couldn't possibly cope? Atlantic College is insensitive. AC does

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<sup>63</sup> YH: youth hostel



not look to the individual. I don't think the system fully realises how different individuals are, and what causes them to be different. In my conversation with Andrew, I think I was trying to smash the pure image of Atlantic College and its ideals down (the image that Andrew has/had). Anyway, I have a lot of pondering to do as of yet, over Atlantic College, and all the things it has and hasn't done for me – including all the things that I did and didn't do for it.

The second journal entry was written two months later. I was adjusting to life back home in Samoa. I had just received my final results for the IB examinations. This journal entry describes the relief I felt in finding I had passed. I recall the anxiety I experienced, and the fear of failure and letting my family down, in the lead up to sitting the final IB exams. In my journal my nineteen year old self used the receipt of the exam results to think and reflect on my teachers and school experiences. The extract begins with a description of my geography teacher, Deon Glover, a white immigrant to the United Kingdom from Swaziland. Kris was the friend from Botswana, and Nora another friend from the Arabic north of Sudan. Adeline was English, and one of the top students in our geography class.

August 31<sup>st</sup> 1983.

... that gruff and grizzly and salty teacher was the best teacher I had at AC, because despite the difficulty he didn't put me off the subject – and he made me feel that it was important for him to not only help the brilliant like Adeline but me and Kris and Nora ... the not so brilliant ... Because I would have described Deon as “one of the few teachers (who gave me the feeling that) he/she had time for me”. Just goes to show how insecure I felt at AC. As an institution, AC did not make me feel a respected, valuable member of the community, because I wasn't one of the ‘perfect people’. Perfect people fit the AC mould of all rounded, intellectual philosophical activity dominant ... super-confident, outspoken ... individuals. Perfect people. But no, they wouldn't be TRULY perfect- there would be one slight flaw. (and there was, so I'm not theorising). Intellectual or academic arrogance.

So, life at AC ended in a flurry ... my dominant emotions were: relief, exhaustion and an impatience to get out to the normal way of life ... I've been angry at AC but its been a slow anger; anger and confusion; but why? The longer I keep away, the more (bit by bit) I think – and conclude. Then the anger no longer becomes unreasonable.

The school encouraged a culture of discussion and debate, of independent and critical thinking. Teachers in classrooms facilitated learning - they did not direct it or transmit knowledge and information. Class sizes were small (ranging from eleven through to just over twenty students, depending on the subject), further enhancing the conditions for discussion and critique. All students were required to take a compulsory philosophy course called Theory of Knowledge, which was assessed by class attendance and the production of a portfolio of writing based on a selected theme. There was also exposure to the school's distinguished speakers programme, involving diplomats, university based academics, religious leaders, politicians and so forth, who spoke to the student body on a range of contemporary topics and issues – such as the Brixton Riots of 1981; apartheid in South Africa; political activism within Poland and other places behind the so-called Iron Curtain and the Falklands War.

### *After Pondering*

My main concerns as a nineteen year old centred on my perception of a social divide – a social divide based on the 'ideal' student or learner on the one side, and the 'less than ideal' student on the other. The ideal or 'perfect' student for that particular school setting (in my eyes) was someone who excelled academically as well as in extra-curricular activities; was “super-confident, outspoken” (Wendt, 1983) – an intelligent independent thinker, with a strong orientation towards individualism. These students tended to come from cultures and societies in the so-called west, or developed nations such as Great Britain, the United States, the countries of Scandinavia, and European countries such as Germany and France. My perception of students who did not fit this mould (and were therefore less than ideal in terms of my perceptions of the school's expectations) were students who came from the cultures and societies in the so-called developing world – for example Senegal, Botswana, Sudan, the Bahamas and the indigenous Pacific.

My nineteen-year old self was aware of other nuances in this perceived divide – one side was predominantly white, the other side was

predominantly black or brown. One side contained students who had been recipients of modernised, well-resourced, student-centred compulsory education systems that, by and large, provided all socio-economic classes with equal opportunity for a good education. The other side contained students who were the recipients of far more traditional, teacher-directed education systems that favoured the urban elites and could not provide equitably for the rural masses. These students were not representative of the majority of their peers 'back home'.

What messages did I feel were communicated to me and my particular peers via this education encounter? My nineteen year old self, perplexed by a set of lived experiences, made a number of astute observations about disparities in the classroom experience. In effect, I had drawn conclusions that aligned with Martin's ideas (2002) about the place of certain cultural stock within an education encounter. In the journal entry, my nineteen year old self lamented that some students had not "... been exposed to the richness and variety that many others (e.g. Europeans) have" in terms of their learning prior to their entry into this school. In my view, the school had overlooked and devalued these students, because they did not have certain skills and dispositions at the ready when they arrived – they did not have the right kind of cultural stock.

My journal entry presents a fairly tidy, albeit simplistic, line of reasoning for the apparent reticence, of some students, to fully engage in a key intellectual area of the overall school programme. The entry asks,

How are such people ... expected to want to know things like Theory of Knowledge if we aren't led to feel that we can cope; that its enriching ... How are people to form a questioning attitude over something which has never ever penetrated our minds before? Something so different, that your're frightened over it and you think you couldn't possibly cope?

In this setting and context, critical thinking skills, argumentation through reasoning and the use of logic, and the ability to articulate independently developed views and opinions were part and parcel of the valued knowledge,

attitudes, values and beliefs. Mastering these skills was considered crucial for academic and, to an extent, social success in the school.

Many of the close friendships I formed were with students (male and female) who came from similar close-knit homes and families; where organised faith and religious observance and participation was integral to social life at all levels, and went unquestioned; and where the norm was 'family', and prioritising family over self was a given. This was cultural stock that was in stark contrast to that of our more vocal peers from the so-called developed nations; not least our taken-for-granted norm that the basic unit of society was not the individual but the collective, in whatever form that might mean (be it family or village).

If we were not conscious or aware of it when we first arrived, by the end of the two year programme we were well-aware of our privileged positions as members of the educated elites back home. Some of our well-meaning, outspoken fellow-students from developed contexts made it clear that they thought our scholarships should have been given to 'less privileged' youth in our homelands. They did not appreciate the reality that those youth, perceived to be somehow more authentic, would not have had the opportunity to receive the kind of formal education (if any) or the socialisation into basic western mores that would prepare them for any chance of success and social acculturation in that particular English-speaking, liberal, private school. More importantly, these fellow students did not have the capacity to 'see' that those in a position of relative privilege can be fully aware of their situational advantage and committed, via their education and training, to take active roles in supporting social transformation and economic change within their home nations.

The culture of the classroom was different in so many unanticipated ways. For some students (including myself) it was a culture crossing into a nuanced, invisible foreign land. We had been very successful in our own education systems. But central to that success was learning respectful acceptance of adult authority and whatever we were taught. The adult

admonition of “*Vaai, faalogo ma usita'i*” which in English means “Look, listen and obey” is a familiar refrain in Samoan settings, directed to those who are younger and less experienced. While my own family upbringing may have been more relaxed in this respect, beliefs about the relationship between adults and younger generations were deeply embedded in settings such as school, church and extended family.

These attitudes and beliefs, however, did not equip students like me with the dispositions and skills (in other words, appropriate cultural assets) that would contribute to our potential success in that particular setting. What was unfortunate was the school did not provide explicit, purposeful support to allow students to learn, develop and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be a successful learner in that setting. This was an unrecognised problem at the time, perhaps due to the school’s as yet unchallenged underlying Eurocentricism.

Not all teachers were oblivious to such nuanced and subtle needs. At the micro-level of teaching and learning in the classroom, I was fortunate to have two teachers who, despite the academic challenges, enabled me to feel a sense of place and belonging in their classrooms and in relation to their subjects – a sense of belonging and place as a learner, as a student. One was my biology teacher, James, and the other was my geography teacher, Deon. As my nineteen year old self wrote “... I would have described Deon as “one of the few teachers (who gave me the feeling that) he/she had time for me”. The kind of time and attention he gave to me, and other similar students, communicated a sincere, understated sympathy to our situation. He communicated a belief in our ability to achieve, and at the same time gave specific guidance in how to succeed in his subject. Some years after I left that school I wrote a letter of thanks to Deon and shared the following:

...you and James did make a difference for me when I was at AC. That’s why I did well in your subjects for the IB – and research shows that some learners, particularly ethnic minority students, respond to more personalised teaching ... when it’s within a context where they

(the learners) feel personally valued, and encouraged (Personal Communication).

This brings to mind a statement Cummins (2003, p.43) made about how certain discourses produce certain kinds of student identities. He argues that,

...despite working in conditions that are frequently oppressive for them and their students, educators have choices in the way they define their roles in relation to marginalised students and communities and in the kinds of interactions they orchestrate in their classrooms. These interactions construct an interpersonal space within which knowledge is generated and identities are negotiated.

The effects on student identity cannot be underestimated. Although his specific focus was on linguistic diversity, Cummins (2003, p.51) “views the interactions between educators and students (termed micro-interactions) as the most immediate determinant of student success or failure in school”. He points out that the interactions between teachers and students can be viewed narrowly - as the “strategies and techniques that teachers use to promote reading development, content knowledge, and cognitive growth” (2003, p.51) – or more broadly in terms of what he described as ‘identity negotiation’. This, he says, is

... represented by the messages communicated to students regarding their identities – who they are in the teacher’s eyes and who they are capable of becoming ... Only teacher-student interactions that generate maximum identity investment on the part of students, together with maximum cognitive engagement, are likely to be effective in promoting achievement (2003, p.51, emphasis added).

This discussion will now turn away from my experiences as a student to my first foray in teaching Pasifika students in New Zealand. In this education encounter, I am situated as teacher with responsibility for the interactions between myself and my students.

I did not expect my secondary schooling experience at an international school in the United Kingdom to have any commonalities to my teaching experiences with Pasifika students (predominantly New Zealand born) in a lower decile school during the early 1990s. However, when I carried out a

small school-based research project in the school I found several important, powerful similarities.

### ***Narrative Three: First Foray into Praxis***

After I returned home to Samoa from the United Kingdom, I was awarded a government scholarship to study for an undergraduate degree and teaching diploma in Auckland, New Zealand. After successfully completing my studies and qualifying as a secondary school teacher I returned home to Samoa again and taught for three years. I did not return home alone – I took with me my New Zealand born Samoan husband, a qualified English and history teacher.

On accepting my scholarship I signed a formal bond with the Samoan government that I would return after my studies and serve for a fixed period of two years. After three years of teaching, my husband and I found ourselves doing what many parents do – thinking about our children, and what would serve their best interests in the future. As New Zealand passport holders living in Samoa, our children were unlikely to be eligible for government sponsored scholarships for further education in the future and therefore, after careful consideration, we decided to migrate to New Zealand, my husband's homeland. We settled our young family in Auckland, and I took up a teaching position in a west Auckland secondary school.

In my position as geography and social studies teacher I became involved, along with several colleagues, in the school's efforts to meet the learning needs of its Pasifika students. For two years (1993-1994), I held the role of Pacific Islands liaison teacher (as it was called at that time), and kept an intermittent work-journal, documenting what was done, and self-evaluating the effectiveness. I retained copies of important memos, reports, minutes to meetings, hand outs and for one year (1994) records of individual contacts with students.

I drew on this material for a research project in 1995 to meet the requirements of two different Masters level research papers. In order to begin post-graduate studies I left the full-time teaching role in 1995 but

maintained the Pacific Island Liaison role part-time. In addition to the documentation collected over the previous two years, I carried out a series of focus group interviews and surveys with senior Pasifika students.

As a former teacher at the school, I knew the staff and students well. Or so I thought. At the time, there were approximately 500 students on the school roll. The main minority groups were Maori (eighteen percent); fee-paying students from South East Asia (ten per cent); and Pasifika students (twenty four per cent). The focus of my research project was the Pasifika students in the sixth or seventh forms (nowadays, Year 12 and Year 13 respectively). The research report was entitled “An Accidently Ethnographic Exploration of a Pacific Islands Liaison Role and Pacific Islands Underachievement in an Auckland Suburban Secondary School” (Samu, 1995). This report is the main discursive event informing the next analysis.

This unpublished paper was explicit about two sets of findings. First was the discovery of Pasifika student perspectives of their interactions with teachers. The second discovery related to the process of learning experienced by the person conducting the inquiry – which was myself as the teacher-researcher.

### *Discovery One*

The perceptions of my 1995 student participants are very similar to findings of more recent studies of Pasifika learners and their perceptions of their experiences of schooling (Hawke and Hill 2000; Nakhid 2002; Silpa, 2004, Gorinski et al, 2008; Spiller, 2011; Siope, 2011; Mose, 2012). However, there was one all powerful message which their collective voices and the aforementioned research amplified. It was the importance that their interpersonal relationships with teachers were perceived to be ‘caring’. For example, in the 1995 study, students’ comments included:

We prefer the teachers that can relate to you.

All the good teachers left ... they mingled with us, they wanted to know us outside the classroom like in sport and stuff.



The report provided specific examples of teacher practices that the students perceived as caring or non-caring and, more importantly, how these specifically affected teaching and learning (from the students' perspectives). For example (Samu, 1995, pp 15, 16):

Teachers expect you to be able to do it on your own – they just leave you and say “if you’re at this level now you should be able to do it independently”.

Teachers aren’t patient with the students when it comes to wanting to ask questions - they get all grouchy.

It’s hard to ask them questions – they might think we’re dum [sic].

Teachers use big words, their language is hard, and they expect that because it’s the seventh form then we should know these things.

When probed further, the point about questions led to what can be described as teachers’ low expectations. For example, one student’s comment that “You can tell they already think we’re dum, that it’s a brown person” led to a description by that student (within the focus group) of an incident where a teacher divided the class into working pairs which were supposed to sit together for the rest of the year. To this student, it was a matching up of the “bright palagi ones” with the “brown dum ones”. She said,

You could tell she thought we were dum ... and that’s why she made us sit next to the bright ones ... we just went back [to sit] in our own groups the next day, with our friends.

Much laughter accompanied the telling of this incident – it was a mixture of self-directed humour and teacher mockery – the teacher’s strategy for organising the class deliberately foiled.

The Pasifika students who participated in the focus groups shared feelings of alienation within their sixth and seventh form classes. The teachers that did matter to them, the teachers that were ‘good’ from their perspective, were the ones they believed *cared* about them. These students came to school because of their friends – school provided a context where important, strong, familial-like relationships with their peers were located. Learning (and

achieving) in Maths per se, for example, was not the main reason for their participating in schooling. It seemed that the good teachers, the ones they perceived as caring about them, were a pre-requisite for engagement in activities that would potentially have a positive effect on their academic achievement.

This is an extract from my reflective analysis of the data drawn from a section of the report entitled 'Personal Relationships with Teachers'.

Perhaps it is the feature of the learning needs of P.I. students, but there seems to be a strong association between initial motivation to meet assessment requirements and a desire to 'please a teacher' or at least NOT to let someone of 'personal significance' down. In other words, the desire to succeed is integrated with the desire to fulfil someone else's goals for you (Samu, 1995, pp.25).

### ***Points to Ponder***

There are two points of commonality between these findings from the research I carried out with the students, and the experience of my nineteen year old self. Both points of commonality relate to interactions between students and teachers. One relates to a specific type of discourse within that interactive space– the kind of discourse wherein there are implicit, unintended messages received by certain students about their capacities and capabilities as learners. It is a discourse that aligns with the image of themselves that they see in their teachers' eyes – learners who fall short of the teacher's ideal student. For the Pasifika student participants in my research project, the message they received was that they lacked certain skills that students at their level of schooling should have – skills of inquiry and study; asking questions and articulating ideas. The simplistic line of reasoning students took was that if they (as learners) did not meet the norms, the teacher was likely to see them as less than ideal, and did not have confidence in their potential to successfully learn and achieve in those classrooms. This was what teachers unintentionally communicated to the students about their identities as learners.

