

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: EMANCIPATORY POSSIBILITIES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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In this article, I argue that emancipatory possibilities for Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand, rely on structural changes that enable them to have control over resources, decision making, and meaning, and that emancipation is a journey traveled by oppressed groups as they exercise their collective agency. The 1990s development of *Pāngarau*, the national mathematics curriculum policy in the medium of Māori, provides the context for this discussion. Recent developments indicate that state structures have shifted towards giving Māori more control in curriculum writing.

Key words: collective agency, state structures, Indigenous curriculum development, New Zealand education, Māori education, mathematics education,

Dans cet article, l'auteure soutient que les possibilités d'émancipation des Maori, le peuple autochtone de la Nouvelle-Zélande, reposent sur des changements structureaux qui leur permettent d'avoir la haute main sur des ressources, la prise de décisions et l'orientation générale et que l'émancipation est un chemin parcouru par des groupes opprimés qui exercent une action collective. L'élaboration dans les années 1990 de *Pāngarau*, le curriculum national de mathématiques en maori, fournit le contexte de l'analyse présentée ici. Des faits récents indiquent que les structures de l'État évoluent vers la remise d'un contrôle accru aux Maori pour ce qui est de l'élaboration des programmes d'études.

Mots clés : action collective, structures étatiques, élaboration de programmes d'études par des autochtones, éducation en Nouvelle-Zélande, éducation dispensée aux Maori, enseignement des mathématiques

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<sup>1</sup>Tribal affiliations of the author

Māori are the Indigenous people of Aotearoa<sup>1</sup> New Zealand. Pakeha (non-Māori) achieved dominance during the early years of colonisation in the 1800s. Colonisation processes and the education system rejected Māori language and culture because they were deemed to be obstacles for the educational and social progress of Māori. Māori-Pakeha social relations since then have largely been typified by Pakeha dominance. Māori as a group have been marginalised through legislation and educational policies, although some Māori became implicated in their own hegemonic positioning.

Māori have not always been compliant or passive recipients of these policies; like Indigenous peoples around the globe, they had “well-developed strategies of resistance” (Stewart-Harawira, 2005, p. 81). Although Māori eagerly sent their children to European-based schools to learn new knowledge and skills to enhance their own knowledge base, they were also active in writing to the provincial, and later the central, Education Department to protest the moralising and manual nature of the curriculum taught to their children (Simon, & Smith, 1998). Groups of Māori parents have throughout the years raised their voices about the absence of Māori knowledge in the curriculum and the marginalisation of their language from formal schooling (Adams, Clarke, Codd, O’Neill, Openshaw, & Waitere-Ang, 2001; Durie, 1998; Simon, 1990).

The 1970s saw the reassertion of traditional pedagogies and values become central strategies of resistance by Māori groups (Stewart-Harawira, 2005). By the 1980s a strong movement had emerged for the renaissance of Māori language and culture. Smith (2003) alleges that Māori conscientization witnessed “a shift away from [Māori] wanting things to be done to them, to doing things for themselves; a shift away from an emphasis on reactive politics to and an emphasis on being more proactive” (p. 2). The state supported this renaissance at one level through being more inclusive and consultative with Māori, but at another level few if any major structural changes occurred, that is, changes in the economic power or ideological structures. I argue in this article that emancipatory possibilities for Māori rely on structural changes that give Māori more control over resources, decision making, and meaning.

The question I have explored in this article is: How have Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, used their agency to exercise power, that is, to resist or accommodate in national curriculum policy development? I have used the term agency to denote reflection and action that involves consciously or unconsciously challenging and contesting (i.e., resisting) the formal structures to intervene or bring about changes in these structures (McMurphy-Pilkington, 2004a). Accommodation is a willingness to adjust or modify one's actions in response to the needs of someone else, or to be adaptable enough to allow something to happen without a major change.

#### AN INDIGENOUS CASE STUDY

I consider this research question as a case study in the context of the development of Pāngarau (mathematics), the first national document in the Māori language. This question arises from a larger qualitative research project, undertaken by the writer (McMurphy-Pilkington, 2004a), that examined the development of Pāngarau in the medium of Māori in the early 1990s. In this larger study, I explored the micro-politics of the policy actors involved in Pāngarau development, including their intentions, their engagement with state structures, and some of the outcomes of their activities. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 17 participants, mainly Māori educators, who were involved directly (as curriculum writers) or indirectly (in a formal advisory role or in a state overseer capacity), interviewing some participants, like the contracted lead curriculum developer, more than once. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and presented as narrative voices to justify the research findings. As the research writer and Māori, I was an interested observer rather than an insider to the development process. In this article, I report on one aspect of this larger study.

