

## The Role Of New Zealand Social Culture In Conflict Resolution

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### Abstract

*New Zealand is a country with cultural diversity and multiculturalism principles. New Zealand's social culture also plays an important role in resolving conflict by creating spaces for open and inclusive dialogue. The principles of "manaakitanga" (hospitality), "whanaungatanga" (kinship relations), and "tikanga" (Maori cultural principles) play a role in shaping patterns of social interaction that are mutually respectful and help create an environment that supports conflict resolution processes. This journal aims to analyze cultural diversity as it shapes the country's unique approach to conflict resolution as well as patterns of multicultural education in New Zealand in fostering understanding and tolerance between cultures. By understanding how New Zealand's social culture plays a role in conflict resolution, we can draw valuable lessons to apply them in a wider global context. The role of New Zealand's social culture in overcoming conflict is by Fostering Understanding and Empathy, Encouraging Social Cohesion, Facilitating Intercultural Dialogue, Implementing Inclusive Policies and Laws, Improving Education and Cultural Awareness. Overall, multicultural education in New Zealand plays an important role in promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance.*

**Keywords:** *The Role of Social Culture ; New Zealand Social Culture ; Conflict Resolution ; Tolerance*

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## INTRODUCTION

New Zealand is a country known for its cultural diversity and the principles of multiculturalism. Its high level of diversity also reflects the rich relationships between various communities in New Zealand and their connections with communities elsewhere. New Zealand is the most ethnically diverse country, ranking fifth in the OECD (Corrine de Bonnaire, Jane F., Emanuel K., & Virginia W., 2019). The country has a population consisting of various ethnic groups, including the indigenous Maori culture, Pacific cultures, and immigrants from different parts of the world. The strong cultural diversity in New Zealand has played a significant role in conflict resolution and achieving peace within society. The Maori people, who are the indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand, make up a minority population of 15%, as seen from the history of colonization, particularly by British settlers in the late 19th century, and in contemporary times from various sources, contributing to an increasingly multicultural New Zealand society (Henry, 2007).

Many countries always face challenges regarding diversity, like Indonesia, which has numerous ethnicities, languages, and religions. Often, conflicts arise due to the diversity, as different perspectives in approaching conflicts can lead to divisions, violence, and even bloodshed. It is unique when diversity becomes a unifying factor. New Zealand, with its strong diversity, possesses this aspect, where the first aspect to be noted is the presence of a strong cultural diversity in New Zealand. The country's population consists of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds, including languages, traditions, religions, and various cultural practices. This diversity reflects a strong cultural pluralism and serves as a source of the country's cultural richness.

The multicultural approach in New Zealand focuses on the recognition, respect, and development of cultural diversity as a valuable resource. The principles of multiculturalism, such as respect for human rights, equality, justice, and inclusion, form the foundation for building a harmonious society and addressing conflicts in a constructive manner. New Zealand's social culture also plays a crucial role in resolving conflicts by creating open and inclusive spaces for dialogue. Principles such as "manaakitanga" (hospitality), "whanaungatanga" (kinship), and "tikanga" (Maori cultural principles) contribute to shaping social interactions that are respectful and help create an environment supportive of conflict resolution processes. Culture is highly significant, as it serves as a source of community resilience during crises, and communities have the potential for social change and the capacity to address conflicts (Anne de Bruin, 2018).

Furthermore, policies and supporting institutions of multiculturalism in New Zealand, such as the Race and Ethnicity Commission, Human Rights Commission, and various non-governmental organizations, have played a role in promoting intercultural dialogue, cultural awareness, and better understanding among different groups. This has also contributed to addressing conflicts and building sustainable peace.

Through the multiculturalism approach and recognition of cultural diversity, New Zealand has built a strong foundation for resolving conflicts in a complex social context. This approach emphasizes the importance of inclusion, appreciation for differences, and intercultural cooperation as better solutions than conflict and discrimination. In this journal, the author will delve deeper into the role of New Zealand's social culture in resolving conflicts. The author will analyze how cultural diversity shapes the unique approach of this country towards conflict resolution, as well as the patterns of multicultural education in New Zealand that foster understanding and tolerance among cultures. By understanding the role of New Zealand's social culture in conflict resolution, we can gain valuable insights to apply them in a broader global context.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

In this research, the author employs a qualitative descriptive research method to describe and explain the role of social culture in facilitating conflict resolution. Qualitative research is a method used to investigate the natural conditions of an object, where the researcher serves as the key instrument (Sugiyono, 2016). Additionally, according to Nazir, descriptive research is conducted to examine the status of human groups, objects, conditions, thought systems, or current events with the aim of providing a systematic, reliable, and accurate description of the researched facts (cited in Destiani, et al., 2021).