The second point of commonality was the importance, to students, of feeling teachers cared for them, and the effect this had on their motivation to engage with learning, to make the effort, to try – even if initially the students did not hold much belief in their own abilities to succeed.

There is a considerable body of literature about what ‘caring’ teachers are and the effects their expressions of caring have on their practice. I was intrigued to find research-based frameworks for theorising personal relationships between teachers and students that set about establishing links between such relationships and student engagement, and student achievement. A significant theorist in this broad field is Noddings. The way teachers and students are orientated to each other is central to Noddings’ (1984) framework on caring. In her view, the caring teacher’s role is to initiate the relationship. It also involves engrossment in the student’s welfare and emotional displacement following from this search for connection. A teacher’s attitudinal predisposition is essential to caring, for it overtly conveys acceptance and confirmation to the cared-for student. Nodding (1984) argues that care-giving is driven by a desire to apprehend the other’s reality.

I found Valenzuela’s (1999) critical interpretation of what she describes as ‘the caring literature’ to be a thought provoking guide through this literature. Valenzuela contends that a significant limitation to caring frameworks such as Noddings’ is that ‘otherness’ remains insufficiently problematised. She argues that comprehending the reality of ‘others’ (students, in this instance) requires teachers and school officials to also understand their students’ cultural worlds and socio-structural positioning. Valenzuela (1999) argues that teachers expect students to care for schooling – and often their evidence for this is student commitment to ‘abstract’ or ‘aesthetic’ ideas and practices that teachers believe will result in academic achievement. She states that students,

... on the other hand are committed to an authentic form of caring that gives emphasis to reciprocal relationships between adults and the youth they serve (pp. 323, 324).

Valenzuela points out that the reasons for such non-alignment and incongruence of the teacher and student perspective is a result of “divergent” social and cultural distance. These ‘opposing perceptions’ undermine achievement opportunities. She states,

Teachers often conclude on the basis of so many urban youth’s attire and off-putting behaviour that youth do not care about schooling and fail to pursue effective reciprocal relationships with students. This response leads youth to further devalue schooling process they see as impersonal, irrelevant and lifeless (p. 324).

It would seem that from at least one critical perspective, a focus on caring should interrogate what it means to be educated, from the standpoint of both the school and the student (Valenzuela, 1999). I consider this to be a very intriguing perspective because it can provide a deeper understanding of the tensions that can develop within schools, when educators overlook the existence of competing definitions. Tensions, even conflicts, are also possible when one group attempts to impose its definition on another group – in this case, teachers’ notions of caring, as opposed those of particular minority groups of students.

For example, an obvious limit to caring exists when teachers ask students to *care about* school while students ask to be *cared for* before they *care about*. With students and schools talking past each other, a mutual sense of alienation evolves. This dynamic is well documented in thinking about caring and education. Valenzuela points out, however, that what is less obvious to caring theorists is the implicit threat to ethnic identity that accompanies the demand that schools may make - that youth must care about school, and that the expressions or evidence of this caring is expressed in specific ways. This demand asks students to embrace a curriculum that potentially either dismisses or derogates their ethnicity, and expects them to respond ‘caringly’ to school officials who, from their perspective, hold their culture and community in contempt. Conceptualisations of educational caring, in other

words, must more explicitly challenge the notion that assimilation is a neutral process.

### *Discovery Two*

In terms of the Pasifika senior students I worked with in 1994, many of the more measurable aspects of their schoolwork, such as attending classes and completing all the coursework, showed little or no improvement. Comments written in my work-journal attest to the discouragement I sometimes felt, for example:

Am feeling preoccupied and confused regarding senior P.I. students. I sense that the academic progress for many is poor – and that motivation is at a low.

There is a need for new programmes, new initiatives, more work from me ... (27/7/94)

I still remain feeling %&##@! about the seniors here at this school and their attitude to school work (efforts, too) (3/8/94)

What was I to do? I was aware that Pasifika educators and academics had declared that there is a need for research. According to Coxon, et al. (1994, p.210),

Isolated initiatives are being taken in individual institutions to enhance achievement levels. However, what is required and what is not happening in any coherent way, is a programme of rigorous research which can establish a clear relationship between such initiatives and academic success.

I felt that this was a necessary next step for my own practice and when my circumstances changed, and I became a post graduate student (and was no longer carrying a full teaching load), I had the time and, combined with my own university study programme, the access to the kind of academic resources that would enable such research to take place. It was not until I embarked on research into the causes of poor subject attendance and non-completion of coursework in 1995 that I became critical of my previous practice. I realised the following: not once did we (as Pasifika teachers) ever, in any direct way, consult with Pasifika senior students in terms of what they

thought they might need, or in terms of how their needs ought to be met, let alone what they thought their needs were. We assumed that we understood their situation, and that we knew what would be best for them.

Another cause for critical self-reflection was the assumption that the students we were trying to support would appreciate our efforts and would show appreciation via culturally appropriate reciprocal action – namely, acknowledge their obligations to us by improving their efforts in the classroom and areas of discipline. I was yet to learn that Samoan young people, particularly the New Zealand-born, are not like their peers I had taught in Samoa (in the years 1989 to 1991) and were not like my peer group at the same age growing up in Samoa (in the late 70s, early 80s).

### ***Points to Ponder***

It was rather humbling, during my Masters studies to come across Freire's definition of what may have been missing from our efforts (1970, p.68) -

...revolutionary leaders do not go to the people in order to bring them a message of 'salvation', but in order to come to know through dialogue with them both their objective situation and their awareness of that situation.

In retrospect, this absence of dialogue was a feature of just about all the initiatives and programmes my colleagues and I had put in place between 1994 and 1995. Why was this?

We had made certain assumptions: we're 'older' and therefore we're 'wiser'. As a group of young, relatively inexperienced (at the time) and predominantly Pasifika teachers, we had obviously internalised social and cultural beliefs about ourselves as the students' elders. I, for one, had formed opinions of what I considered to be the barriers to academic progress: that these originated from the students' own personal circumstances (such as poverty, lack of parental support with school, poor management skills and so forth). I had also presumed these deficit assumptions were the only area of concern. Hence, for example, programmes to improve motivation (reflecting

statements such as “yes, you can do it if you’ll just settle down and apply yourselves” and “yes, just look at our success as your real-life role models - we know what you’re going through but you can do it- you just need to apply yourself!”). We were without doubt, and had appointed ourselves as their navigators, even their saviours in that specific setting.

The ‘message of salvation’ that informed most of the programmes we put in place for the Pasifika students was positive in its intent. But, the absence of dialogue prevented us from obtaining a far more accurate picture of the students’ situation - and their perception of that situation - which would have ensured that the message was more relevant. Freire (1970, p.69) provides an explanation for the purpose of such dialogue:

... the starting point for organising the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation reflecting the aspirations of the people ... we must never provide people with programs which have nothing or little to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes and programs which at times in fact increase the fears of the oppressed consciousness.

I reflected deeply on this in relation to the research I was doing:

The whole process of undertaking the qualitative and quantitative research on Pacific Islands underachievement as expressed in attendance patterns and coursework has caused me to critically reflect on my *tautua* to these students over the period of time that I have been associated with them. I have had to compromise culturally designated distance, and recognise that in order to hope to make a difference, my role has to adapt, in order for the ‘dialogue’ that Freire insists must occur. The new relationship that has fostered this dialogue needs to be maintained and fostered further (Samu, 1995, p.8).

I began to understand the students’ actions as a reflection of their particular social situation. As Freire says (1970, p.69),

We must realise that [the people’s] view of the world, manifested variously in their action reflects their situation in the world. In order to communicate effectively, educators must understand the structural conditions in which thought and language of the people are dialectically framed.

The data I derived from the students I surveyed and interviewed (via three focus groups interviews) were the source of the influential education encounter.

### *Interactions and the Inter-Face between Learners and Teachers*

The analyses contained within this chapter throw further light on the nuances of the interactions between teachers and students. Given that these interactions can have a negative effect on certain students' self-efficacy and effort this should be a cause of concern to educators.

What kind of relationship are young people socialised into believing they must have with their teachers? What are teachers' expectations of their learners? Are there differences in the development of such expectations across time, space and cultural context?

Before I left home and family for the first time, my expectations of student-teacher relations was shared and reinforced by my peers at school. The school I went to in the United Kingdom, however, was far more diverse and, as discussed in Narrative Two, the dominant perspective of ideal teacher-student interactions was very different to the perspective held by me and other students from the so-called Third World. The curriculum was challenging, and teacher-student relations were conducted in a far more democratic yet depersonalised way, which presented a strange and unfamiliar way of interacting with adults for students like me. Thankfully there were some teachers who seemed to respond with more care and with greater sensitivity of the diversity of education experience amongst their students.

The Pasifika students in my research project also expressed their views about feeling out of place in some classrooms, and attributed this to their relationship with teachers. They too talked about 'caring' and caring teachers – something I did not appreciate until I carried out the research project. As a consequence, I developed an appreciation for student voice and



perspective. This has been reinforced several times in my current academic career pathway particularly when I review research about Pasifika student experiences of the classroom, and their perspectives of the interface between themselves and teachers.

There have been a number of significant studies examining the interactions of teachers and their Pasifika learners in New Zealand secondary schools over the past twenty five years. These studies provide important insights to teachers' and Pasifika students' perspectives of teaching and learning, particularly interactions between teachers and students. Some of these studies have been postgraduate research (Masters, doctoral research) while others have been Ministry of Education contracts. There is certainly a New Zealand based literature – but if one looks closely at when they were produced, level and scale as well as frequency of production, one can see that the occurrence of such research has been sporadic over time.

Given the emphasis on evidence based contract research produced within the new century via Ministry of Education contracts, one can argue that this type of research (examining the lived realities of Pasifika students, from their perspectives) has been eclipsed and consequently, not received close attention by systemic agents of change for policy planning or the development of professional learning and development programmes. This is understandable, given that more recent research products of this nature have been based on small scale Masters' degree level research that have employed qualitative research methodologies in order to capture student voices and adult recollections, of classroom experience. A review that brings some of this literature from the past twenty five years into focus will now be presented.

### ***What does the literature say and how does it say it?***

Jones' seminal doctoral research of Pasifika girls at a central Auckland girls' school in the mid-1980s used participant ethnographic methodologies to examine the classroom experiences of 19 Pasifika and 12 Pakeha girls over a period of a year. The data collection straddled two academic years and so

observations were made when the girls were in Fourth Form and then Fifth Form<sup>64</sup>. Jones (1991) demonstrated how teaching and learning processes in the classroom advantage some students and disadvantage others along class/ethnicity lines and success in school is highly dependent on familiarity with the dominant culture.

A decade later, Hawk and Hill (1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1999) conducted a series of studies as part of the formative evaluation of the previously mentioned AIMHI project one of the first major MOE funded initiatives for Pasifika and Maori secondary schooling. The project involved decile one secondary schools in Otara, Mangere, East Tamaki (suburbs in Auckland) and Poirirua East (in Wellington). In the initial Phase of the study, more than 900 students participated in group discussions. Some of the general findings of Phase One include:

- Pasifika students had to develop strategies for coping with the conflicting values and expectations of the worlds they live within, namely that constructed by significant social groups such as the family, their cultures, the school, church, peers and for older students, the world of part-time employment or work.
- The primary or most influential authority figures in students' lives, from these different spheres of interaction, are likely to have limited knowledge and understanding, of these other worlds or spheres of influence.

In a later research report Hawk and Hill (2000) focused on actual teaching practice. The researchers observed 100 lessons involving 89 teachers and 1,645 students across the full range of subjects and year levels. Interviews with the teachers who were observed and group discussions with students were also undertaken. Hawk and Hill identified two critical features of teachers whose practice was considered effective by the students. The first feature relates to teaching approaches wherein the teachers actively empower their students. Hawk and Hill (2000, p.4) describe teachers who

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<sup>64</sup> Fourth Form is the equivalent of Year 10 or the sophomore year, of high school.

...are not afraid to share power with students and work hard to divest the locus of control to students rather than keep it to themselves...

The second critical feature relates to the relationship between effective teachers and their students (bearing in mind that the majority of their students were Pasifika and Maori). Hawk and Hill (2000, p.6) describe certain types of teacher-student relationships that are 'crucial' as a prerequisite for student engagement and learning.

The teachers in this study had particular understandings and attitudes that make it easier for these relationships to be positive and strong. One of the most important dimensions to the relationship is the ability of teachers' to communicate genuine respect for the students. The students described the importance of body language, tone of voice as well as teacher-actions. According to Hawk and Hill (2000, p.8), the students talked about how

...teachers understood the various worlds the students live in and how they manage the tensions and conflicts between them, they were fair and patient, enjoyed participating in activities with the students, and were prepared to give of themselves - sharing their lives, feelings, failings and vulnerabilities with the students.

There can be no doubt that for the students, personalised relationships with their teachers was of immense value to their engagement with learning.

Pasikale (1999), in her qualitative study with more than 80 Pasifika TOPS students, found that regardless of the ethnic background of the students, individual contexts have to be taken into account when determining the teaching and learning processes. Bear in mind that these students had *not* been particularly successful at secondary school and therefore their perspectives of teachers are particularly pertinent. This study found that for these students, what was of greater importance for academic success is teacher empathy rather than ethnicity - in other words, the students valued educators with empathy, who cared about the whole person.

Tupuola (2004) raised a different, perhaps more contemporary question about developmental norms of Pasifika youth – and this is the way the self-identification of Pasifika youth is increasingly global. She describes how the growing number of Pacific youth both in the USA and New Zealand, who are “...emulating Black African American lifestyles, music, and slang....” cannot be ignored but points out at the same time “...nor can the youth who are using popular culture as a tool to express their own Polynesian or Pasifika music, styles, and fashion” (2004, p.91).

An important finding of Manatu’s (2000) doctoral research is that a sole focus on Tongan students’ skills when separated from an analysis of the social, political, and economic positioning of Tongans within New Zealand, merely serves, ultimately, to reproduce the marginalization of Tongan (and other 'Pacific') people in the New Zealand schooling system. This focus on power relations is important not only in terms of the analytical concepts that scholars and researchers apply, but also in terms of Pasifika learners who are explicit about issues of colour, of race in terms of their lived realities.

Studies by Fusitua and Coxon (1998) and Manuatu (2000) may be somewhat dated but provide insight to the experiences of Tongan students, their families and schooling in New Zealand. The more recent mixed methods analysis by O’tunuku (2011) for his doctoral research about Tongan secondary students, their parents and teachers is a significant contribution to the knowledge base – but regrettably, studies of a similar nature (that is Pasifika-specific research, besides Samoan, Tongan) are yet to be conducted.

Cahill (2006) discusses the cultural disjuncture between Samoan students, their families and the school. She attributes Mageo (1998) as explaining that having a different perspective in which to see and experience life does not mean inferior intellectual capacity (p. 69). In her qualitative study for her Masters’ research, with a small group of Samoan parents, she examined this “culturally ingrained acceptance” and identified what is essentially a clash in values between Samoan parents and school-based expectations. She states

Samoan society is “sociocentric”...[meaning] in many non-Western cultures, understandings of the self accentuate the social roles that people play rather than emphasise the feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of the individual (p58).

Her study provides ethnic specific evidence about just how far apart and how disconnected, the world of home (as represented by the voices of parents) and the world of schools can be – “neither of which provides the skills to allow interpretation of the other” (p. 58).

Siope (2011) compared the experiences of Pasifika students from a number of Auckland secondary schools in 2009 with her own experiences of formal schooling in Auckland (from the mid-1970s through to the early 1980s). Her methodological approach integrated auto-ethnography (in relation to her analysis of her experiences) and the analysis of interviews with students. One of her overall conclusions is summed up in the following statement - “Educational researchers in the 21st century have shown that listening to what students have to say about what works best for them is more important than ever” (2011, p.11).