Critical theory and Kaupapa Māori approaches underpin this research; the stance that I take is that curriculum development is a contested process among competing interest groups. As Apple (2003) argues, the official knowledge contained in curriculum policy is the result of compromises and conflicts between the state and civil society, in this instance between the state and a group of Māori writers.

Māori researchers have a strong attraction for critical theories because critical theorists question the inequalities and social malfunctions; they are committed to make changes towards a more just and fair society (G. Smith, 1997; L. Smith, 1999). Thus human agency is a focus within critical theory. Indigenous scholars including Māori have developed Indigenous critical theories in response to researchers who have historically regarded Indigenous peoples as inferior objects of study “and whose research has been applied to the benefit of all but those whom they researched” (Stewart-Harawira, 2005, p. 21).

Kaupapa Māori theory is one such critical theory approach that examines resistance and struggle, and has an emancipatory focus (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; G. Smith, 1997; L. Smith, 1999). It is recognized that Indigenous struggle is neither singular nor homogenous, and that there is a need to struggle on several levels and in several sites, often simultaneously. There is an attempt to challenge unequal power relations and dominant/subordinate politics, and to work towards economic and structural changes (Smith, 2003). It is therefore transformative. Kaupapa Māori theory promotes the validity of Māori language, knowledge, and culture and creates political space to enable and legitimise the centring of matters Māori. Further space is given over to Māori voices that have long been silenced in the retelling of history.

A brief overview of the historical background of curriculum development and Māori education in Aotearoa New Zealand is a necessary part of understanding Māori involvement in policy development. Selected aspects of the development of Pāngarau are discussed in this article, where Māori voices demonstrate evidence of the exercise of power, resistance, and accommodation in their struggle for some control over resources, decision making, and meaning during the policy development process (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2004a). According to Foucault (1990), resistance arises out of the exercise of power, and the notion of resistance links to people’s ability as human agents to act in social situations. In the final section a brief discussion of current developments indicates that state structures have shifted towards enabling more control for Māori in national curriculum development.

## HISTORICAL ASPECTS

### *Curriculum Development and Education for Māori*

In the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, Aotearoa New Zealand's education system was built on an academic, formalised, and hierarchical structure with a centralised top-down system of curriculum. The curriculum, written in English, was controlled by external examinations and consistency was reinforced through school inspectors and officers from the Department of Education. Teachers' roles in curriculum development were minimal.

Māori children were educated in missionary schools from 1814 until 1867 when they attended Native Schools set up under the 1867 Native Schools Act (Simon, 1990). These Native schools operated largely under Pakeha-defined (non-Māori) structures, with curriculum and values using a Pakeha cultural perspective. The ultimate objective of the Native schools was to Europeanise Māori by instilling those norms and values that the dominant Pakeha group deemed desirable (Simon, 1990; Stephenson, 2006). Non-Māori teachers in Native schools were expected to take on the role of state agents in the inculcation of Pakeha middle-class norms not only at school but also within the entire Māori community. They did so with varying levels of success; Māori language and culture still remained strong in some rural areas, less so in the more populated towns. The 1877 Education Act established a national education system for all New Zealand children. Māori children attended either state schools or the rural Native schools. Māori language was banned in schools from the late 1800s (Ka'ai, 2004).

The colonization in Aotearoa New Zealand resonates with other Indigenous groups who have engaged in struggles to retain their culture and historical identities in the face of cultural domination in educational systems that "deny, distort, and destroy indigenous cultures" (Fenelon & Le Beau, 2006, p. 22; for other examples see Cajete, 1999; Castellano, Davis, & Lahache, 2000; Lipka, 1998).

Until the 1980s, curricula were written in English and intended for all New Zealanders including Māori. There were no formal curriculum statements written in the Māori language, although there was a Māori language syllabus, mainly written in English, for those communities

wanting to include some Māori language and culture. If Māori teachers were involved in curriculum development, it was usually as a minority member of a consultative group, or working under the supervision and direction of non-Māori Ministry of Education (MOE) policy makers.

A national meeting of Māori elders was called in 1980 to address concerns about the decline of the Māori language, as indicated in Benton's (1979) report. After much discussion, the elders returned to their tribal areas to set up *Te Kohanga Reo*, early childhood language nests, to save the language (Durie, 1998; Ka'ai, 2004). In *Te Kohanga Reo*, babies and young children, along with some of their parents, learned Māori through language immersion from elders and those fluent in Māori. *Te Kohanga Reo* blossomed around the country to well over 500 centres in six years (Jenkins, 1994).

