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Ethnic Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand

**Towards Effective Participation
In
the Development of Social Policy**

**A Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Masters in Philosophy (Social Policy) at Massey University.**

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Abstract

The underlying theme of this research is that of participation.

Major objectives of this Thesis are as follows:

- to identify those issues in society which are of concern to ethnic peoples
- to identify barriers which may limit the participation of ethnic peoples in the development of social policies, which may affect their wellbeing
- to ascertain major avenues through which ethnic peoples may participate in and contribute to the formulation and development of social policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In neo liberal democratic societies such as Aotearoa/New Zealand all members ought to enjoy freedoms associated with race, ethnicity, religion or culture. In recent post modern times our differences and uniqueness challenge freedoms curtailed through unwittingly systemic discrimination which occurs when cultural assumptions become embodied in society's established institutions and processes. Post modernism reflects an acceptance of the need to deconstruct realities and construct new ways of measuring and discovering. The detrimental effects of capitalism can be ameliorated through social reforms.

Participation is in itself liberating – only through one's own experience does it become fulfilling. Social wellbeing incorporates being comfortable, integrated and accepted within Aotearoa / New Zealand. It impacts on one's identity and ability to contribute to everyday life. Hence Social Policy making without due participation through appropriate consultation is not only somewhat naive but lends itself to being inherent with real difficulties, often perpetuating even greater injustices and resulting turmoil.

Qualitative research methodology enabled me to interview ten research participants, all of whom being well informed representatives of a cross-section of our ethnic peoples. Each participant is actively engaged in key societal institutions and community organisations that are concerned with safeguarding and promoting our wellbeing and hence, are influential and authorized commentators. All were enthusiastic participants who commented on the timeliness and importance of the research topic.

Social Policy refers to the role of the state in relation to the welfare of its citizens and how state intervention affects the conditions under which people live. Over time experiences with the continued realities of separation and alienation can cause increasingly isolated fragments that can raise undue anxiety, and if not appropriately addressed, create potential powder kegs. Key findings of this research reiterates the importance of participation by suitably

informed ethnic peoples in developing effective social policy that affects their wellbeing.

It is not enough to advocate participation, one must also be participatory. To this effect this thesis invites the reader into worthy consideration of the importance and immediate needs that presents itself. It is argued that while it is important that differing ethnic groupings be accepted by society the emphasis ought to be on bringing them in as players in the political community rather than on simply accepting them as members of the economic, moral and legal community within an environment characterized by the forces of market capitalism, political pluralism and cultural diversity.

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‘ always around, can’t stop a good vibration ’
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