Other recent Masters level research have sought and analysed student voices using mixed methods approaches. Coleman’s (2011) innovative study is set within a Year 10 social studies class, and involved the use of process drama which was particularly effective in engaging Pasifika boys. Acting as someone else, a character perceived by the students to be “smart” and “brainy” enabled them to overcome their negative self-perceptions, explore new ideas, and gave them a voice – both within the fictional drama and afterwards during the reflective discussions. It is interesting to note Coleman found that their negative self-perceptions as learners within that class and subject area were influenced at least in part by their perceptions of their usual teacher’s view of them as learners.

The focus of Spiller’s (2011) Master’s research was Year 9 Pasifika secondary students and their teachers in a low decile school in Wellington. Spiller examined classroom studies examining teachers’ efforts to incorporate

culturally responsive pedagogies based on their knowledge of 'Pasifika ways of learning' and Pasifika students' perceptions of their teachers' efforts. Although carried out at a small scale, the study was like "...a mirror held up to the complexities of classroom interaction across cultures" (2012, p. 59). The study found that despite teachers' well-meaning efforts, they "...acted to impede their Pasifika students' learning", and the overall outcome was resentful students, who would behave poorly (or act up, act out) in the face of what they believed was teachers' negative perceptions of them.

Mose (2012) carried out research, in Auckland secondary schools. She was interested in successful senior (Year 13) secondary Pasifika students' perceptions of factors of school success and captured the voices of students' who were on track to continue their education at tertiary level, after school. Their voices are reflective, and articulate. The factors that they found challenging included the high and at times unrealistic expectations of their families (family as both 'burden and blessing'), and the implications of skin colour, of race – in other words, confronting the low and racialised expectations and even stereotypes of Pasifika learners held by others.

What is absent from all the studies mentioned above is a more developed meta-analysis of power relations and its significance at a number of levels – the level of teacher-student; school-community; and schooling -social reproduction. Such analyses have the potential to provide further illumination on the complexities of the teacher-student relationship and the role of this relationship in bringing two seemingly incompatible cultural settings together – that of the learner and his / her family and community; and that of the school/teacher.

There are other studies that have contributed meaningfully to the knowledge base of Pasifika learner and their teachers' interactions such as Nakhid (2003), Gorinski, et al (2007) and Fa'avae, (2012). Collectively, these studies and the ones described briefly above add to an important albeit disparate knowledge base. A series of important questions arise, relating to the extent knowledge about the interface between teachers and their Pasifika learners

can be harnessed to inform the work of educators, policy makers and researchers. The following set of questions is intended to capture the complexities and nuances that emerge from this review, and will be theoretically reflected upon in the last chapter.

Are there differences in the experiences of Pasifika learners in different suburbs within cities and between cities in New Zealand? Do the experiences of Pasifika learners in Christchurch for example, mirror that of Pasifika learners in south Auckland?

Are there differences in the quality of reflection and the nature of experiences, between junior secondary school students, and senior secondary students?

Do teachers of Pasifika learners' see and understand juniors and seniors differently?

What are the experiences of Pasifika boys? Where are their voices, what are their perceptions?

There is literature that focuses on Samoans and Tongans, as well as pan-Pasifika studies. What about other Pasifika ethnic groups?

Is our knowledge (as educators, researchers and policy makers) of the importance and significance to young Pasifika people, of race and ethnicity (skin colour, phenotype and all that it represents) deep enough?

## **Chapter Nine**

### **What does education mean to Pacific women?**

#### ***Tala Mai Fafo 3: Learning on the Job within the Academy***

Understanding the importance of education to many Pacific peoples is not limited to the formal schooling of children and teenagers in the compulsory sector, or to young adults within the tertiary sector. One can derive deep insights from the involvement of Pacific peoples (in this instance, Pacific women) in professional roles and positions within education, particularly their responses as Pacific-heritage women to changes in employment-related expectations of their professional roles. In Jane Roland Martin's theory of 'education as encounter',

...the change process that an individual undergoes when his or her capacities and cultural stock become yoked together is what is called learning. The change in that individual's end state is, in turn, what has been learned (2011, p.19).

Learning is both a process and an end-product, neither of which is the exclusive domain of a formal learning situation or relationship (such as teacher-student or lecturer-student).

The previous two chapters analysed the selected school or classroom experiences of individual Pacific women. This chapter extends and deepens examination of the research question that guided the previous chapters: What does Pacific education mean to Pacific women? It delves deeply into a 21<sup>st</sup> century contemporary *tala mai fafo* – an analysis of the collective workplace experiences of a group of Pasifika women in the academy between the years 2004 and 2010.

This chapter will present a detailed description of events and context followed by a brief discussion of the theoretical perspectives at the crux of the analysis of the group's actions. These are analysed as the main components of Wenger's (1998) community of practice framework and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theories of situated learning. The findings that emerge



from the analyses are organised and presented around the themes of 'spirit', 'space' and 'stewardship'. Jane Roland Martin's theory of 'education as encounter' enabled a perspective capable of identifying and articulating the cultural stock that was galvanised into action, developed and refined in response to pressing employment-related circumstances and conditions. Hence, the theme of 'spirit' refers to spiritual, intellectual and cultural ways of knowing and meaning-making; 'space' is a reference to the development of physical, conceptual and structural spaces; and 'stewardship' makes reference to a specific culturally informed sense of duty, responsibility and obligation informing a powerful notion of service – an important driving force for action, for the women concerned.

### *The Empirical Data*

The data that informs this analysis is auto-ethnographic in nature. Auto-ethnographic data is usually centred on the experiences and perspectives of a 'single self' or individual. Alternatively, it may be based on the collection of narratives from individuals within the same context – narratives about how they each experienced and responded to a similar set of circumstances and conditions. In this case, however, a more collective experience of a group of Pasifika women is examined rather than a collection of individual experiences of a shared collective experience. The 'self', therefore refers to the collective rather than an individual. Gathering and analysing the data involves exploring changes in the surrounding context and examining how the collective made sense of, responded to, or at times, resisted these changes. While the primary focus is on collective experience, a single voice 'speaks' on its behalf. Authorial voice is again prominent in this chapter as it was in the previous chapter.

The socio-cultural and political features of the context are of profound significance within each of the contextual layers. The broadest unit of analysis comprised the institutional and organisational entity of the university. Within this, the faculty forms the more defined space wherein the collective of women is situated; this therefore becomes a focus for closer

analysis. The analysis not only provides insight towards understanding the meaning of Pasifika education to the collective, but also provides some insight to the meaning of Pasifika education for the wider institutional entity (the faculty) that the collective worked within.

The collective of women is a formal academic grouping of female Pasifika academic staff within one of six schools in the Faculty of Education. The collective named itself *Kainga Pasifika*. The following section of this chapter will introduce the Kainga Pasifika in terms of its socio-historical origins within the Faculty. This comprehensive overview provides an in-depth socio-historical description and discussion about the collective of Pasifika staff from 2004 through to 2010.

### ***Introducing the Kainga Pasifika***

The origins of the Kainga Pasifika are closely associated with institutional and structural changes that have occurred since 2004.

#### ***Before Amalgamation***

September 2004 is a significant milestone because it is when a college of education amalgamated with a university. Prior to amalgamation, the college was organised into faculties and the Pasifika education staff members in question were located within a faculty called Pasifika Development. It had an explicit focus on the education and development of Pasifika peoples. This faculty had its own general manager, responsible for a team of a dozen academic staff, two student learning support staff and three general staff members – all of Pacific heritage and all with job descriptions that required a specific focus on Pasifika education in one or more areas, such as early-childhood, primary, secondary, pre-service teacher education and social work. This organisational entity also carried responsibility for the provision of Pasifika student academic support and success for Pasifika students enrolled within the college's various undergraduate programmes. Staff had responsibility for teaching specialised courses and programmes, such as a compulsory Pacific Education Studies (PES) course within the Bachelor of

Education (BEd) degree programme, and the Pacific Island Early Childhood Education (PIECE) diploma programme.

At the time of the amalgamation, several of the Pasifika staff had achieved the status of senior lecturers and principal lecturers through the college's career path. As a distinct Pasifika-specific faculty within the college, income-generating activities also took place, such as education advisory consultancies, contracts for teacher professional learning and development, and Pasifika-related research. However, only a small number of the staff consistently engaged with such contracts due to capacity and capability constraints, particularly with research projects. At the time of the amalgamation, the greatest strengths of this faculty were, arguably, the collective experience and expertise of staff in teacher education; their cultural knowledge; their community networking, collaboration and skills; and their espoused commitment to serve Pasifika communities in the Auckland Region and beyond.

There is no doubt that this faculty of Pasifika staff had an explicit sense of itself as having a leadership role and commitment to duty and service in education to Pasifika communities in Auckland and in New Zealand. In a paper written in 2005 (and published in 2007), I asked:

What does it mean to be a part of a Pacific community of university educators and researchers that is striving to both *lead and contribute* to the development of Pacific people within our urban region and our nation of residency? (Samu, 2007, p.138, emphasis added).

National education policy and institution-based strategic planning had a role to play in this naïve, almost grandiose, sense of our collective importance and value. As previously discussed in Chapter Five, the policy environment in Aotearoa New Zealand articulated Pasifika education as a strategic priority, as evidenced by the first *Pasifika Education Plan 2001-2005* (MOE, 2001), 'Priorities: Interim Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities, 2002/2007' (MOE, 2002) and the then Labour government's *Government Education Priorities* (Mallard, 2003). As previously argued, (in Chapter Five), one of the

most important drivers of this strategic and targeted focus on Pasifika people and education was the demographic projections for Pasifika peoples. Thus, with considerable urgency and intensity, a multi-pronged strategic policy focus on Pasifika education emerged within the first three years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Acknowledgment was made that failure to address the second government education priority (relating to those groups such as Pasifika with low achievement levels relative to the rest of the population) would negatively impact on the achievement of the first education priority: that of growing the capacity of New Zealanders in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and thereby strengthening the nation's efforts to become a strong globally competitive knowledge economy.

Interestingly, these national level priorities were reflected in the high-level discussions surrounding both the business and academic case for the amalgamation between the college of education and the university. Specific visions and goals were presented to the councils of both institutions and, after formal permission was sought and granted, the case for amalgamating was submitted to the New Zealand government for final approval. The vision of the amalgamation was:

To be recognised nationally and internationally as New Zealand's leading provider of professional education and educational research through excellent programmes of teaching and research that are inclusive, innovative and outcome based and that advance educational knowledge, improve educational practice and support communities of interest (University of Auckland, 2004).

There were six goals, each with a set of sub-goals, intended to achieve this vision:

- Build excellent capacity
- Provide leadership and innovation within the sector
- Strive constantly for increasingly effective delivery
- Constantly improve accessibility and relevance
- Contribute to Maori development aspirations
- Contribute to Pasifika inclusion and development

One sub-goal of Goal 1 was to “work collaboratively and cooperatively to contribute to the delivery of the Tertiary Education Strategy and support the specific needs of Maori and Pacific people” (University of Auckland, 2004). Goal 6 speaks for itself, of course. Pasifika peoples were identified and therefore prioritised in the case for amalgamation, reflecting the Labour government’s broader tertiary education policy directions as the demographic features of the Auckland metropolitan area – or Auckland City.

*After the Amalgamation: Co-construction (Sept 2004 – Dec 2005)*

After the amalgamation, many fast-paced developments were set in motion in order for the new faculty to be fully established and operational by the start of the academic year of February 2006. These included the development of new degrees and courses, as well as the development of the new faculty’s organisational structure. Seven new schools were established, the smallest of these being the School of Pasifika Education (SCOPE) with fewer than twenty academic staff. Rather than creating a Centre of Pacific Education Studies and Research within a larger school<sup>65</sup>, it was determined that the new faculty needed to create a structure that would ‘walk the talk’ of the case for the amalgamation as well as reflect national education policy emphases.

SCOPE staff’s perceptions about the relative importance of their collective role within the faculty was encouraged and reinforced by this inclusive structure of being a stand-alone School. They were charged with the explicit responsibility to lead the faculty’s efforts to address the Pacific-specific components of not only the case for the amalgamation but also the faculty’s own strategic plan. SCOPE was given additional resource allocation to organise additional activities for, and on behalf of, the faculty such as a separate graduation celebration for Pasifika student graduates and their families. This was based on the wider university’s strategic goals and plans.

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<sup>65</sup> Within the university, a centre is a much smaller organisational entity. The usual focus is research, and involves academic staff from across a faculty, who share similar research interests. A school, on the other hand, operates as a university department. Schools are the fundamental units of organisation. They are allocated budget for administration of courses and management of staff. The Head of School is a member of the Faculty Management Committee and ensures representation of School interests at faculty level committees.

The small size of SCOPE belied the tremendous expectations the faculty had for its leadership role in Pasifika education and development across the faculty. Another highly significant implication of being a School (rather than a Centre) would be Pacific representation at the highest level of management and decision-making within the faculty.

After the new faculty's proposed structure was announced, expressions of interest for the roles of heads of school were invited for the seven new schools. As part of the university's practice, candidates were required to make a public presentation that would serve as an opportunity to formally introduce themselves to staff within their new school, describe their vision and aspirations for the school and their intentions regarding leadership. I presented a paper entitled 'The Making of a Pacific Patchwork Quilt: The School of Pasifika Education' (Samu, 2005). I represented myself as follows:

I am many things, to many different people. I am a daughter, a wife, a mother ... I am a teacher, a lecturer, a researcher ... but one thing I am NOT is an individual – and I accept this. I stand with a host of people behind me – namely my family (Samu, 2005, p.1).

The description of my formal qualifications and the experiences I considered relevant for the role of head of school began with a well-known Samoan proverb that articulates the Samoan concept of service (Samu, 2005, p.2):

*O le auala I le malo o tautua.* The road to authority is service.

I explained what *tautua* (service) meant to me. The somewhat detailed explanation focused on the way *tautua*, as a principle, is used to justify social organisation among a range of units including the family, the village, churches, parliamentary government and formal schooling (2005, p.3). I then asked, so why not apply a similar principle to a university department or school, dedicated to the education and development of Pasifika peoples? I explained that I was socialised by my family and church community into holding a strong sense of duty and obligation and that in my view this was the most important qualifier for the role of head of school. *Tautua* is a

distinctive, culturally located ethos and discourse very familiar to my intended audience at the time- the Pasifika staff of SCOPE.

In the fifteen months from the amalgamation date to the beginning of the academic year of 2006, staff throughout the new faculty were busy with the development of new courses for the new qualifications (new degrees and diplomas) set to begin in 2006. At the same time they continued to teach and support students enrolled in the degree and diploma programmes offered by the former college and the former school of education (of the university). In addition to building courses for new qualifications, the faculty also activated the new seven-school organisational structure previously mentioned. This involved moving former school of education staff from the university's city campus to the site of the former college of education, which was now the main site of the new faculty.

At the outset SCOPE was regarded by its staff and management as a legitimate organisational entity within the new faculty. An integral feature of the professional identities of staff (as teacher educators and academic staff) was their personal and collective beliefs regarding their duties, obligations and responsibilities to serve Pasifika peoples. With the national policy context underpinning the case for the amalgamation, and the organisational structure of SCOPE (with responsibility for Pasifika activities faculty-wide) Pasifika academic staff with their own school seemed to be a given.