A group of Māori parents, who were concerned that their children's Māori language was not being maintained when they left *Te Kohanga Reo*, began the first *Kura Kaupapa Māori* (Māori medium) school in 1985. *Kura Kaupapa Māori* like *Te Kohanga Reo* began outside the state system, funded by Māori (Durie, 1998; Jenkins, 1994; Smith, 1997). *Kura Kaupapa Māori* not only incorporates Māori language and structures but it also provides a critique of the existing state schooling policies. In starting their own education initiatives, Māori parents were saying state education was not meeting Māori needs and was failing Māori children (Smith, 1997). Features of the *Kura Kaupapa Māori* include teaching and learning occurring within a Māori framework, spiritual dimensions of the learners are given important consideration, and Māori is the medium of instruction.

After political lobbying by Māori and supportive non-Māori, the *Kura Kaupapa* movement was incorporated into, and funded by, the state system (Ka'ai, 2004; Smith, 1997). The number of *Kura Kaupapa Māori* schools has grown with state and Māori community support. In becoming a part of the state system, both *Te Kohanga Reo* and *Kura Kaupapa Māori* have given up some of their autonomy because they are now subject to controls by the state, for example through funding and national curriculum requirements. *Kura Kaupapa Māori* is chosen by only about 20 per cent of Māori; 80 per cent of Māori families send their children to state public schools.

## POLITICAL AND CURRICULUM CHANGES

The election of the Labour party in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1984 saw the beginning of a neo-liberal transformation (Adams, et al., 2001; Jesson, 2001). This ideological shift brought about major reforms from the mid 1980s in many of the activities of the state. Because New Zealand Treasury was of the opinion that the middle level of governmental bureaucratic structures was costly and unnecessary, sections of the state such as the Curriculum Division of the Department of Education were downsized. In line with new public management models, an increased emphasis occurred on a separation of policy advice from policy implementation, and a separation of funding from providers (Adams, et al., 2001). Policy advice and policy development became services provided to the state through the mechanism of external contracting. Contracted agents delivered curriculum policy to specifications set by the Ministry of Education (MOE), for a price, and in a particular time frame, both of which were specified in a contract (Jesson, 2001).

Throughout the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education contracted out the writing of national policies for each of seven curriculum areas. Mathematics was the first curriculum policy developed under contractual arrangements. These policies were written in English. After lobbying from various Māori groups over a number of years, such as *Kura Kaupapa Māori* schools and teachers, bilingual teachers, Māori parents, and non-Māori educators, the Minister of Education made the decision to write curriculum policies in the Māori language. Whereas a collective Māori voice had been largely absent from curriculum policy development, 'contracting out' was enabling for Māori; Māori became contract developers for curriculum written in Māori (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2004a).

## PÄNGARAU DEVELOPMENT

Two years after the beginning of the national curricula in English, the MOE employed a Māori educator to oversee first the Māori medium mathematics curriculum and then four of the subsequent curricula written in Māori (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2004a). Stewart-Harawira (2005) suggests that the state's response to Māori initiatives was to co-opt Māori aspirations and Māori people into the state structures. The Māori

Project Manager began with the MOE in 1992. Her first job was to become familiar with ministry structures and in particular the processes for national curriculum development in the contracting out system. An advertisement was placed in *The Education Gazette*<sup>2</sup> on 16 June 1992 for expressions of interest for Māori contract writers to develop Pāngarau. A Māori lead writer/contractor was eventually appointed, and after negotiating aspects of his contract, he assembled a team of 10 Māori teachers to write Pāngarau. The writers met nationally as a group on a number of occasions, also working in pairs or individually on sections, coming back to the main group to share their progress and gain feedback from each other. The lead writer collated the writing and wrote regular milestone reports for the group, which were presented to the MOE through the Māori Project Manager.

An integral aspect of the MOE contracting process was the establishment of external advisory groups: a Policy Advisory Group (PAG) and a Contract Review Committee (CRC) who assisted the MOE to oversee the process and make decisions. These two groups ensured the Māori writers did not capture the process or the policy content. Māori curriculum writers provided milestone reports and written drafts to these groups on a regular basis. The CRC regularly reviewed the writing progress to ensure the Māori contractors were keeping within the timeline and the allocated budget, thus giving value for money within the contract requirements. The PAG, who were Māori, gave feedback for the writers through the Māori Project Manager on the content and the Māori vocabulary in Pāngarau drafts.

Although Māori either in small groups or as isolated individuals had never relinquished the contested nature of their relationship with the authoritative state, the cycle of Māori resistance and the exercise of collective power were rekindled during the curriculum development process.

#### MANAGEMENT OF THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In exploring the multifaceted way in which power works, Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan (1998) suggest a useful four-dimensional model to demonstrate that power works at several levels. In the following section, I discuss the development of Pāngarau under the headings of



management (or control) of the resources, decision making, meaning, and power in the system.

