

# Biculturalism and multiculturalism

The purpose of this activity is to explore the perceived conflict between biculturalism and multiculturalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand and to enable participants to discuss issues of diversity in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi.

## Activity 25

**Time:** 45 – 60 minutes.

**Materials:** Copies of the handout *Monocultural, bicultural and multicultural* page 103. The three overhead transparencies/slides, *Our relationships, cultural, political and future*, pages 104, 105 and 106.

1. Give out copies of the handout *Monocultural, bicultural and multicultural* and discuss the meanings of the terms. See the note for ESOL groups below.
2. Display the slide *Our relationships: cultural*. Use the questions as prompts for discussion.
3. Display the next slide, *Our relationships: political*. Display only the top of the transparency, covering the discussion questions. Compare this and the first model with the group. How are these two models different?
4. Now discuss the questions with the group.
5. Display the final slide, *Our relationships: future*. Allow group time to discuss the questions at the top of the transparency and for completing the 'vision' diagram.
6. Return to large group to debrief.

## Notes

This discussion may be a sensitive one as there has been a feeling in New Zealand that our various minority groups and Māori are in some way competing with each other for rights, resources and recognition. Some people may have felt threatened or excluded when another group is granted recognition.

This feeling of competition between minorities can take the focus away from the fact that Pākehā culture has been historically, politically and numerically dominant in New Zealand since the 1860s.

The facilitator should emphasise that this situation is a result of historical factors and not a personal criticism of any individuals that may be participating in the activity.

This activity emphasises the common ground between our various peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand. We would hope that participants see the work undertaken by Māori in fighting for recognition not as a threat but as precedent for other cultures to be recognised as well.

## The Treaty and diversity

If we recognise that the Treaty was a contract allowing for migrants to live in this country alongside Māori then it can be argued that honouring the Treaty could create a safer environment for diversity and the coexistence of different groups. This challenges the concept of 'one-law for-all'. The parliamentary system in its current form is based on a concept of indivisible sovereignty; yet constitutional arrangements for shared sovereignty, while highly controversial in New Zealand, do occur elsewhere, for example in some European countries and in the European Union itself.

The Treaty offers a framework for cultural and religious tolerance.

## Note for ESOL groups

ESOL participants may not be familiar with the Latin-based prefixes mono (one), bi (two), multi (many) or lateral (sides) unless they speak another European language.

## Monocultural, bicultural and multicultural

In Aotearoa/New Zealand these words have special meanings.

People often use the word **monocultural** about Pākehā culture because this is the dominant culture we see in our political system.

People usually use the word **bicultural** to mean Māori and Pākehā together.

People use the word **multicultural** because they want us to remember there are many cultures in our country.

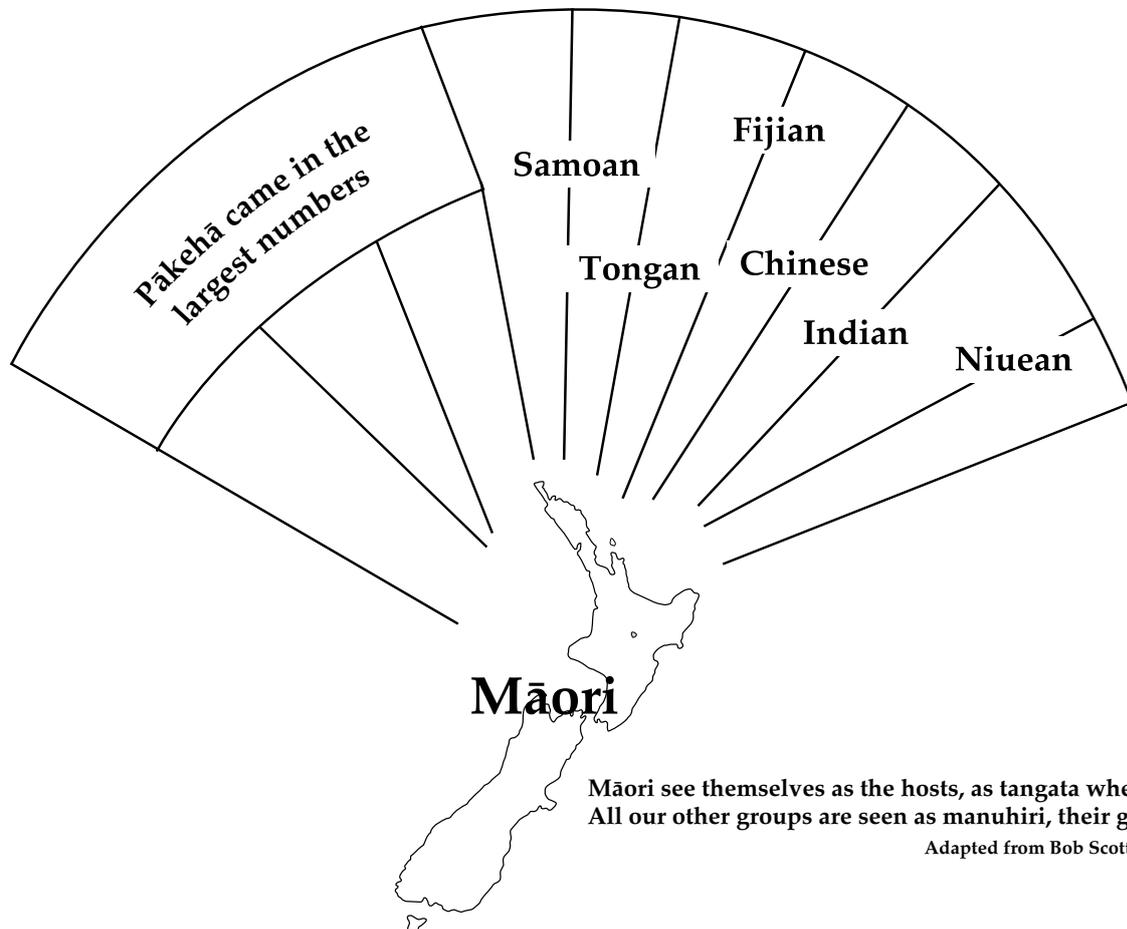
Both words, **bicultural** and **multicultural**, are often used by people to question the **monocultural** control of power in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