### ***Deconstruction then Reconstruction (2006-2010)***

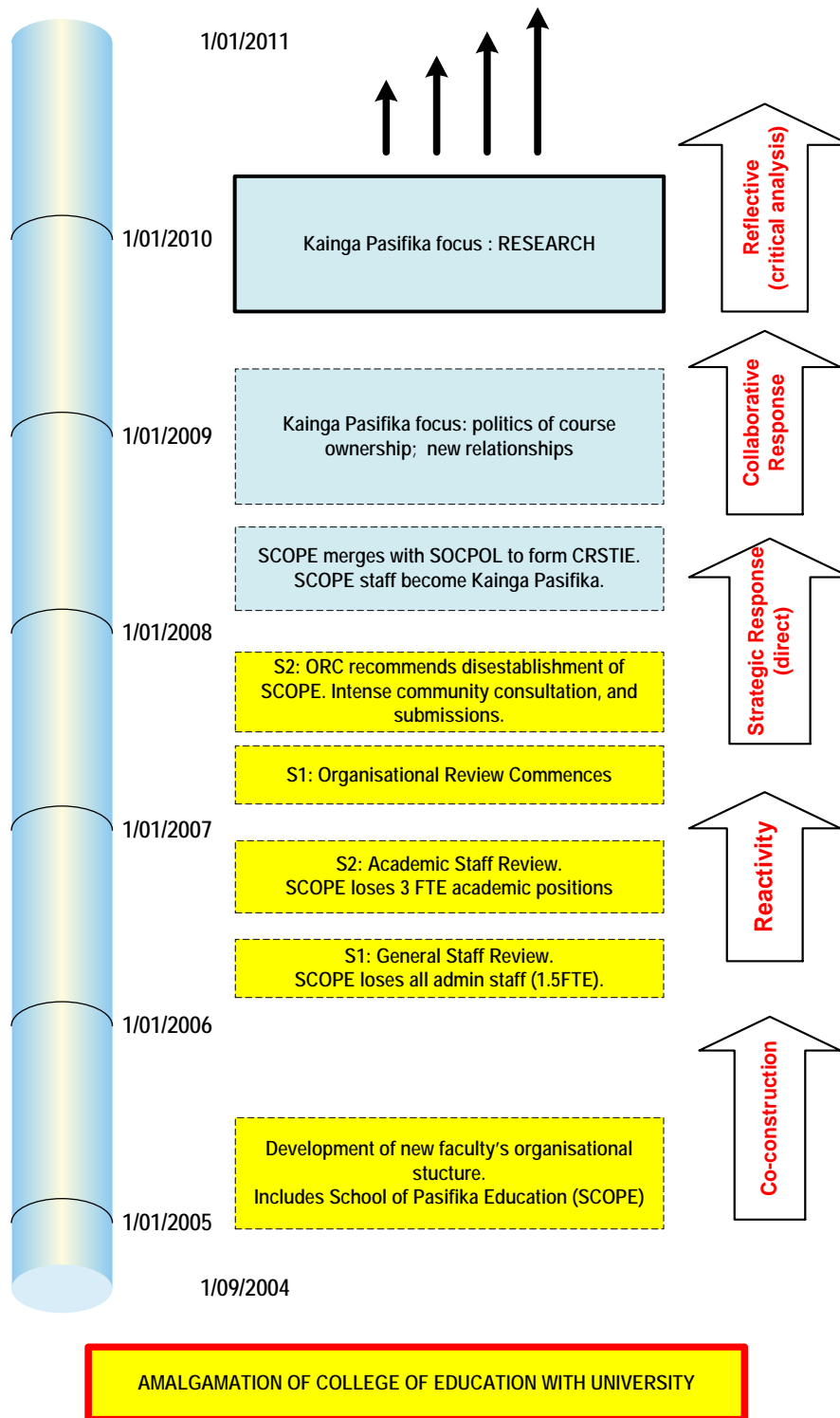
Changes continued into the new academic year of 2006, but the nature of the structural changes altered. In the very first semester in 2006 the faculty underwent a review of general staff. It was determined that there was a major, faculty-wide surplus of staff which was not economically viable. The outcome for SCOPE was a loss of all its general administrative staff positions, with the exception of the school manager. Hence, much of the administrative work was absorbed by the head of school and school manager. In the second semester of the same year, an academic staff review was announced as the university deemed there to be a surplus of such staff. A formula was designed

and applied across the different schools and consequently SCOPE lost three academic positions with the incumbents offered voluntary severance or redundancy.

Early in its second year (2007), a faculty-wide organisational review was announced. The organisational matrix model heralded in 2005 which had given rise to the seven schools was reviewed. The purpose of the organisational review was to improve the faculty's organisational structure by modifying or even replacing it with one that would enhance the faculty's academic and economic viability. The end result was the disestablishment of the faculty's two smallest schools, which included SCOPE.

SCOPE was merged with the School of Social and Policy Studies (SOCPOL), forming a new school - the School of Critical Studies in Education (CRSTIE). The remaining academic staff of SCOPE formed one of four discipline-based academic groupings within CRSTIE. Rather than take on the name of Pasifika Education, however, members determined to name themselves the *Kainga Pasifika*. Staff attrition resulted in just five of the original SCOPE staff remaining in the Kainga Pasifika in 2010. Two Pacific heritage staff from other academic groups within CRSTIE became associated with the Kainga bringing membership (including associated membership) to seven. Figure 7, below, summarises the key structural changes that took place between September 2004 and the end of 2010.





**Figure 8: Timeline of Structural Change**

Five phases are identifiable in the series of changes experienced by the group of Pasifika staff from the point of amalgamation through to the end of 2010.

These phases reflect the overall response of the group, regardless of the formal entity that the staff were party to at the time (for example, first as SCOPE and then as the Kainga Pasifika). Phase One (2005) featured co-construction, with SCOPE staff participating fully with the many and varied requirements of the faculty.

Phase Two is associated with the unanticipated (by SCOPE members) series of staff reviews in 2006. Moreover, the loss of three academic staff positions required considerable risk management of wider Pasifika community perceptions, given the incumbents were individuals of considerable social and cultural prestige and esteem, with long careers in education. Phase Two was mainly about being reactive as a collective, through processes such as writing submissions to the committee responsible for the reviews and group meetings with the dean the chair of the review committee. It was certainly a phase of experiential learning in different forms of advocacy, even resistance.

Phase Three took place over much of 2007, where SCOPE's response was far more purposeful and strategic. Painful lessons had been learned from Phase Two, wherein new skills and ways of thinking had been developed. Phase Three provided opportunities to apply them. The focus of this phase was strategic, organised action as evidenced through savvy submissions informed by intense community consultation.

Phase Four covered 2008 through to early 2010. It involved transitioning into a bigger school structure, establishing a new identity and forming formal and informal relationships and connections to consolidate and systematically strengthen the group. This was a phase in which collaboration was an imperative. The final phase, shown in Figure 7, focuses on retrospective analysis.

### ***The Main Challenge Areas: Teaching, Research and Service***

The majority of the Pasifika staff that came into SCOPE after the amalgamation had been members of the Faculty of Pasifika Development within the college of education. In fact, before the amalgamation, the school

of education within the university had only one Pasifika academic staff member. She chose to join SCOPE after the amalgamation. Before my own employment by the college of education in 2004, I had held a series of fixed term contracts within the school of education at the university in various academic positions (tutor, senior tutor, then lecturer) for over six years. As a consequence, there was only myself and one other staff member within SCOPE with prior experience and knowledge of the employment expectations of university academics. College of education staff understood the term 'academic staff' to mean teaching staff, with the contractual obligations this entailed, which was a far more pragmatic, teaching-focused professional understanding.

One of the main features, however, of becoming an academic staff member within a university was the profound and powerful discourse of 'academic'. This was not something that many staff in the new faculty could directly engage with in a careful, measured and purposeful way during the transition to becoming a part of a university, given the demands on time, energy and attention that the numerous post-amalgamation changes required. I found that my prior employment experiences with the university had served as an unofficial academic apprenticeship. I found I had a working knowledge of the discourses of the academy and how these relate to the three key areas of performance for staff on academic contracts: teaching, research and service. Because of this, I was able therefore to publicly express the beliefs and values I held at the time, with regard to each of these key areas of expected performance for university academics, in my presentation for the head of school role (Samu, 2005).

In terms of teaching, I expressed the view that teachers (lecturers) within tertiary settings hold considerable influence and power related to their responsibilities to make critical decisions about what to teach and how to teach, as well as what and how to assess learning. I went on to describe such a position, deliberately, in cultural terms rather than sociological terms (such as power relations). I referred to teaching as a "sacred responsibility, and so deserving of the time and effort needed to ensure that we [as lecturers] are

effective for all learners” (2005, p.5). I identified the importance of writing and presenting as a critical area of work required to inform and influence teaching. I deliberately avoided using terms such as ‘research informed practice’ and even ‘praxis’ because I wanted to foreground my own values and beliefs in relation to teaching, rather than what I knew and understood to be the academy’s. I also wanted to avoid taking a detached and impersonal stance. My target audience for this presentation was incoming Pasifika staff and students of the new School of Pasifika Education (SCOPE) rather than academic staff from throughout the faculty. More importantly these were staff who had been given the opportunity to express their preference for who should lead them as head of school to the Dean. I anticipated that my values and beliefs were, by and large, shared by the staff of the soon-to-be School of Pasifika Education. In recognising that we shared set of culturally based values towards teaching, the inference was that in becoming part of a university, we were already positioned with strength.

I had a somewhat different stance towards research. In a later writing, I was more pragmatic about how we were at that point in time positioned as a collective in terms of research,

...the one overriding feature of this new school, particularly for former [college of education] staff, is that it is within a new *university* mega-organisation ... And in a university, there are unique cultural features that we as new university academics have to address.

First of all, as university academics we are expected to research, write, publish and advance our professional qualifications. What previously was encouraged is now mandatory. Quality teaching of future teachers and social workers is no longer the main measurement of performance and the primary source of peer esteem, as it was in the [college of education] (Samu, 2007, p.143, emphasis added).

At the start of SCOPE’s existence, only one person held a doctoral qualification, and three staff held Masters’ degrees. Of these, two had embarked on part-time doctoral studies. Thus, of SCOPE staff, only three could be described at the time as being established, experienced researchers with publications. I held reservations about our collective position with

regards to research and academic qualifications. Such reservations can be inferred from the almost prophetic statements that I made (Samu, 2007, pp146, 147) not long after I was appointed as the head of SCOPE.

Have we become somewhat complacent and set in our thinking in the way we see Pasifika education and ourselves as Pasifika educators? In the former [college of education], much was accomplished to establish Pasifika education as a highly legitimate and credible cross-discipline in the official consciousness of the overall organisation. Should we assume that this will continue now that we are part of a university faculty?

Following from that, part of a university culture is the expectation of freedom of expression, and a free and frank exchange of viewpoints. How will we respond if, at worst, colleagues challenge our legitimacy, our professional credibility, and perhaps our very existence?

We have a lot to live up to and to continue to prove. I anticipate unique oppositional forces – are we prepared to become more politicised?

The third performance area within the academy is service. In my 2005 presentation, I expressed confidence in SCOPE staff capacities and capabilities in this area, particularly in terms of community, and that their contributions were carried out “in ways that go over and beyond their current job descriptions” (Samu, 2005, p.9). I expressed the belief that the collective’s extensive experience of community service and outreach within their specific Pasifika communities (as well as Pasifika professional communities such as Pasifika early-childhood education) aligned well with the university’s notion of community engagement.

I expressed the hope that our new faculty would formally recognise and nurture the type of community-based partnerships that Pasifika staff had cultivated for years via the former college of education, although some did not necessarily have immediately obvious and measureable benefits to the institution in which they were employed (Samu, 2005, p.10). I hoped that the new faculty would recognise such activities as a meaningful part of staff workloads, particularly staff on academic contracts. I also stated:

I would be very disappointed if the faculty required Heads of School to determine, for individual academic staff members, exactly what forms such service should take. I believe service and outreach should be personalised to an extent in order to ground individual commitment (Samu, 2005, p.10).

In my previous years of employment with the university, in the former school of education, I was not directed or managed in terms of how service time had to be used. It seemed that academic staff in general, at least within the faculty of arts at that time, had considerable autonomy in determining which activities external to the university would meet policy expectations regarding service.

I was confident in the new school's collective capacities for the teaching and service components. The performance area that caused me the greatest concern was research – the new school did not have a strong platform to stand on. I attempted to signal awareness and concern that our relative weaknesses in the area of research could have serious implications for our collective structural identity (Samu, 2007). The largest of the seven schools in the new faculty were clearly based on recognised, undisputed, well-established discipline areas, such as the School for Teaching, Learning and Development and the School of Science, Maths and Technology. Of the other three schools, one was focused on social work and human services (such as youth, counselling), another focused on the arts, and the last on language and literacy. Although the incoming staff of SCOPE had no doubts as to the legitimacy of Pasifika education as a discipline area, such confidence did not rest on a strong analytically based evidence base. Unconsidered was the possibility that, within a university with a different set of 'academic' performance measures and expectations, Pasifika academic staff might appear far less viable (professionally) as individuals let alone as a collective.

### ***Theorising the Problem***

The previous section provided the socio-historical context from which the current group, the Kainga Pasifika, emerged. This section will articulate the

problems associated with the transition from one organisational context to another.

What has prevailed (albeit subtly) for this particular group of Pasifika women is their adjustment to the academy; the culture of the academy; and their acceptance as academics in their own right in all key areas of performance: teaching, service and research. Achieving this has been an unanticipated challenge and one which involved coming to the understanding that “academic acceptance too often demands the rejection of authenticity – one’s own, other peoples, and sometimes of whole chunks of human experience” (Steinem, 2000, p.x). As Martin states, “the academy charges an exorbitant admission fee to those women who wish to belong”.

Before the case for amalgamation was even mooted, the women in this case study had been employed by the college of education for their experience and expertise as practitioners; they were highly experienced teacher educators. Entry to the academy (via the university faculty) as an academic staff member was, essentially, by default. The majority of the group were quite unaware of the ‘admission costs’ yet to come.

Chetty, and Lubben (2009) examined the experience of institutional change (specifically transforming from a college of education to a university) and the requirement to enhance research capabilities. They argue that it is a particularly complex challenge to the professional identities of teacher educators. I would argue that it is even more complex for teacher educators driven by expectations (professional and personal) to represent the interests and serve the needs of specific minority groups, such as Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This study recognises that in taking a gendered focus (that is, focusing on the experiences of a specific group of women) recognition is given to the diversities and differences that exist within and between Pasifika women in Aotearoa New Zealand. The study does not take an essentialist perspective of Pasifika women – that is, it does not subscribe to the view that women who

identify as Pasifika share an innate set of physical, social and cultural characteristics. Rather, what is recognised is that Pasifika women are likely to share points of connection and networks of relations. Chapters Seven and Eight established that there is consistency in the value Pacific/Pasifika women place on formal education, reflecting the effectiveness across generations of the socialisation of certain beliefs about the purpose of achieving education goals – that is, for the benefit of family and community or the collective good rather than for individual gain. While there may be points of connection, and obvious similarities, the specific individual pathways and lived experiences are likely to differ in ways attributable to factors other than culture. This study strives to avoid rendering diversities within ‘Pasifika women’ invisible which, according to Martin, is the pitfall of false generalisation (2000, p.6).

### *Surface Features and Deep Structures*

According to Robinson (2010) the surface features of empirical matter are what are obvious, observable and common-knowledge. Surface features may not be understood or appreciated. The following could be the surface features of Kainga Pasifika – that which is obvious, observable and taken for granted as common-knowledge.

- Its formal status as an academic group.
- The name of the Kainga Pasifika, and its association with, Pacific/Pasifika Education.
- Females in their 40s and 50s.
- Employment positions as lecturers, and senior lecturers.
- The Kainga, as a collective, contributes to courses in Liberal Arts, Foundation Studies, Youth Work and Teacher Education programmes at under-graduate degree and graduate diploma levels.
- A physical location within an older building on the perimeter of the campus, the interiors of which have been decorated in a distinctive Pacific Polynesian way.

There is, however, much more below the surface to know and understand.

Several theoretical lenses of analysis and critique were applied to the surface features to establish and better understand the deep structures.



### *Analysis of the Kainga Pasifika*

In order to drill down and carry out an in-depth analysis, the Kainga's experiences (as empirical matter) are analysed as the main components of a community of practice. Using Wenger's framework (1998), the components of a community of practice are as follows: a strong, supportive community; construction and maintenance of a unique shared identity; negotiated meaning and the formation of specific social and cultural practices. In addition, Lave and Wenger's (1991) theories relating to 'situated learning', and 'legitimate peripheral participation' were also applied.