#### *Management of Resources*

The focus of the first dimension or level of power is management of resources (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). Power is exercised through using or controlling scarce resources on which groups depend. These resources include not merely control of money, rewards, and sanctions but also information, expertise, and access to those higher up the hierarchy. In the development of Pängarau, the MOE controlled both the financial and people resources. A contract price was clearly stated and the MOE laid down the processes so that the writers did not have direct access to those above them – the Policy Advisory Group and the Curriculum Review Committee.

On appointment as the Pängarau development contractor, negotiations began between the MOE Māori Project Manager (MPM) and the lead contractor. From the outset, the lead Māori contractor, Tony<sup>3</sup> wanted to consult with various *iwi* (tribal) groups around the country for appropriate Māori language terms for the mathematics curriculum. Finding relevant technical mathematical language in Māori was one area that concerned the Pängarau writers. They did not believe they had the mandate from Māori for some of the decisions that had to be made for the Māori vocabulary necessary to discuss mathematics in Māori. The MOE did not allow resources in the budget for this process. There was no budgeted allowance in the English medium curriculum because mathematics vocabulary in the English language has had hundreds of years to evolve and develop; this has not been the case for mathematics vocabulary in Maori. Early in Pängarau development, some Māori writers used their agency to make unofficial visits to several of the writers' tribal areas, "at our own cost," to discuss the Māori vocabulary. As one of the Māori writers noted:

That was always the issue from [Māori] people, not just for that [Pängarau] but all the other documents – no time, no resources were allowed for research . . . . I remember I took Tony to Ruatoki,<sup>4</sup> and he used to go to his own people. We used to go to our own communities, our own *kuia*, *koroua* [Māori elders] to ask what

was the word for such and such. We had to do this in our own time. There was no money. (MW, Māori writer)

However after some resistance by the writers and further debate, the MOE accommodated. "A budget was eventually set aside for this consultation" (Tony).

This consultation process also necessitated extra time to travel around the country visiting various *iwi* (tribes) to ensure that the mathematics vocabulary did not merely reflect minority views or specific tribes. The Māori Project Manager (MPM) acknowledged the importance of this consultation and the extra costs involved. She exercised her power to justify to her MOE senior manager why an extension of the timeline and an increased budget were necessary.

Yes . . . I was spreading it out over a longer period of time and justifying to my manager why. Because that included costs and I had to say well, the reason we are doing this is because we just haven't got the number of [Māori] mathematicians and the *reo* [language] is brand new, that we have all these other issues that we had to face and get our heads around. (MPM)

A number of other areas in the development process caused debate and although the Māori writers resisted, in many instances they eventually accepted the MOE contract conditions. "Yeah, we generally accepted it and got on with the job, you just had to. In the end they [MOE] held the purse strings, they were the boss" (MW: Māori Writer).

The writers did not have direct access to the Policy Advisory Group and the Curriculum Review Committee; instead the Māori Policy Manager communicated the feedback of these groups on the draft writing to the Māori writers. The Māori writers having direct access to the advisory groups for discussion not only had resourcing implications (everyone would need to be flown to the capital city plus accommodation costs) but this policy also placed limits on the human resources available to the Māori writers thus restricting the decision-making processes.

*Management of Decision Making*

The second dimension of power involves management or control of decision making (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). It may be assumed that those who do not access or participate in decision making do not engage because of satisfaction and consensus. However, those who control the decision making can make or determine outcomes from behind the scenes, allowing only safe issues or questions to appear on the agenda.

The PAG and the CRC determined outcomes for the writers from behind the scenes, through an arms-length relationship. They made comments and gave suggestions in written reports, which were given to the Māori Project Manager. The MPM revealed that she would often rewrite the advice in the report from the Advisory groups to the Māori contractors, changing the language so the contractors did not take the comments personally and would be more likely to accept the recommendations made. There was an expectation that the Māori writers would comply with the feedback and decisions of these Advisory groups. At times this meant the PAG feedback given on behalf of the Ministry changed what the writers wrote, a process in which the MOE was clearly in charge.

Tony was accountable, and this [the curriculum] was not going to happen unless we complied with what they [MOE] wanted . . . .

But when it went down there [to the MOE] as a draft and the document actually came back, I looked at it and I thought this is not what I wrote. I was really devastated [at the changes] . . . if they didn't want us to write it why didn't they write it themselves and save that money. (MW)

These quotations highlight the MOE endeavors to manage the meaning of Pāngarau for Māori.