## Bilateral and multicultural?

The Treaty is often called a **bicultural** agreement (between Māori and Pākehā) but this is not the best word to describe the Treaty relationship. The Treaty is not mainly an agreement about *culture*; it is mostly an agreement about *power*.

The Treaty is better described as a **bilateral**, not a bicultural, agreement. It was a bilateral political agreement made between some Māori Hapū and the British Government.

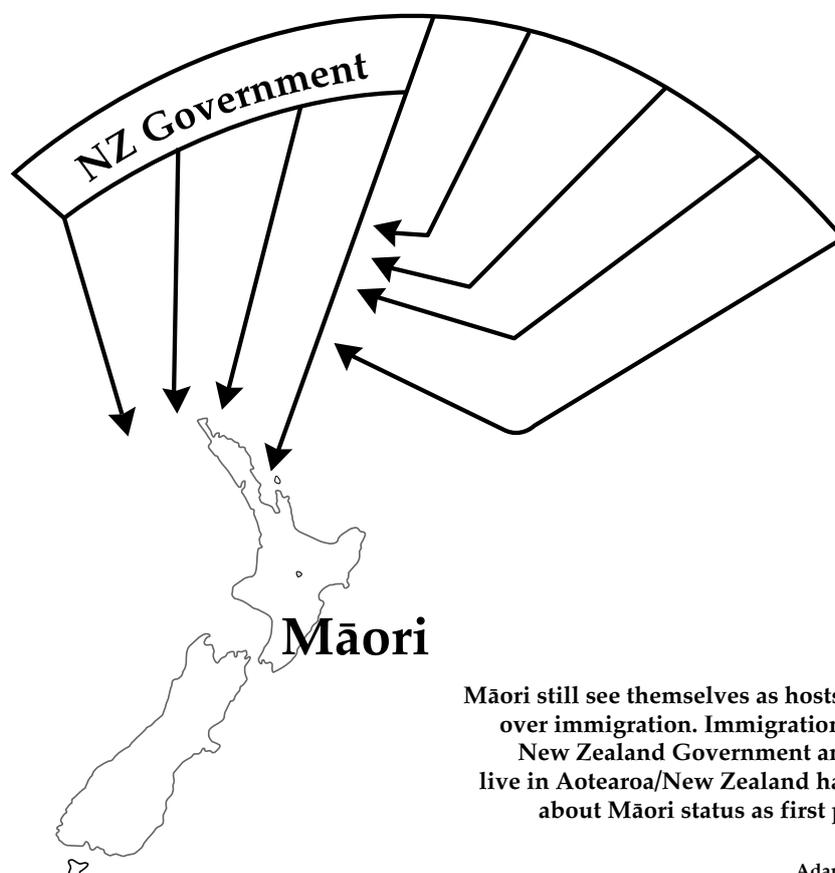
activity 25. **Relationships: cultural**



**Discussion questions:**

1. Which cultural group started the New Zealand Government and the institutions (eg. schools, courts, government) we have in Aotearoa / New Zealand today?
2. Can we see parts of Māori culture in the way the New Zealand Government and institutions work today? What are they?
3. Can we see parts of any of our other cultures in the way the New Zealand Government and institutions work?

## Relationships: political



### Discussion questions:

1. What groups feel invisible when we talk about being a bicultural country? Would bilateral be a better word to describe the Treaty relationship?
2. Why do Māori sometimes feel invisible when we talk about being a multicultural society?

## activity 25. Relationships: future

### Discussion questions:

1. How can we make sure all our cultures and groups have a place in Aotearoa / New Zealand?
2. How can we respect the rights of Māori as first peoples and our hosts in a nation of many cultures?
3. Should we aim to be both a bilateral and a multicultural nation? Why / Why not?
4. Draw into the diagram below how you think the future relationships amongst our groups might look.

	<p>You might want to use these words to help you:</p> <p><b>Māori</b> <b>Pākehā</b> <b>My culture</b> <b>Government</b> <b>Treaty</b></p>
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