#### *Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998) and Situated Learning (Lave & Wenger 1991)*

The concept of community of practice has been useful in illuminating the undeniable co-construction of knowledge that occurred through the situated learning of a changeable professional environment. Communities of practice is a broad social theory of learning in which the "overall apparatus of situated learning is a significant rethink of learning theory ... [for those who want to] ... take learning beyond the individual" (Barton and Tusting, 2005, p.3). This view is useful for theorising the relationship between structure and agency. For the Kainga, this relationship is between changeable institutional structures and the purposeful, deliberate exercise of value-informed agency, even oceanic agency, on the part of the group.

Lave and Wenger's (1991, p.17) theories relating to situated learning locate learning in the "increased access of learners to participating roles in expert performances ...". They state that "learning could be viewed as a special type of social practice associated with the kind of participation frame designated as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP)" (1991, p.18). This means that learning is a feature of practice - and practice involves participants and participation. This would imply that certain participation frameworks may be dispositional to producing learning even if the co-participants are not trying to acquire or inculcate identifiable skills. This kind of pervasive low-level

learning can be seen when both learning and the subject learned are embedded in participation frameworks.

In applying these theories first as SCOPE and then as the Kainga Pasifika, the collective did more than adapt their dispositions – they responded fully and intensively as co-participants in high-stakes experiences, including the academic areas of performance (teaching, research and service). They endeavoured however to participate in ways that reflected their core socio-cultural values and beliefs - in other words, utilising their unique pre-existing cultural stock (Martin, 2002). One can therefore ask:

- How and why was the experience of institutional change (i.e. ‘becoming a university’) a particularly complex and challenging *learning* experience for the Kainga Pasifika, as a minority group of teacher educators?
- What are the distinctive features of “*learning* in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world” (Wenger, 1998, p.3, emphasis added) for the Kainga Pasifika?

### ***The Kainga Pasifika as a Community of Practice***

The four main overlapping components of the Kainga as a community of practice are a strong, supportive community; the construction and maintenance of a unique shared identity; negotiated meaning (through participation); and the formation of specific socio-cultural practices.

#### **In terms of a strong supportive community**

Prior to the amalgamation, my colleagues and I, as Pasifika educators, were physically located together within the formal entity of the college of education’s faculty of Pasifika Development which had clear boundaries of membership, roles and responsibilities to the wider institution. Essentially this entity remained the same when SCOPE was established. When, however, the Organisational Review Committee (ORC) recommended that SCOPE be dissolved and its staff dispersed throughout the faculty to “schools relevant to their research and teaching interests” (SCOPE, 2007), the SCOPE submission to the ORC’s recommendation emphatically rejected what they

termed as a “dissolve and assimilate” approach. Instead their stated preference was “to remain as a distinguishable entity within the Faculty ... to remain together and form a clearly visible entity within another School” (SCOPE, 2007, pp 1-4). The SCOPE submission drew attention to the potential consequences that disestablishment and dispersal would bring to their efforts to formally build collective staff capacity and capability as (i) informed, strategic participants for the on-going task of building the new faculty of education; and as (ii) university academics. The submission also articulated potential risks to the development of Pacific/Pasifika education as a viable discipline within the faculty and wider university if the “dissolve, disperse and assimilate” approach was taken.

When the Kainga Pasifika formed at the start of 2008, staff adopted SCOPE’s Mission Statement and Values. This further sealed its collective sense of being a professional Pasifika community of educators and emerging academics. To quote, (in part)

The School of Pasifika Education recognizes its leadership role in Pacific education and development. Such leadership brings with it the responsibilities to advance educational knowledge; improve educational practice and enhance service and support systems in Pasifika education ... (SCOPE, 2006, p.1).

#### In terms of the construction and maintenance of a unique shared identity

Throughout the different iterations of the collective’s form and structure, its identity was based on two core elements: the cultural backgrounds of the different members (brought together and referred to using the umbrella term of Pasifika), and the group’s professional work in Pasifika education. How did the group express such an identity?

Physical symbols became important in identity construction. When the newly established SCOPE was relocated to a larger, two-storey building on the eastern margins of the campus, considerable effort was made to transform it into a distinctive Pasifika space. Examples included putting up

commercial artwork of tropical flowers and plants; displays of traditional handicrafts; and hired tropical plants and professional signage (with Pacific motifs, such as hibiscus) at the main entrances.

A storage room was designated as the school's formal meeting room and refurbished. SCOPE staff held the view that their very existence was an expression of the new faculty's commitment to the enactment of the Pasifika aspects of the case for the amalgamation. Therefore, the SCOPE meeting room also needed to be the formal meeting space for all things Pacific/Pasifika within the faculty – intended to be a campus-wide place to dialogue about Pasifika issues and concerns. The space was named *The Talanoa Room*. 'Talanoa' in several Pacific languages refers to a specific collaborative process of dialogue (O'tunuku, 2011). It must be noted however, that in the Niue language *talanoa* refers to 'rubbish': SCOPE staff took that as a reminder of the shared responsibility to avoid the risk of irrelevant discussion and debate.

Another physical yet spiritual symbol was the creation of a series of photographic portraits of Pacific children of the past. In the *whare nui*<sup>66</sup> of Maori *marae*<sup>67</sup> there are often portraits, carvings and photographs of ancestors and deceased members of the *hapu*, or community, surrounding the *whare nui*. This draws the attention of the living to their past, and reminds them of those who stand behind them when they engage with the present, and move towards the future. The Talanoa Room's collection of eight photographic reproductions of Pacific children and youth from late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were sourced from the Alexander Turnbull Library and serve as a reminder of the spiritual dimensions of Kainga Pasifika's accountabilities and beliefs.

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<sup>66</sup> *Whare nui* – the large meeting house on a Maori marae

<sup>67</sup> *Marae* - sacred community or extended family place within which the whare nui is centrally located

In terms of negotiated meaning (through participation)

Due to the ways SCOPE/ Kainga endeavoured to make sense of the institutional changes, they became an epistemic collective as well as an empirical collective. This concept has been drawn from Bourdieu's conception of epistemic individuals, developed from his study of the reflective behaviour of academics (Bourdieu, 1988). For example, as an epistemic collective, the Kainga developed a number of concepts in its efforts to theorise and make explicit their ways of working together. These include: collective individualism; the development of a number of Pacific research models and paradigms; and the notion of *niu* epistemology.

Kainga members recognise and accept that career development and advancement in the university environment is ultimately about individual action and achievement. However, the group subscribes to a long-held belief that individuals can advance (or learn and develop) much more effectively as a consequence of collective systematic effort. In a letter written in 2004 to the former college's research grants committee, I wrote (as the Pasifika Development research mentor):

I have not responded to the 'needs driven by the individual', (Research Mentor job description) as such. Rather, I am responding to the similar needs driven by a collective of individuals. What has evolved is a collective approach to meeting the initial research development needs of some of the staff of Pasifika Development (Samu, 2004b, unpublished seminar presentation).

One of the greatest problems I identified at the time was the lack of individual self-efficacy with regards to research in general, and the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) in particular. There was not only a need to build confidence, but also to develop a structured approach to building up skills and research related experience.

The institutional changes had important implications for teaching, particularly after SCOPE's disestablishment. Some staff found themselves teaching classes of mainstream students for the first time. Some of these

classes belonged to courses delivered by other schools, requiring new and at times challenging, professional collaborations. When an individual found such new professional experiences difficult, she would return to the collective, to the sanctuary and safety of the Talanoa Room. There, behind closed doors the collective would share, laugh, affirm, provide practical advice, moral support and, where needed, strategise ways forward. The term 'collective individualism' crystallised and took conceptual shape during the SCOPE phase.

Individual Kainga members developed and applied their own Pacific models and paradigms for their research, demonstrating emergence of what the PBRF Guidelines describes as "contemporary Pacific research and discourse on Pacific research" (TEC, 2006, p.133). Embedded in Kainga practice and belief is the notion that "Pacific research is reflective of the traditions of the past, as well as the present and future. It often embodies paradigms, perspectives and critical stances that are not always captured in mainstream research" (PBRF Guidelines, 2006, p.133). Examples of original theorising include Sauni's (2006) *ula* methodology, which she developed for her Masters study on the participation of Pasifika men in early childhood education; Siteine and Samu's (2009; 2011) typology of Pacific knowledge and experience, based on their on-going study of social studies curriculum and resources; and Tuafuti's strategies of silence on the part of Samoan parents in bilingual education settings (2010, 2011).

A more recent development is critical reflection of contextualised, culturally informed perspectives. Discourses of indigenous epistemologies seem to imply that a specific ancestral point of origin is necessary for authenticity and legitimation. But what if an emerging epistemic approach to making sense of experience has its origins within more contemporary cultural contexts? The Kainga has discussed a metaphor for a modern, situated Pasifika epistemology. They refer to it as *niu* epistemology. *Niu* is the Samoan word for the ubiquitous young coconut. The *niu* is really a gigantic seed, with an incredibly tough exterior that enables it to be carried by ocean currents from one island to the next. The tough husk provides buoyancy and resilience.

According to Teaiwa, in the Pacific, *niu* “most commonly refers to the coconut, the ancient and enduring tree of life in most island environments, but in the pidgin “niu” also means ‘new’, ‘novel’ or ‘different’” (Teaiwa as cited by Carter, 2000, p.ii).

In terms of specific social, cultural practices

Wenger (1998, p.46) stated that “it is the collective construction of a local practice that, among other things, makes it possible to meet the demands of the institution” Examples of such practices developed by the Kainga include: the development and use of Pacific protocols for work-related meetings; recognition of significant events (particularly life events); wearing ethnic clothing as identity statements for key events; the establishment of sincere and genuine reciprocal relationships; and organising high-stakes meetings within the Talanoa Room.

The Kainga Pasifika has maintained protocols and practices such as saying prayers at the beginning of meetings in a Pacific mother-tongue, and beginning formal presentations with the language greetings of at least six different Pacific cultural groups. Gatherings (including meetings) organised and hosted by Kainga Pasifika staff are generously catered for, and life events experienced by staff and students (for example the death of a close relative) are actively respected in “our Pacific way” and according to “our Pacific protocols” (Samu, 2007, p.146). Significant personal and familial events, such as 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> birthdays, children’s 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays, graduations and even family weddings are celebrated. Work life is not separated from personal or community life. Professional milestones such as successful conference presentations and first peer-reviewed publications are creatively recognised. As an example, in December 2010 the Kainga held its inaugural Pasifika Research Revue, an informal celebration in which ‘best group research’ and ‘individual excellence in research’ were acknowledged and awarded trophies. In addition, wearing Pacific-styled formal attire for key school, faculty and university events (such as graduations) to enhance visibility.

The Kainga Pasifika was very mindful of its limitations, in terms of higher level academic qualifications, publications and research experience. After all, this was one of the two main arguments for the dis-establishment of SCOPE, its previous organisational entity. Nurturing reciprocal relationships with those willing to share their knowledge, expertise and wisdom has therefore been an important way to address this. Friends were also informal mentors and critical friends, offering practical wisdom and advice and caring in the sense of Noddings' (1984) ethic of care. For the Kainga, such relationships carry the inherent responsibility to nurture and respect in turn, regardless of the context or purpose of the interaction.

This can be understood more fully in terms of the Samoan concept of '*teu le va*' (Airini et al., 2010) - a culturally informed conceptualisation of the nature of relationships between researchers, policy makers and those who are 'researched'. This conceptualisation about relationships aligns with the arguments presented by Sanga (2003) and Nabobo-Baba (2003) about the nature of relationships between aid donors and local counterparts in education projects in Pacific nations. An example of such an enacted relationship is when the collective organised its first research *talanoa* in 2007. Three friends who happened to be experienced, senior scholars in Pasifika education (and external to the faculty) were invited to be critical friends at a closed, invitation-only, research seminar of research by Pasifika staff. The *talanoa* was a formal opportunity to present (and practice) for upcoming conference presentations and receive critical feedback in a safe, supportive environment.

### ***The Kainga Learning through Situated Activities***

A unique set of intersecting factors had the profound effect of drawing all the Kainga members into situated learning. In the process that Lave and Wenger (1991) call legitimate peripheral participation (or LPP),

...learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skills requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community



... A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice. This social process includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills (p.29).

In terms of Pacific peoples, Quanchi wrote:

Oceanic people speak through many modern voices; film, documentary, installation, performance art, rap, fiction and experimental theatre...*and through a Diaspora that remains connected to 'home'* (2004, p.10, emphasis added).

He was thinking primarily of Pacific contemporary artists, poets and film-makers when he wrote that statement. But surely this applies to equally teachers or educators? Their voices are "not naïve, mysterious, unfathomable or inexplicably complex, although they have been described mistakenly in these ways by non-indigenous observers ..." (Quanchi, 2004, p.10). The Kainga Pasifika are a part of the New Zealand-based Pacific diaspora and, as university academics, key aspects of their research activities (as well as their teaching, and service) 'speak' from particular, historically specific, social locations – such as spirit, space and stewardship.

#### In terms of 'spirit'

The Kainga Pasifika is mindful that in becoming academics there are transformational risks associated with such learning. Lave and Wenger (1991, p.51) contend this is to be expected with situated learning, "one way to think about learning is the historical production, transformation and change of persons".

In exercising oceanic agency in deliberate and purposeful ways, the Kainga Pasifika has endeavoured to retain control, even manage, the impact of their participation (learning) on the development of their collective and also personal, identities. A cross-cultural learning experience results in movement across distinctive cultural formations, a process that could result in additions and deletions in cultural stock (Martin, 2007). Learning to become an academic and a scholar situates a person (such as Kainga members) in the

midst of a somewhat turbulent stock exchange, with possible outcomes such as a changed world view and differences in ways of thinking and behaviour. For example, although critical thinking skills are seen as an asset within the academe, they could become a liability if applied unchecked and unmonitored within other relationships and settings, such as one's extended family, one's church community, even one's marriage. It is tensions like these that the Kainga has been wary of, and it has purposefully turned to and drawn on cultural heritage and spiritual resources for the Values and Vision to ground their professional efforts and manage risks.

The women of the Kainga are unashamedly women of faith and valour. They cannot - and will not - separate the personal from the professional. They define themselves according to their multiple roles as women with leadership roles within their extended families and church communities; the main bread winners in their homes and households; and roles such as wives, mothers, aunts and grandmothers – in addition to their lives as academic staff within a university faculty of education. The ubiquitous young coconut or *niu* is an apt metaphor -it does not require deep, rich soil in order to sprout and become a seedling. All the sustenance it needs to sprout, to become a seedling and to make a good start to becoming the ubiquitous coconut tree comes from within. It is self-sustaining. In many ways, the Kainga Pasifika's efforts to make sense of, and give meaning to their experiences within the academe have required such qualities.

#### In terms of 'space'

The Kainga Pasifika are well aware that they do not necessarily look, sound or even act the part of the 'critic and conscience of society' as university academics. If a member is married (or used to be) they talk about husbands, not partners. If single, they do not live alone – they live with and care for aging parents, or their siblings and their siblings' offspring whom they help to raise. Collectively their children range in age from primary school through to young adults who still live at home and show no sign of moving on. One member regularly expresses public pride in her nine offspring. Most of the

Kainga are blatant church goers and active participants within patriarchal cultural communities. They laugh a lot, and loudly. They can be somewhat colourful in appearance, with physical features that make their ethnic affiliations obvious. There is nothing delicate or diminutive about a *niu*, and the same can be said of the Kainga and its members.