*Management of Meaning*

The third dimension involves management of meaning (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). A considerable difference in assumptions occurs between the first two dimensions and this third one. Power is used not just to fight conflict, but power can also be the reason why conflict does

not arise in the first place. Power shapes people's perceptions, preferences, and thinking such that they accept their role in the existing order of things. In this dimension conflict is unlikely to arise because people think there is no alternative, or that their state is natural and unchangeable, or divinely ordained and beneficial (Freire, 1972). Māori voices indicated that although they resisted in some areas they eventually accommodated to the MOE requirement that a parallel curriculum be written because the Māori writers believed there were no alternatives.

A strong area of contention between the Māori contractors and the MOE was the content of the Pāngarau curriculum. Māori wanted a curriculum that reflected Māori knowledge and how they thought about the world. However, the contract firmly stated that Pāngarau was to have the same achievement objectives and structure as the English medium curriculum. Both the MOE advertisement calling for expressions of interest and the Pāngarau development contract signed six months later contained the same clause: "The document will be parallel to the recently published curriculum statement *Mathematics in the National Curriculum*, maintaining the existing achievement objectives. . ." (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2004a). The MOE remained adamant on this area. Although the Māori writers initially resisted this requirement, Māori eventually accommodated so the contract could go ahead. The meaning of mathematics for Māori, based on Western ways of viewing the world, was being controlled by the non-Māori MOE. Some of the Māori writers noted,

Really what the government wanted was a document that, for whatever reasons . . . they're [Māori learners] doing exactly the same things as their Pakeha [non-Māori] counterpart . . . for what they wanted I think we delivered. (MW)

But then that was not the way we were allowed to write. There was a format, MOE said we had to follow [and we followed it]. (MW)

Defining the Māori word for mathematics was a further area where the MOE controlled the meaning.

[In the end] we were pretty unanimous as a writing group that the mathematical word we would use was *tatai* because we felt it encapsulated all the things that we thought mathematics was. However the ministry at that time was using the word *Pāngarau* . . . in their literature and in the resources, so we had to use *Pāngarau*. (MW)

#### *Power in the System*

The fourth dimension largely rests on the ideas of Foucault, who proposed that power is embedded in a system (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). Foucault challenged the idea of sovereign power that underpins the first three dimensions. Power is not something that is static, nor is it possessed by someone to share or use over another; rather it circulates within and between individuals (Foucault, 1990). Both Māori and non-Māori (MOE) involved in Pāngarau development used their agency, exercising their power at times to resist the processes, while at other times to accommodate in accepting the process or the content (McMurphy-Pilkington, 2004a). Power was by no means something that the ministry possessed, to be exercised authoritatively over Māori. Power flowed in both directions.

Both groups, the Māori writers and the MOE, engaged in an exercise of power to make changes in the system or the processes. For Māori it was important to incorporate Māori ways of doing and thinking in the curriculum although this added to the time frame and the cost of processes. The MOE requirements and budget for Pāngarau development did not allow for many of these to take place. However, Māori ensured Māori processes happened despite the MOE requirements. For example, Māori went ahead with consultations and giving *koha* (a donation when visiting tribal *marae*<sup>5</sup>); *kaumatua* and *kuia* (Māori elders) became an integral part of the writing and consultations; the lead contract writer ensured the writing team represented most of the large tribal areas; *whanaungatanga* (relationships and connections); *karakia* (prayer and spirituality) and *kai* (food) were a normal part of meetings.

We didn't always seem to [be allowed] time for Māori processes; they [MOE] just assume that things can be done in a similar time frame [as the English medium curriculum]. We get around it by using our processes anyway. (MW)

In the national development of the 1990s curriculum, writers were not permitted to meet and talk to other curriculum writers. In line with the practice of separating policy advice from policy development and implementation, Advisory Group members were kept separate from the writers, despite the perceived advantages of face-to-face interactions. The Māori world places strong importance on the value of *kanohi ki te kanohi*: the *seen face* where respect is gained from face to face interactions. Māori processes and protocols of making connections with people (*whanaungatanga*) mean that one way or another, Māori educators meet other Māori educators during the course of their involvement in wider education or Māori contexts. Therefore, despite expectations of the MOE, Māori, kept apart through formal processes, still engaged in informal *kanohi ki te kanohi* interactions.

When the writers completed the final draft of Pāngarau (Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 1994), it was submitted to the MOE. The MOE was unhappy to discover that the Māori writers had not directly translated the learning outcomes from the English medium curriculum; rather the writers had written the essence of the learning outcomes in Māori. As the lead writer indicates, the MOE exercised their power in getting aspects of the draft rewritten.

We had translated the concept of each learning outcome [from the English medium curriculum]. The Ministry then contracted *Te Taura Whiri* [Māori Language Commission] to rewrite all the learning outcomes, in other words to translate the English medium ones [and include them in the Māori curriculum]. (Tony)

The Māori writers relate further examples of both resistance and accommodation during the development of Pāngarau to show that power circulates and flows in both directions.