The creation of a structural space (be it SCOPE or the Kainga Pasifika) facilitated the development of a contextualised group identity that provided an important sense of place and belonging within the ivory tower that is the university. Within that space intimidating discourses of 'academic' could be demystified, deconstructed, simplified, reduced and most importantly, made sense of. The wider faculty is the 'other' to which the Kainga responded to and, as a consequence, adapted to in order to do more than survive. Indeed, because of its marginal position, it sought to thrive. As Ladson Billings (2000, p. 262) points out, marginal positioning provides a perspectival advantage - a wide-angle vision - that a central, dominant paradigm position cannot. She explains,

This advantage is not due to an inherent racial/cultural difference but is the result of the dialectical nature of constructed otherness that prescribes the liminal status of people of colour as beyond the normative boundary of the conception of self/other.

The Kainga subscribed to a notion of marginality in relation to what hooks (1985) described as a

...site of radical possibility, a space of resistance ... a central location for the production of a counter hegemonic discourse that is found not just in words but in habits of being and the way one lives. As such, I was not speaking of a marginality one wishes to lose ... but rather of a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds (1985, p.156, 157).

In order to survive and thrive as best as it could, the Kainga appropriated physical and conceptual spaces. The Talanoa Room was constructed as place of safety, and at same time an expression of formal, dignified identity. Oft

times it has served as a political space when meetings were conducted with others in authority about impending changes. I am unsure if colleagues elsewhere in the faculty fully appreciate how empowering it is to set the terms of engagement with respect to something as fundamental as ‘the where’ (in terms of physical location) of a high-stakes encounter.

As for conceptual space – theorising and conceptualising one’s own theoretical constructs and research paradigms is an exercise of freedom of thought, unconstrained by rigid expectations of what constitutes legitimate research or more importantly, what constitutes important valued knowledge. Western frameworks have been useful, especially those that have acted as a bridge between our initially tentative and then confident forays into scholarly thinking. In this critical qualitative investigation I have drawn upon social learning theories of communities of practice and situated learning, then moved across theoretical domains to draw on the ideas of critical race theorists (such as Ladson-Billings) and Pacific scholars and writers (like Quanchi) to develop and justify our own conceptions – such as collective individualism, and *niu* epistemology.

#### In terms of ‘stewardship’

This analysis confirms that for Pasifika women, “success in formal education enables one to serve the collective or family and community” (Samu 2011, p.20). The importance of this value cannot be underestimated. In her analysis of the narratives of Samoan women who lived their lives across the 20<sup>th</sup> century (referred to in Chapter Seven), Fairburn-Dunlop (1996) found that “Each story emphasises the enduring and all-embracing strength of the customary ways (as shown in the family systems and how these are nourished by *tautua* and acts of love and reciprocity) and how women’s roles are very firmly set in these family systems” (p.vii).

The experiences of women of the Kainga Pasifika demonstrate the persistence, across time and space, of their main motivation with regards to striving to succeed within academia – that of service, or stewardship. For the

Kainga, prosperity and success is measured in terms of families, communities and relationships rather than material well-being, and progression within individual academic career paths.

Such stewardship has involved learning, as a collective, how to be politically strategic as well as resistant and/ or proactive. There is an allegiance to a wider, broader, more idealistic notion of collective purpose as emerging academics - the notion of service to Pasifika peoples. This explains their self-perception that, as a structural entity focused on Pacific education within the faculty, they are a valid source of knowledge, skill and expertise, despite the absence of extensive lists of peer-reviewed research publications and doctoral qualifications (at this point in time).

I now return to the two key questions posed earlier in this chapter. First, how and why was the experience of institutional change (i.e. “becoming a university”) a particularly complex and challenging learning experience for the Kainga as a minority group of teacher educators?

Prior to the amalgamation, the majority of the staff within the faculty of Pasifika Development at the college were employed within an established formal institutional structure, with its own courses, programmes and accountabilities to the highest level of management. A credible, legitimatised professional identity as a Pasifika educator was built into one’s position and accompanying job description. Few of the staff members were pioneers - they had not played leadership roles in the creation of the institutional structures that provided and supported a ready-made identity. For Pasifika staff, the structural reorganisation (that occurred in Phase Three – refer Figure 7) simplified and reduced their collective position relative to the wider faculty – they could no longer take their professional value and identities for granted.

For the Kainga Pasifika, their status prior to the amalgamation as experienced and expert practitioners became overshadowed by their lack of doctoral level academic qualifications in the new faculty organisation. A

discourse based on 'research activity' and becoming research-active emerged and became significant within the faculty. As a discourse it challenged their self-efficacy as academic women. The new social context the collective found themselves within post-amalgamation was dominated by the expectations of a research-based university, which itself was responding to what Grant has described as "a government-initiated zero-sum game research performance round" (2006, p.485). Otherwise known as the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF), the pending research accountabilities scheduled for 2012 added an additional layer of high-stakes expectation and subsequent pressure.

The pressure to demonstrate development in this broad area of performance focused collective attention on academic writing (as in journal publications); conference presentations, particularly international conferences; contributing to selected research communities as reviewers, conference organisers, and the organisation of capacity building seminars for Pasifika researcher, including themselves. In addition, there was recognition (and effort) to progress the pursuit of doctoral academic qualifications. This considerable set of challenges sat over and above their 'normal' workload as lecturers on undergraduate and graduate programmes.

The second question posed earlier was: what are the distinctive features of "... learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" (Wenger, 1998, p.3)?

The Kainga believed that in order to continue to contribute to their wider Pasifika communities they needed to (i) stay in the new faculty and (ii) learn how to be a meaningful, contributing part of the so-called academy. Challenged by cultural change, they needed to ensure they never lost sight of themselves as Pasifika women. They began to theorise using cultural and critical theoretical perspectives. They theorised their professional identity and finally recognised that it was theirs' to shape and construct. They theorised their marginal or liminal position as an empowering space – a space where they could respond proactively, and participate with stratagem.

They worked to produce symbols (physical and conceptual), metaphors, paradigms, strategies and practices to capture, embed and direct their own vision and evolving knowledge of themselves as Pasifika women in the academe. In effect, they created an empowering, sense-making contextualised counter-discourse.

The enhanced complexity of their situation is attributable to their marginal position in relation to being an academic grouping, rather than as a structural entity of significance in terms of decision-making. Positional marginality brings with it unique stewardship responsibilities, which are better addressed as an astute, savvy and responsive collective of committed women. Through spirit, space and stewardship, the Kainga have maintained a vision *of themselves as Pasifika women within the academe.*

## 5. Breakthroughs

*What I here call “the deep structure of educational thought” is a systematic rendering of the findings I unearthed on my many archaeological expeditions.*

*Jane Roland Martin, 2011, p.2*



## **Chapter Ten**

### **Learning from Discontinuities and Interruptions**

As explained in Chapter Two, imagery from archaeology proved useful in terms of explaining the overall methodology of this thesis, as well as in terms of how the thesis has been organised. As was stated in that chapter (on p.40),

Identifying the context of an archaeological find is important not only in order to draw conclusions about the site but also to understand its nature and assess its spatial and temporal features. The archaeologist attempts to (i) establish whether there are other contexts (layers, strata) and (ii) to find out how they came to be created.

Like an archaeologist, I as the researcher/ writer identified other layers of analysis – layers lying beneath the surface layer of national education policies. Selected layers were analysed in order to develop deeper and more critical understandings of meaning.

Michel Foucault's ideas (1972) about the historical analysis of ideas were instrumental in the development of deeper knowledge and understanding of policy (surface layer) and to the identification and analysis of other layers of significance – metaphorically, in the stratigraphic sequence below or out of sight (and consciousness) of policy, policy makers and those researchers and educators who focus on generalised patterns of groups. This is why the six analyses were selected and developed. Three examined national education policies in New Zealand as well as regional visioning of Pacific education (as contained within Part Three of the thesis) and three explored alternative Pacific/Pasifika conceptions of education (as contained within Part Four), from the perspective and experience of (selected) Pacific/Pasifika women.

The juxtaposition of the analyses within Part Three of this thesis demonstrated the how diversity and the education of Pasifika peoples are constructed and understood at the highly influential level of national policy are not the only ways of thinking about the public domain at the macro-level. New Zealand as a heterogeneous state actively participating in a global economy is understandably faced with a complex set of constraints (internal

and external) from within which policy must be developed. One can argue however, that compared to government agencies and institutions, think-tank groups of Pacific/Pasifika academics, scholars and educators are able to conceptualise in more innovative, visionary and undoubtedly unrestrained ways.

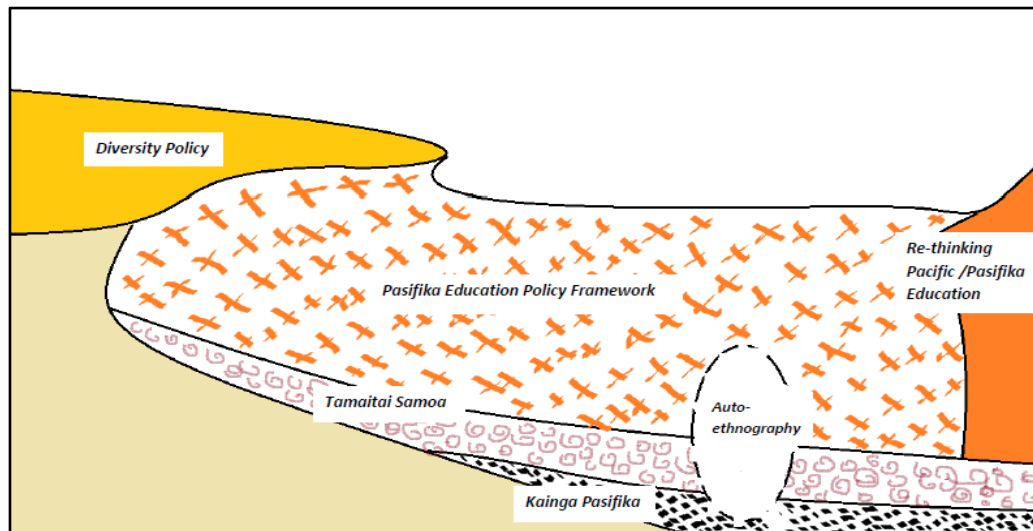
From the perspective of many Pacific/Pasifika cultures, Pacific /Pasifika women carry high status roles as sisters, mothers and aunts (as sisters of parents) within the private domain. From the perspective of these same communities, they carry high status roles as teachers and educators. Until such time more Pasifika men are involved in research as well as teaching and learning across all the formal education sectors within New Zealand (including the academy), the education experiences of Pasifika women remain a crucially important source of further insight and illumination of the education of *all* Pasifika learners. The study's analyses of the personal and professional experiences of education of Pacific/Pasifika women is therefore of even more value.

The context for study was both the process and product of discontinuity – discontinuity being interruptions to the steady development and accumulation of knowledge and in terms of this study, knowledge about the education of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand (please refer to Figure 9). Foucault (1972, p.3) said interruptions come in different forms and levels such as displacements, transformations, ruptures, thresholds, limits and series. The discontinuities that steered and guided this study were education encounters – some of which were displacements caused by shifts and changes in education policy and practice. Consider, for example, the two educative encounters presented in Chapter 2 as part of the theorisation of the research problem which lead to my uncertainties and feelings of displacement about the broader context within which I was working.

Several discontinuities became the focus of analysis of the experiences of Pacific/Pasifika women in Part Four. Some discontinuities were experienced more as reaching thresholds of experience and capacity, such as young

Pasifika learners and their classroom-based experiences, encountering the unknown at the inter-face of teaching and learning (Chapters 7 and Chapters 8). Another discontinuity was experienced as a series of ruptures caused by abrupt institutional and structural change as was the experience of the collective of Pasifika women in Chapter 9.

**Figure 9: The Six Analyses and Discontinuity as Process and Product**



Regardless of their status or nature, what eventuates from a discontinuity is some form of change in the direction, development and even nature of knowledge and understanding. Knowledge is forced into a new phase or mode of development (Foucault, 1972, p.4). Such an event may leave ‘traces’ in specific layers or results in the establishment of a whole new context. This means that identifying the contexts and piecing together the stratigraphic relationships right through to the surface layers, requires a methodological ‘archaeological’ approach to find, identify, and understand the constituent parts of the past (Foucault, 1972, p.7).

The conception and examination of multiple strata was beyond the scope of this study. The sub-surface layers of analysis that this study focused on were situated in the private domain, the domain of communities and individuals - their lived realities and their personal theorising of those realities. Specifically, these were more micro-levels of knowledge generated by the individual and collective experiences of Pacific/Pasifika women. The analyses

within this stratum brought to the surface knowledge that is not necessarily known or valued in the same ways by those outside of the Pacific/Pasifika women's fields of personal interaction. This chapter will endeavour to demonstrate that this knowledge and understanding is of considerable value, and of relevance and value in informing education policy and programmes targeting Pasifika learners in the New Zealand education system.

It is important to bear in mind that discontinuity can be both process and product. In this study, the examination of education policies, for example, involved critique (such as examination of the socio-historical origins of the key discourses within the policy) and challenge to current knowledge and understanding of the policies. New ways of thinking about the policies were an outcome, as well as new theorisations of role and purpose. Similar outcomes emerged from the micro-level analyses. This chapter brings together new knowledge and understandings from the conceptual analyses that were undertaken and the theorising that took place. It will present and discuss what would conventionally be known as the discussion and conclusions of this research. What follows is organised in response to the third and last research question (as outlined in Chapter One) which is: "Now that we know, what do we do?"

In other words, what do we know, in terms of new knowledge and understanding? And what do these new theorisations say to and for the work of educators, policy makers and researchers?

This study has developed five sets of theorisations or sets of insights. These are presented and discussed in detail. Included in each discussion are likely shifts in thinking.

### *New Theorisations / Sets of Insight*

There are five broad areas of new theorisation. The first one is derived from the analyses of the surface – the examination of discourses (as policies) relating to diversity and Pasifika education. The micro-interactions (or the inter-face) between teachers and their Pasifika learners is the focus of the

second broad theorisation. The third theorisation is a reflective summary of the meaning of education to Pacific/Pasifika women. The fourth builds on and extends the hybrid conceptualisation of Pasifika education, and the final area re-visits the concepts of oceanic perspective and agency.

### ***The Politics of Positioning: Pasifika and the Knowledge Economy***

The analysis located within Chapter 4 discussed how New Zealand and other OECD nations are striving to develop formal education systems that are responsive to the changes wrought by globalisation and modernization and presented a case for what was described (earlier on p.127) as

New Zealand's pragmatic (rather than aspirational) view of itself: as working collectively and collaboratively with other like-minded developed nations within the global arena, committed to building education systems that will strengthen economic competitiveness.

The OECD (2005, p.4) recognized that the "collective challenges" nations must address involve "balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and prosperity with social equity" (OECD, 2005, p.4). Using the national school curriculum to illustrate, the analysis in Chapter 4 argued that this discourse is a powerful and dominant influence on education provision and that the national curriculum is evidence of the state's efforts to re-shape the education system into an effective and responsive tool for producing a globally competitive knowledge economy. One can well ask: so where are Pasifika as a multi-ethnic group in relation to this?

The differences in achievement outcomes for Pasifika learners have been a source of national level concern since the mid-1990s – but it is the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that arguably has been the primary driver of the MOE's systematic, sustained and multi-level response since 2001. New Zealand's first PISA outcomes enabled international comparisons which positioned New Zealand's education system as 'high quality, low equity'. When these were examined closely, the MOE identified what was then a very long tail-end of poorly performing New

Zealand students. Of these, was an over-representation of four groupings of students: Maori, Pasifika, special needs and learners from backgrounds of poverty.

The analysis of education policy within Chapter 5 demonstrated that focused education policy targeting Pasifika is to be expected, given that New Zealand's economic development could be adversely affected, especially in the Auckland Region if current levels of Pasifika achievement are not improved with some urgency. The analysis found that the dominant influences on education policies targeting Pasifika learners and communities are (i) the demographic and socio-economic location of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand and (ii) the knowledge economy discourse. In other words, Pasifika education, as constructed by the MOE, is arguably a government strategy to reconcile the potential impact of the Pasifika demographic profile on New Zealand's economic development. While education success for Pasifika peoples may be a shared aspiration for government, the MOE, educators as well as Pasifika peoples, the differing perspectives and worldviews of these groups (as critiqued and discussed in Chapter 6) can result in significant disjunction. These need to be recognized, deeply understood and taken into account.