I think over the development of all the curriculum she [Māori Project Manager] was more able to say to the ministry, no we're going to do it like this, and the ministry has probably become more accepting that it doesn't have to be done exactly the same as the Pakeha [English medium] ones have been done. (MW)

We [Māori] are also gaining more confidence about our *take* [causes] and we're more likely to say what we think now. (MW)

These Māori voices indicate that Māori gained more confidence in being assertive and resisting (being empowered). Māori also knew that at times they could gain positive benefits from exercising agency by accommodating, especially to meet the greater goals and aspirations of Māori in the revitalisation of their Māori language and culture. As a Māori writer explained,

I don't ever think anyone really doubted that this first one [curriculum] was just a political document . . . . The feeling was . . . the document's got to be done . . . the document has got to be done because it's got to be there. Whether it's used or not, it's actually irrelevant here, this is a political document. We knew it was never going to be perfect but that didn't matter because the political imperative [of language revitalisation] over-rode all those things, because next time we knew . . . we will be much better prepared [to resist]. (MW)

The MOE exercised agency by giving the completed draft to the Māori Language Commission to rewrite the learning outcomes. Their actions could be considered an attempt by the MOE to control the meaning of mathematics for Māori. The MOE further contracted Tony the lead writer to sit beside the Commission to assist them in this re-writing. In the following quotation, he indicates how rather than get into a conflict situation with MOE, he accommodated to the wishes of the MOE so that Māori gained the benefits that he believed Māori would achieve from having a Pāngarau policy written in Māori.

Yes I assisted in that process [of helping the Māori Language Commission to rewrite the Achievement Objectives in Māori]. I didn't translate it but I helped the translator interpret the mathematics . . . . It was because we [Māori] were at a point where we needed that curriculum document to get out. It was a credibility thing . . . . We felt the message in the *marautanga* [curriculum] was important, but we also wanted the professional development for Māori teachers and the resources that would come with it. The only way that was going to happen was if we got the *marautanga* out, so if we had resisted, it was out of our hands anyway, it was going to happen whether I helped or not. (Tony)

On the surface, power is exercised through mobilizing scarce and critical resources, and through the control of decision making. At a deeper level power is exercised by managing the meanings that shape

others' lives. Deeper still, power is embedded in the fabric of the system, constraining how Māori see, what they see, and how they think, in ways that limit their capacity for resistance (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). However, it would be a mistake to assume that having no control over the management of resources, decision making, or meaning indicates that Māori without this control remain docile.

## DISCUSSION

Although MOE structures were dominant and constrained Māori agency through laying down the requirements for Pāngarau policy, Māori were not passive recipients of policy development. In the previous section, Māori voices recalling their actions and those of the MOE testify that dominance and control were not unidirectional, or top-down from the authoritative state to the Māori writers. It is evident that "Power is not simply what the dominant class has and the oppressed lack" (Hoy, 1986, p. 134). In opposing state dominance, the Māori actors asserted some control, to varying degrees, in overt and covert ways.

The notion of resistance highlights the ability as human agents to act in social situations as well as to be acted upon (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993). But resistance is not a straightforward concept as the above examples suggest. Māori curriculum developers both acted (resisted or accommodated) and were acted upon by the MOE. The importance of the notion of resistance lies "in the connections it makes between structure and human agency . . ." (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, p. 101). Some of the MOE structures like the resourcing, the contract requirements, and the prescribed nature of the curriculum had the potential to constrain agency but were also points of resistance (exercising of power or agency). In using their agency, Māori in Pāngarau development sometimes accommodated, having decided that was the best course of action at that point, rather than resistance. A good example of this accommodation occurred when Tony decided to assist rather than resist the Māori Language Commission's rewriting of the Achievement Objectives. Other MOE structures enabled or assisted Māori agency, such as having a process for contracting out curriculum development and eventually extending the time frame and extra funding for travel to tribal areas.



Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) note power is usually defined as a negative force and recognized in contexts where it is claimed to “reproduce relations of domination and subordination” (p. 150). However they allege

... power is both a negative and positive force. Its character is dialectical, and its mode of operation is always more than simply repressive. In actuality, power is the root of all forms of behavior in which people say no, struggle, resist, use oppositional modes of discourse, and fight for a different vision of the future. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, p. 150)

Power usually arises from an active struggle, and those in subordinate positions who appear powerless are by no means always the losers. Although Māori may not have met all their aspirations, Māori made some positive gains from the policy development through their active struggle and their reflexive action. For a start, Māori had not previously had an opportunity “to discuss at a reasonably deep philosophical level what mathematics was . . . or curriculum issues” so it “gave an opportunity for a large number of people to up-skill themselves in both Māori language and mathematics content, and in developing a curriculum” (Tony).

We felt it was an opportunity to engage . . . in some real mathematics education issues that in the past we’d been totally excluded from. We also saw it as an opportunity to develop the vocabulary further . . . a better understanding of what Māori mathematics was all about if there was such a thing . . . to develop our own understanding of western mathematics . . . because in order to translate a lot of it, we had to go back to the origins of western mathematics, and so it was really a huge up-skill for all of us. . . . Further in consulting with our Māori communities it had an educative function [in mathematics] for them. We also knew that once it had become a nationally recognized curriculum statement that the state and educational institutions were obliged by law to support it . . . in one way or another through professional development, through resource development, and that’s I guess at the end of the day the huge positive out of it if I look back. (Tony)

Māori were empowered through the development process. They became more confident, assertive, and their confidence and self-efficacy

in mathematics increased. Nonetheless, although they became aware of the power of the state, Māori worked largely within the existing structures. Māori as a collective critically analyzed, resisted, and challenged the system and some of the structures of power, but at the end of the day the structures largely remained the same. Māori writers' resistance or collective agency brought about limited changes to the structures. Māori achieved empowerment but not emancipation (Inglis, 1997). Conscientization can bring about enlightenment and empowerment, but knowing about the oppressive structures does not necessarily change them. Emancipation is about using the knowledge attained so that power is exercised collectively to bring about changes to dominant macro structures. It is essential then for both empowerment, with individuals being conscientized, and emancipation, with those who are empowered, working as a collective to transform social and political structures that oppress them.

Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan's (1998) model rests on the assumption that power is exercised through dimensions of power (control of resources, decision making, meaning, and power in the system). For Māori having control of the first three dimensions necessitates changing the structures, that is, emancipatory action. Emancipation can only be achieved through acquiring those dimensions of power that were denied to Māori. Māori need to gain greater access to avenues of control and resources (Adams et al., 2000). During the development process of Pāngarau, the state was largely dominant in controlling these dimensions. At times, Māori were assertive in gaining some control in the process (i.e., the fourth dimension of power), for example, for approval for cultural processes like *iwi* consultation, and an additional contract to collate the vocabulary. However, these gains were limited because Māori had no control over meaning (the third level of power). The MOE's contract was very clear: that Pāngarau was to be a parallel curriculum. Māori knowledge was deemed not worthy, although Māori language, the language of the curriculum, was legitimated, a gain for Māori. Through control of meaning, the MOE endeavored to constrain how Māori saw and thought about the world through mathematics.

Apple (2003) questions whose knowledge is selected in curriculum and he reminds educators that the official knowledge that is selected "is

the result of conflicts and compromises both within the state and between the state and civil society" (p. 7). Hegemony involves the power to decide what counts as legitimate but there is a sense of constant movement, of conflict, dynamic contestation, and unstable compromises that ultimately lead to further movement between the state and its relations with civil society, in this instance a group of Māori writers. For Māori, curriculum is still a site of contestation about whose knowledge is valued (Adams et al., 2000).

Some of the state's processes and structures to regulate Māori to ensure they incorporate what was considered important knowledge included the setting up of the PAC and CRC and the utilization of the Māori Language Commission. However, Māori also engaged in counter-hegemonic processes as they contested, negotiated, and accommodated to the state during the development of Pāngarau, for example meeting face-to-face and incorporating Māori processes regardless of Ministry and the Advisory group's expectations. Thus policy was not done to Māori because they have become more conscientized in their dealings with the state and more sophisticated in their resistance to state structures. The words of Touraine are a relevant reminder: "We must resolutely reject all discourses that try to convince us that we are powerless" (as cited in Apple, 2003, p. 17).

Nonetheless there is a need to be cautious about romanticizing resistance and making an assumption that acts of resistance always lead to progressive policies (Apple, 2003, p. 13). There is no guarantee that counter-hegemonic action will bring about desirable change for those engaged in exercising agency. There are both limits and possibilities in counter hegemonic activity. "The key is to recognize the possibilities of both without romanticizing the later, since this is decidedly not a level playing field politically, culturally, or economically" (Apple, 2003, p. 17).

#### CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 2004 the MOE completed a curriculum stock take of both English and Māori medium curricula. The stock take, 10 years on from the development of the first national curricula in the Māori language, included a commissioned literature review of what Māori communities were saying, and summaries of Māori teacher interviews expressing

their thoughts about curriculum (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2004b). Recommendations from the report stress the importance of having an inclusive philosophy for curriculum that is underpinned by Māori beliefs and values and Māori ways of viewing the world: links to be made with *Te Kōhanga Reo* and other Māori medium early childhood organisations to enable a more seamless curriculum development, and a more comprehensive, inclusive, holistic, integrative curriculum framework that reflects Māori status as *tangata whenua* (Indigenous people of the land).