The editor of *The New Zealand Listener*<sup>68</sup> once wrote

Pacific peoples are immensely innovative...they are upbeat achievers...they are a formidable national asset (Stirling, 2006, p. 5).

In order for such an "asset" to be fully utilised in the development of the knowledge economy, systemic agents of change must give more careful consideration to how this will be facilitated for Pasifika learners by taking into account Pasifika peoples' own aspirations for educational success, and their own understandings and perspectives of formal education. These are likely to be anchored in cultural values and perspectives relating to their

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<sup>68</sup> *The NZ Listener Magazine* is a national weekly periodical which began publication in 1939. It is considered to be one of the top selling magazines in the country, and covers a variety of general topics, including current affairs, political commentary and entertainment.

families, faith and places of origin on the one hand (Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9) and on the other hand, Pasifika learners' negative perceptions of their location within the settings of schools and tertiary education (Chapters 7, 8).

Despite the implicit differences underlying the perspectives of systemic agents of change and in the case of this study, selected Pasifika women towards education, both sides are seeking the same outcome: the success and advancement of Pasifika peoples, with and through formal education, in order to attain greater economic security and well-being. The question one can ask is: is there another way of looking at these all-important demographic trends, patterns and their socio-economic implications?

As stated earlier in Chapter 5, Sutton and Airini (2011, p.2) pointed out that a significant implication of the Pasifika demographic trends was the group's "growing economic and voting power". If average Pasifika wage earnings were to be lifted to levels similar to that of non-Pasifika by 2021, and given the population projections, this would lead to an increase of \$ 4 billion within the New Zealand economy. An even stronger perspective of the positive economic potential of these demographic trends is captured by the concept of demographic dividend already applied in a comprehensive analysis of Maori population trends, and carried out by Jackson for the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER, 2011).

The fundamental concept is as follows: it is derived from the demographic transition model which associates demographic change at national level with technological change. It argues that the industrialised, so-called developed nations are in the fourth and final stage of a transition from rural, agrarian societies (pre-Industrial Revolution) wherein birth and death rates were high and population growth was minimal. According to the model, the transition begins when improvement to living conditions and health care rapidly reduce mortality rates, resulting in sharp increases in population numbers. Fertility rates then begin to decrease due to further improvements to overall standards of living. The labour force increases and for a time, is greater than the population that is dependent on it, (particularly the very young and the

elderly). This means that resources are available “for investment in economic development and family welfare. Other things being equal, per capita income grows more rapidly too. That is the first ‘dividend’ (Lee & Mason, 2006). The first dividend is a lengthy one, “lasting five decades or more” at the level of a nation. The steady decline in fertility levels of the nation over time however, leads to the reduced growth rate and the aging of the labour force – as a result, per capita income will grow more slowly. The first demographic dividend peters out and turns negative. A second dividend however is possible, because according to Lee & Mason (2006) a “population concentrated at older working ages and facing extended period of retirement has a powerful incentive to accumulate assets....whether these assets are invested domestically or abroad, national income rises”.

Note that the first and second dividends are sequential. What is even more important, however is that the demographic dividends do not automatically translate into economic dividends – what is needed is the development and implementation of effective policies in order to take advantage of the window of opportunity that the dividend periods represent. Such policies need to focus on the economic life cycle of the population – given that the “productivity of young adults depends on schooling decisions, employment practices, the timing and level of child-bearing and policies that make it easier for young parents to work” (Lee & Mason, 2006).

The afore-mentioned New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) report applying the demographic dividend concept to the Maori demographic profile argued that the concept was applicable at the “sub-population level, particularly for a relatively large sub-population such as Maori” (2011, p. 8). The Maori population in New Zealand is more than twice the size of Pasifika and is socially, historically and politically situated within New Zealand in very different ways than Pasifika. The Pasifika population is structurally similar, however, to the Maori population in terms of its youthfulness, and positioned against a majority (European heritage) population with a significant difference in age structure – because it (the European/Pakeha population) is aging. NZIER’s analysis of the implications of this structural



difference between the Maori and the majority/dominant European-heritage populations may therefore offer useful insights. The NZIER (2011) report argued that the demographic dividend concept was of value because with an aging labour force in the majority population, a shortfall presents itself which youthful sub-populations have the potential for filling. According to the report (NZIER, 2011, p. 7) more research is needed because “the extent to which it can be realised depends on proactive investment in social capital, particularly education”. The report is referring, of course, to the need for adequate investment and “an appropriate policy environment” in the first dividend in order not to “compromise the realisation of the second dividend”.

The Pasifika demographic profile has the potential to be a sequence of demographic dividends. This gives further impetus to the need for a strong, relevant policy environment. The MOE’s national policy-framework for Pasifika education is an established, comprehensive framework built up over more than a decade. It is monitored and reviewed – and as established in the analysis in Chapter 5, it is a framework that has established strong collaborative partnerships between several national education agencies. The education policy environment for Pasifika is the strongest it has ever been – and at a strategic level, given the direction that the state is pursuing, it is a highly relevant one. Perhaps grafting in a demographic dividends perspective of Pasifika within education will not only sharpen the focus of policy, but also shift and accelerate developments.

What would be particularly useful is for Pasifika peoples themselves (or more particularly, those positioned within systemic agents of change) to extend and strengthen their own knowledge base with a more ‘helicopter’ perspective of education, one informed not only by the pragmatic strategic approach of national policy but also more innovative economic perspectives and analyses of the demographic realities which are driving the state’s response to education provision for Pasifika. Pasifika educators who are positioned to give advice and even collaborate with decision-making processes within systemic agents of change, should seek such perspectives in

addition to nurturing and deepening their own value-informed personal theorisations of education for Pasifika.

*The Micro-Interactions at the Inter-Face between Teachers and their Pasifika Students*

The analysis within Chapter 5 drew attention to the complexities of identity development. It discussed a framework for identifying contemporary forms of Pasifika identity and advocating for their validity and legitimacy (refer to pages 150-154). The sub-heading of 'The Politics of Pasifika Identities' clearly captures the political nature of recognising and valuing such forms of identity formation. What is important to recognise and take into account is that the identity formation of Pasifika young people is not just a matter of cultural back ground and experience and is not restricted to notions of traditional Pacific culture and language. The concept of Pasifika education (as in the hybrid conception) ensures that diverse Pasifika identities and values, and processes of identity formation are recognised and supported. This is inclusive of contemporary forms of Pasifika identity.

Another important consideration of identity is how Pasifika students' see themselves as learners. This is a significant and more specific aspect of their self-perceptions, one which is a serious constraint if Pasifika students carry negative perceptions of themselves as learners. A crucial element of one's identity as a Pasifika learner could well be one of racialisation. This term takes cognisance of the nuances of race, and the complexities of marginalisation. It appears that for Pasifika young people, one of the realities of identifying (or being identified) as a Pasifika learner in the context of New Zealand schools involves responding to values and beliefs about being brown and all that it might entail. This bears further investigation.

Perhaps the more important problem, however, is the discomfort that some systemic agents of change (such as educators) may experience in any discussion that appears to focus on racial differences. Generally speaking, in education, New Zealand practitioners, policymakers and researchers are very uncomfortable about engaging in such discussions perhaps in the belief that

(i) race and racism is not a concern in education and (ii) one runs the risk of being judged as racist in any discussion of differences attributed to physical differences and the constructed beliefs associated with these. As will be discussed shortly, the pedagogical response to diversity in New Zealand classrooms is culturally responsive pedagogy. If educators, policy makers and researchers pay close enough attention to the voices of Pasifika students, they will be reassured to find that yes, culture counts – but startled perhaps to discover that so does race.

Cultural responsive pedagogy is a discourse that appears to be an explicit strategic response to Pasifika education. Notions of caring relationships, the importance of teachers understanding their Pasifika learners are accepted fixtures within this discourse. Arguably however it is all too easy for such terms to be understood and responded to in primarily superficial ways – one uninformed by an appreciation of nuances and complexities which this study has set out to identify and examine, and without the support of robust and rigorous conceptualisations. Terms such as ‘cultural responsiveness pedagogy’, ‘caring relationships’ and ‘understanding the learner’ can mean everything - and nothing.

There is also the possibility of a hidden risk within the discourse of culturally responsive pedagogy - that is the risk of a subtle form of deficit theorising related to how teachers/educators ‘see’ and understand the concept of learner identity. For example: if the quality and nature of the relationships that are developed between teachers and their Pasifika learners are indeed recognised as being fundamental and important (as well as being the responsibility of teachers to develop) , then teachers need to invest time and effort in getting to know their Pasifika students. This will involve engaging with the students’ personal identities. Being Pasifika (and the specific ethnic and socio-cultural affiliations) will be at the crux of these identities – at least that is what teachers are very likely to assume, and PLD programmes targeting Pasifika learners are most likely going to be teaching teachers that this is the case. Therefore the opportunity arises for teachers to address questions such as: What does Pasifika mean? What is involved in having such

an identity, or an identity as a Tongan, a Samoan, as a Niue or any other specific Pasifika identity?

The possession of a strong personal identity is perceived as knowing oneself – particularly in cultural terms. In the case of teachers trying to understand their Pasifika students better in order to develop stronger relationships with them, how are they seeing their students? Are they seeing students in terms of loss and deficit if their students do not have strengths in the language of their parents, be it Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island Maori or one or other Pacific language? Are they seeing students in terms of loss and deficit if the students are not confident in the cultural customs and protocols of their parents, grandparents – and have little or no sense (at that point in time) of authentic connection to their ancestral Pacific homelands? In other words, for teachers and educators, what constitutes having a strong Pasifika learner identity? Does it *have* to be built upon a strong foundation of a specific Pacific cultural tradition? Or is there flexibility, such as a foundation built on a strong sense of oneself as an evolving Pasifika person, a work in progress even, with strong connections to that which is contemporary, and curiosity and interest in that which is indigenous and traditional?

As demonstrated by the literature reviewed in Chapter 8, teachers play a crucial role in establishing the kind of relationships that facilitate Pasifika learners' efforts to engage and succeed with learning. It is not just a matter of creating a safe space within which to learn. It needs to be a space within which Pasifika learners have opportunities to develop the items of cultural stock they may not currently have in their possession such as familiarity with academic language, and critical thinking skills. It is also a space within which they can learn how to convert items of stock already in their possession into viable assets rather than liabilities to learning. This becomes part of an explicit process of identifying and acquiring the powerful knowledge and skills needed for success.

Finally, consider the set of questions posed at the end of Chapter 8 – which included questions along the lines of: are there differences in the reflections

(or voices) of younger Pasifika learners compared to older ones? Are there differences between in the experiences and perspectives of Pasifika learners in different suburbs and cities in New Zealand? How do Pasifika boys think of themselves as learners? What are the ethnic-specific experiences of other Pasifika such as those who identify as Niue, Cook Islands, Fijian and others? A set of questions like this, posed for educators, reflects the diversity of possible experience (and perspective) under the so-called Pasifika umbrella (Alton-Lee, 2004). As Anae (2007, p.3) states

...the changing demographics of the Pacific population which is growing not only in numbers...is that what we have now is a complex Pacific cohort consisting of Pacific immigrants/recent arrivals, NZ-born Pacific people...of mixed heritages...a situation where ethnicity has taken on new salience..

With reference to research in education, Anae (2007, p.3) states

I contend that much Pacific research in New Zealand has glossed over and ignored the cultural complexities of not only the multi-ethnic nature of Pacific communities, but also the intra-ethnic nuances of the diverse groupings and identities of Pacific peoples in New Zealand...Until this is addressed Pacific research...will be ineffective and lack ability for transformative change for a component of New Zealand's population which remains marginalised.

A conceptualisation of the Inter-Face between Pasifika learners and their teachers known as the Ethnic-Interface model (Samu, 1998; Samu, 2006) has been used by several researchers (Coxon, et al, 2002; Rio, 2003; Filipo, 2005; Anae, 2007) and proven useful. The key underlying assumptions of this model are: the critical connection between culture and schooling; that teachers who draw on it are those with a strong sense of social responsibility and commitment to the development of self-awareness; and awareness of the dynamics of power and privilege. Anae (2007, p.12) has described the Ethnic-Interface model as "...a tool or a framework to enable educators to unravel and take complexities into account".

### *The Meaning of Education to Pacific/Pasifika Women*

In terms of crystalizing understanding about the meaning of education to Pacific/Pasifika women - consider the women of *Tamaitai Samoa*. One wonders why these women's stories of education change are so dissimilar to other women's narratives within the analysis in Chapter 7. One reason for the different tenor of the reflections could be the different historical periods of time the different women left Samoa to go to New Zealand for schooling. The *Tamaitai Samoa* women left in the mid-1940s and 1950s. In 1945, the population of Pacific Polynesians in New Zealand was a mere 2,159. In 1956, the population had risen to 8,103. By 1966 it had jumped to just over 26,000. In other words, students coming to New Zealand in the 1940s/ 1950s did not migrate into strong, negative pre-existing social constructions of Pacific Islanders. The great migratory influx from Samoa, Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands, and subsequent settlement (and socio-economic location) had not yet begun. Any pre-existing perceptions of Pacific peoples, as limited as they might have been, would not have included the following description, published in a newspaper education series in 1976:

For too long the community has looked the other way. We have been amused and a little patronising about their quaintness, their old-style religion, worried, too, about their violence and their boozing.

But about the problems we cause them, and they cause us, we don't want to know ...

Yet when the history of Auckland in the '70s is written later in this century, this could be the issue historians say the city failed to see or neglected to deal with.

Not rapid rail, or urban sprawl, but the growth of decadent suburbs, ghetto accommodation for unskilled Island labour, either enticed here by agents for industry, or drawn by their own unsophisticated ambition. (S.E.P.<sup>69</sup>, 1976, p.5).

Any efforts to cross into New Zealand culture and society in the 1970s (and later decades) even on a temporary basis as a student would have been a

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<sup>69</sup> S.E.P.= Short Education Publications

very different experience, compared to that of the Samoan students of the 1940s and 1950s.

The overall personal effect of my own education experiences in the context of an international school in the United Kingdom carry similarities to the voice of the lonely, isolated Tongan girl in an Auckland Catholic girls school in the 1960s; the voice of the Samoan church minister's daughter from a small village community who moved into the elite secondary school in the urban area of Samoa in the 1950s; and the voice of a young New Zealand-born Pasifika/ Samoan woman experiencing schooling 21<sup>st</sup> century Auckland. They are not alone – the work of Siope (2010) and Mose (2012) are very recent studies showing that (some) Pasifika students are still experiencing disjunction. These voices signal something significant: the impact of crucial, high-stakes education experiences on the inner dimension such as self-identity, self-esteem and self-efficacy. The analyses within Chapters 7, 8 and 9 demonstrate that education is without doubt, a troubling culture crossing into new and different settings and contexts. For the Pasifika women in the analyses, education appears to be journeys into the margins and fringes of westernised learning settings. The study shows and demonstrates what these are, and how they continue to be (at least initially), disabling social spaces to be within and to navigate through on one's own.

In her autobiographic, critical reflection of her formal education experiences, Tanielu (2000), speaking explicitly as a Samoan woman presents an argument for the need to attend to the development of deeper, contextualised understandings of Samoan perspectives of education. This argument could also extend to young, urban-raised, New Zealand born Pacific peoples –that is, Pasifika perspectives of education (in all their possible variations).

At present, when Pasifika young people undergo formal education, particularly at senior school level and move on to higher education, what are they crossing into? What is the nature of their education metamorphosis? Even more importantly, one must ask whether their self-appointed navigators (parents, teachers, educators, academics, policy-makers) are

encouraging and even socialising them into certain expectations, ideas and beliefs about schooling, which do not 'match' or align with the different time and place they are being educated within. Have Pasifika parents and educators been party to the successful transmission of all-important cultural values such as *tautua* to the younger generations of Pasifika learners, assuming that this would be an asset in their own education journeys?

While there are apparent similarities in the individual experiences of formal schooling described and discussed in each *tala mai fafo*, there are also the differences – the difference between the past experiences of the older Pasifika/Pacific generations, and those of the current generation. Pasifika learners, such as the poet of 'Brown Brother' and the student in the fifth *tala mai fafo* are members of significant-sized cohorts in the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Auckland secondary schools they attend. English IS their first language. They grew up in this country – it is more theirs than the island homelands of their parents, even grandparents. Have educators (such as teachers), policymakers, researchers and the like ignored or made assumptions about the impact of education experiences for Pasifika youth on their inner dimension, and on their identity formations?

Martin's ideas are useful because of the recognition that education "is uncertain and often unpredictable" (2007, p7). An educational metamorphosis is a culture crossing which impacts on personal identity. It involves an identity change that is shaped, via the educative process, by culture, society and circumstance. One wonders, then, if education changes or metamorphoses can be managed, steered or even, directed? In order to make the changes more deliberate, less ad hoc and incidental? And if so, how might these to be monitored? Is it possible to coach and mentor people experiencing such crossings, in order for the process to carry less risk and to be less "harsh and brutal" (Martin, 2007, p73). Is it possible to nurture and support young people, who have not yet learnt from prior experiences, in ways that enable them to develop the kind of cultural stock that might better equip them to be more savvy, astute and even strategic; to self-anaesthetize, if need be, in order to protect themselves from developing negative,



undesirable stock such as an inferiority complex, loss of confidence and insecurity and reduced self-efficacy?

It is time for us as Pasifika educators to re-think the ongoing processes of formal education that shaped the generation before us, our own and now, our children. We can ask the question that Martin asks, which is

Can unwanted or undesirable educational transformations be avoided?  
Can policies and practices be devised to alleviate the alienation, fear, guilt and shame that so often accompany even those metamorphoses that represent improvement? Not if the very existence of these radical changes of identity is barely acknowledged, and not if their dual character remains hidden from view (2007, p. 3).

The analyses within Part Four about Pacific/Pasifika (mainly Samoan) women, and perspectives of education, demonstrate that certain beliefs about the meaning of education persist across time and place. Formal education is important for one's family – and not just in terms of economic dividends. It is a means of enhancing that family's social status, and how that family defines itself in relation to wider social networks. Success in formal education enables one to serve the collective – that is the real purpose of education.

Such beliefs about formal education, and the qualifications that result, have taken almost mythical proportions within some families. It is mythical because there is a tendency for families to be uncritical about the education that is being experienced and received by their children. Some sons and daughters may pay a profound personal price as they quietly, earnestly and obediently pursue higher levels of education in order that they too may better serve their families and communities. It is a myth because of the (arguably) extraordinary motivation driving the efforts of such individuals, despite the difficult internal culture crossings such experiences have required. The price is paid, in quiet private discomfort and pain, for a greater, perceived good – service to kin and community.

In another paper written, Foliaki (1993) reflected critically on her professional work as a community worker. She describes her work in the Tongan community as involving

...getting parents and students together, getting parents to understand what was going on in the educational system and how that might come into direct conflict with the values they had at home. I hoped they were going to become less authoritarian and allow more discussion (p.103).

But she also wanted to tell teachers (of Tongan students) “more about what is going on in the homes” because of the situation of

Tongan parents and New Zealand teachers, knowing very little about each other, both attempting to influence and teach these children and very often contradicting each other. The child is caught in the middle (p.103).

One wonders now if the situation is one where not only do *teachers* not know enough about their Pasifika learners (and their parents), but *Pasifika parents* do not know or understand the various realities of their children. If we do make an effort to develop deeper, contextualised understandings of Pasifika perspectives of education over time and place, as well as across the generations, we may be taken by surprise by the multiple realities that exist, influence, and shape Pasifika young people in Aotearoa New Zealand today – unfamiliar realities that contribute to the all-too familiar isolation of individuals within the pedagogical space of the classroom.

### ***Reflecting further on the (Hybrid) Conceptualisation of Pasifika Education***

A rich and robust conceptualization of Pacific education developed by educators and scholars in the Pacific for education within the Pacific (IOE, 2002) was given minor adaptations in order to produce a contextualised conceptualisation of Pasifika education (refer to Chapter 6, where it was referred to as a ‘hybrid’ concept). This was presented to final year Bachelor of Education students by Samu, Mara & Siteine (2008) with the intention of using it as a framework for students to critique national education policies in terms of the implications for Pasifika learners and communities in New

Zealand. Following the lead taken by their professional kin in the Pacific, Samu et al (2008) conceptualised Pasifika education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As stated earlier (p. 180), with reference to what was written by Samu et al (2008) for the afore-mentioned book chapter

.....the purpose of this conceptual adaptation is our survival and sustainability as Pasifika peoples (citizens, residents) in New Zealand. We expressed the expectation that the education and development of Pasifika peoples must enhance Pasifika transformative capability, as well as the education success of learners, in order to help them serve their families and contribute to New Zealand society. Such an education must be grounded in the diverse Pasifika cultures of New Zealand, and ensure consistent critique of the values and assumptions underlying education policies – those that specifically target Pasifika peoples, as well as those that are more generic, and directed to all.

The framework, however, holds significant potential for application over and beyond a pre-service teacher education course, as a critical framework informed by pertinent Pacific/Pasifika aspirations and perspectives. This was demonstrated in Chapter 6, with the application of the framework in the development of a personal code of ethical practice (refer to the sub-headed section 'Insider, Outsider and Back Again', p.180). Upon further post-analysis reflection, the conceptual hybrid can be fine-tuned and sharpened even more. The result is the following contemporary conceptualisation of Pasifika education:

- Its purpose is to support the survival and sustainability as Pasifika peoples, and enhance their transformative capability
- The main goal is the success of Pasifika learners within the New Zealand education system – learners equipped with the knowledge, skills and competencies (translated into viable qualifications) that will enable them to serve their families and contribute to New Zealand society and its economy
- Pasifika education is a process grounded in diverse Pasifika cultures – in the belief this is a source of empowerment that will situate Pasifika peoples in positions of strength enabling them to be responsive to changing externalities
- Pasifika education is a process that involves critique of the values and assumptions underlying education policies and initiatives at all levels.

The outcomes of each of the analyses demonstrate the need for systemic agents of change to hold more sophisticated, deeply theorised conceptualisations of Pasifika education –because what is currently in place does not align well with Pasifika peoples experiences, expectations and aspirations of education. For the MOE, Pasifika education is a high priority, strategic response (refer to Chapter 5). And yet, as demonstrated by leading Pacific educators and scholars within the Pacific Region, Pacific education is an aspirational concept based on a vision of ‘for the Pacific by the Pacific’ – which can easily be reframed for Pasifika peoples in the context of New Zealand for the same reasons – to encapsulate their contextualised values and aspirations.

The Kainga Pasifika is one such example. They are a contextualised group of Pasifika women. Their response to structural and institutional change was a deliberate and purposeful effort to survive and thrive as Pasifika women in the academe. Their underlying motivation was to serve their wider communities, in the belief that the education of Pasifika (including their own further education) will lead to the transformation and empowerment of Pasifika communities within Aotearoa New Zealand. Developing themselves as a strategically responsive academic group required the articulation of shared values and concepts. The analysis in Chapter 9 demonstrated how integral their cultural values were to strengthening themselves as a collective and learning to recognise and respond to contextual change on their own terms. As a community of practice, the Kainga Pasifika demonstrated the importance of critiquing new policies and procedures within their faculty, particularly in terms of the possible implications for themselves, Pasifika staff throughout their faculty and especially Pasifika learners. The analysis contained within Chapter 9 also provided indirect insights to the faculty itself, and its construction of Pasifika education. Fundamentally it constructs Pasifika education in terms of wider university strategic goals. This in turn shifts (or contracts) in response to fiscal parameters and academic measures (particularly in terms of scholarship).

### *Oceanic Perspective and Agency*

This study has examined the meaning of Pasifika education in a number of ways using different approaches. It is the contention of this study that, within the public and private domains, there needs to emerge discourses that reflect astute understanding and appreciation of the economic and social terrain within which Pasifika peoples are raising their families and growing their communities. A helicopter perspective ensures we look up and outwards, in order to be better informed as collectives – collectives of family, of church or other significant Pasifika community organisations as well as educators and scholars.

There is evidence of a positive shift in the ways that Pasifika learners are constructed and written and talked about – discourses that purposefully employ terms such as ‘Pasifika achievement’ and ‘Pasifika success’ (for example, Sutton and Airini, 2011; Mose, 2012). This represents an important, constructive shift away from deficit language; detached language, even ‘neutral’ language (where Pasifika disappear altogether) – but one wonders if this can be evolved further. The language of culturally responsive pedagogies is becoming embedded within education practice, and with it the risk of a subtle yet significant form of deficit theorising. This needs to be countered. How can such discourses be evolved? How should other risky ones be countered?

Western theoretical frameworks may be useful, enlightening, even inspiring – but these theoretical approaches and constructs should not be the only influences on the process of conceptualising Pacific/Pasifika experiences. Indigenous and minority scholars have engaged in what Smith (2004) described as “...multiple challenges to the epistemic basis of the dominant scientific paradigm of research and these have led to the development of approaches that have offered a promise of counter-hegemonic work” (p5). I have looked up, out and away from the metropolitan setting in which I live, and the academy in which I work, searching for ideas and insights that I can draw on, from Pacific thinkers, scholars and academics particularly from

those who have established formidable regional and international reputations. First generation post-colonial Pacific intellectuals (in terms of the academy, and publications in English) made their mark in the 1970s, 1980s within the Pacific Region with writing that Wendt described as "...a revolt against the hypocritical/ exploitative aspects of our traditional/commercial and religious hierarchies, colonialism and neo-colonialism and the degrading values being imposed from outside and by some elements in our societies" (1976, p. 59).

My long philosophical exchange with discourses of Pacific/ Pasifika education has resulted in insights that I believe to be intellectually and conceptually challenging. The theoretical tools that make up this composite approach include post-colonial theorising; socio-cultural learning theories; and other philosophers whose discipline-base are other forms of philosophy (including Pacific/Pasifika epistemologies). The outcome has been the development of new conceptual tools –tools of explanation and of analysis. The last broad theorisation revisits and reflects on the relative value and utility of new concepts as oceanic agency and collective individualism.

These concepts have their origins in lived reality - for example, within my learning experiences as an academic staff member in the Faculty, shared with the Kainga Pasifika. These concepts (such as collective individualism, oceanic agency and perhaps even *niu* epistemologies) have become more focused and theorised as a consequence of my research. What is vital to note are the origins of these concepts within strategies of resistance, meaning-making, adaptation/ accommodation, and identity formation. They have resulted from Pasifika women's efforts at ownership over their measured and calculated responses to structural and institutional change. I have the confidence to argue, and the ability to demonstrate, that institutional change in the Faculty resulted in the academic and professional marginalisation of some groups of staff - Pasifika being an example.

However I do not see marginality as a position of deprivation. I believe that informed (research-based), reflective, analytical voices from the margins of

an institution or an organisation, should be seen as a resource, even a gift. Such voices can provide an agent of systemic change, with alternative standpoints or perspectives of itself. These represent opportunities for insight, and the illumination of additional truths that on their own, agents of systemic change do not have the capacity to obtain.

I have drawn on Pacific conceptualisations from the past in order to provide an arguably deepened perspective of several different fundamental features of key concepts and discourses surrounding the education of Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. Given the intellectual activism and legacy of the Pacific scholars, I have no doubts that my research and writing about education of and for Pasifika in New Zealand must endeavour to be informed by what my colleagues and I have referred to as 'an Oceanic perspective' (Samu & Siteine, 2006; Siteine & Samu, 2009). We attribute this perspective to Hauofa (1993) who conceptualised the Pacific as "a sea of islands" rather than "islands in a far sea". This is "a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships" (Hauofa, 1993, p.7). An Oceanic perspective draws attention to ancient Pacific peoples' ways of seeing their world. As Hauofa declared:

If we look at the myths, legends and oral traditions, and the cosmologies of the peoples of Oceania, it will become evident that they did not conceive of their world in such microscopic proportions ... their world was anything but tiny (1993, p.7).

An Oceanic perspective of education can be developed even further. Wendt's conceptualisation of a New Oceania included counter-hegemonic features. He advocated, not for the revival of past cultures but "for the creation of new cultures which are free of that taint of colonialism and based firmly on our own pasts" (1976, p.53). An Oceanic perspective, therefore, encompasses new forms of expression and identity, and can absorb creative 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches for resolving issues and concerns of Pasifika peoples and Pasifika education in 21<sup>st</sup> century Aotearoa New Zealand.

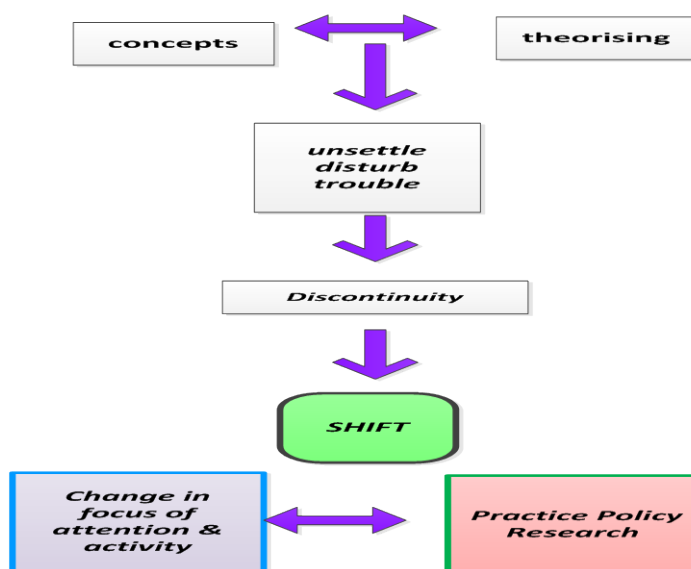
I can also apply an Oceanic perspective to the process I am currently engaged with as an emerging scholar. Nabobo-Baba's (2004) description of "... the

usual feelings of isolation and the helplessness that comes from being minorities in academia” (p.19) and of the intellectual and spiritual aspects of that isolation, resonate strongly with me. In seeking for and applying the ideas of established Pacific scholars, I feel both connected and anchored by the authentic network of Pacific knowledge and authority.

### *Disruptions and Shifts in Thinking*

The problem that this study has responded to is the problem of a lack of conceptual clarity, even dysconsciousness, in relation to diversity and Pasifika education. In terms of this research project, the five theorisations or sets of insights are products which have the potential to unsettle, disturb and trouble the meaning constructs of those who play pivotal roles in the education and development of Pasifika learners – as educators; as researchers; and as policymakers. Challenging habits of mind can lead to shifts in thinking (please refer to Figure 10).

*Figure 10: Addressing the Meaning Constructs of Systemic Agents of Change*



At the level of the individual, shifts in thinking can lead to changes to meaning constructs (Stone, 1992). When the meaning constructs of an educator, researcher or policy analyst are affected, he or she may pay close and critical attention to the beliefs and understandings underlying his or her



practices. This could lead to new decisions relating to education practice; research and policy.

At the level of the national education system, this study, through analyses of national education policy on the one hand, and Pacific/Pasifika women's motivations for participating in education on the other, has examined the problem of limited and partial understandings of Pasifika as a multi-ethnic group. The study also illuminates complex yet nuanced issues related to the unintended simplification and misapprehension of Pasifika learners and their communities by educators', policymakers' and researchers' – which can impact on crucial decision-making in these areas.

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