Work has begun on rewriting the national curriculum framework that underpins the seven national curricula. Writers have been commissioned, advisory groups have been established, with significant stakeholder involvement. For the Māori curricula, this process includes Māori teachers, educators, *kaumatua* (elders), sub-tribe and tribal input. Together they are building the curriculum framework and the curricula. This process suggests that the culture of Māori communities, and the knowledge and values of the curricula “coevolve” (Lipka, 1998, p. 176) as connections are strengthened among community practices, Māori knowledge, and schooling. The MOE has developed a formal process to foster dialogue among Māori policy developers inclusive of community at both horizontal and vertical levels as an integral aspect of policy development and educational planning. What Māori are seeing is a more ecological process of education “that allows Indigenous people to become agents of transformation in their own social and cultural contexts” (Cajete, 1994, p. 218).

In returning to the original question of this article, I point out that Māori voices have testified to the presence of the exercise of power, resistance, and accommodation in Pāngarau, at multidimensional levels and in bi-directional ways. At times power was exercised and flowed both from Māori writers to the state, and vice versa. Curriculum development occurred in the tensions and negotiations between structure and agency.

Although Pāngarau was written in Māori but not based on a foundation of Māori knowledge or Māori ways of understanding the world, Māori feel they have made some positive gains, in particular a revitalization of the language. In the 1990s two Māori curriculum writers

declared, "We realize that curriculum are all the result of human hands, that we can change them" and that "there never is a final curriculum . . . curriculum will continue to evolve and change" (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2004a). Curriculum like emancipation is a progressive journey.

Through asserting some control in covert or overt ways, Māori actors exercised power to change the process, or at least to register a hegemonic protest to the dominant view of Western mathematics and the oppressive MOE structures. In doing so, some positive gains were made for Māori in the form of national curricula written in Māori, Māori language development, curriculum resources in Māori language, and professional development for teachers and Māori communities. Māori exercised power in an endeavor to obtain a different vision of the future than has been available under the effects of colonisation.

#### CONCLUSION

In this article, I have highlighted some of the oppressive state structures that have constrained Māori agency in curriculum policy development: the state's domination in the control of the resources, decision making, and management of meaning. The contention is that Māori were empowered during the process, such that Māori demonstrated that they can produce a mathematics curriculum policy written in Māori language, albeit one parallel to the English medium policy. Evidence was also presented to demonstrate that Māori exercised collective agency, acting assertively in an endeavor to change the structures. At times Māori achieved some limited success in changing the structures. But what is also evident is that the bureaucratic state remained dominant, using its legitimate authority to control Māori if they did not carry out the wishes of the state. Māori may have become empowered during the process, but overall Māori were not emancipated. Although exercising some power and agency, Māori largely worked within the state structures, rather than effected changes to them. The state still managed and controlled Māori, especially in the area of knowledge construction. For Māori to continue on an emancipatory journey, the state must work with Māori and make structural changes, giving them more control over the resources, decisions, and meaning.

During 2006 and 2007, Māori have been involved in the rewriting of the national curriculum framework and national curriculum policies in Māori. These have been published in draft form and feedback from communities has been invited with submissions closing in April 2008. At this point Māori feel optimistic about future curriculum policy. There are indications that the state has listened to Māori voices, and Māori are being given more control over resources, decisions, and meaning than in the past. In their journey of language and knowledge revitalization, Māori are continuing to exercise their agency in their engagement with state structures. However it is imperative that Māori continue to share developments and success stories with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators across the globe so they can learn from, and be supportive of each other.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Aotearoa is the name many Māori use for New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup> *The Education Gazette*, a fortnightly Ministry of Education official publication, announces new state policies, education initiatives, and vacant positions in schools and educational institutions throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> Tony is the first name of the Pāngarau lead contractor. Because Tony's strong involvement in Māori medium education and in particular curriculum development is well known in Aotearoa New Zealand, it was decided not to use a pseudonym. His name has been used in this article and other writing with his permission (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2004a).

<sup>4</sup> Ruatoki, a town on New Zealand's east coast, has a predominantly Māori population.

<sup>5</sup> *Marae* are Māori communal facilities on tribal lands, which include open areas, a large meeting house, often carved and decorated, a dining hall, and other facilities. Māori *hui* (meeting and debates) often take place at *marae*. Many educational institutions including high schools have a pan tribal *marae*.

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