This approach was chosen due to its suitability with the limited data available to the researcher, as they were unable to directly engage in fieldwork. Instead, the focus was on conducting interviews with experienced sociologists holding a PhD from The University of Auckland, New Zealand, and consulting various other academic sources. In the data analysis, the author employed an interactive model that involves data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The Social Culture of New Zealand and Conflict Resolution**

The social culture of New Zealand plays a crucial role in resolving conflicts and promoting peace in the country. Emphasized cultural norms and practices in New Zealand, such as inclusivity, equality, and respect for diverse perspectives, strongly contribute to conflict resolution efforts and the creation of a peaceful life for its inhabitants. One significant aspect of New Zealand's social culture that has a profound impact on conflict resolution is the emphasis on open dialogue and communication. New Zealanders highly value the exchange of ideas and opinions, and there is a strong tradition of engaging in constructive conversations when faced with conflicts. This culture of open communication provides opportunities for individuals to voice their perspectives, listen to others' views, and seek common ground that can lead to peaceful conflict resolution. By employing this approach, New Zealand creates space for constructive dialogue, promotes understanding and respect, and reduces the risk of escalating conflicts.

New Zealand holds a strong belief that every individual should be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their background or identity. By prioritizing inclusivity and equality, New Zealand successfully reduces the potential for conflicts that may arise from cultural differences, ethnicities, or other factors. The country creates an environment that encourages acceptance and understanding, where everyone feels valued and has equal opportunities. New Zealand society is open and friendly, with a more relaxed and informal lifestyle. People in New Zealand tend to discuss leisure activities and family interests rather than focusing on careers and jobs (CultureGrams, 2014).

In this context, conflict resolution is based on respectful dialogue and an awareness of the importance of diversity in achieving peace. The social culture of New Zealand also encompasses the principle of "whakawhanaungatanga," which is a concept from Maori culture that emphasizes the building and nurturing of relationships. This principle emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships, maintaining harmonious interactions, and resolving conflicts through peaceful means. This approach encourages individuals to approach conflicts with empathy and seek reconciliation, thereby avoiding confrontation or aggressive actions. By applying the principle of "whakawhanaungatanga," New Zealand promotes a dignified approach to conflict resolution, fosters mutual respect, and maintains harmonious relationships between individuals and communities.

The collaborative approach is also an integral part of New Zealand's social culture in resolving conflicts. The people of New Zealand recognize the importance of working together and reaching consensus in finding solutions for differences and disputes. This approach reflects the cultural values of New Zealand that emphasize the importance of cooperation and justice in conflict resolution. Additionally, New Zealand also has institutions and mechanisms that support peaceful conflict resolution. The government and society of New Zealand recognize the importance of a fair and transparent legal system in handling conflicts and protecting individual rights. A legal system based on principles of justice and human rights provides assurance to citizens in resolving their disputes. Additionally, dispute resolution institutions such as courts, mediation bodies, and other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms also play a role in assisting parties to achieve fair and peaceful resolutions. By fostering a cultural framework based on inclusivity, equality, open communication, the principle of "whakawhanaungatanga," as well as employing collaborative approaches and effective conflict resolution institutions, New Zealand has successfully created an environment that encourages peace and harmony among individuals and communities.

## **The Cultural Diversity and Multiculturalism in New Zealand Help Overcome Social Conflicts**

Cultural diversity and multiculturalism in New Zealand play a crucial role in addressing social conflicts by promoting understanding, inclusivity, and equality. Here are some ways in which cultural diversity and multiculturalism contribute to resolving social conflicts.

### **a) Fostering Understanding and Empathy**

Nurturing understanding and empathy is a crucial aspect of multiculturalism in addressing social conflicts in New Zealand. Through cultural diversity, individuals from various backgrounds can interact and learn from one another. In this process, understanding perspectives, beliefs, and diverse traditions becomes possible. Nurturing understanding involves opening the mind and heart to the experiences and viewpoints of others. Through interactions with different cultures, individuals can overcome stereotypes and prejudices they may have held previously. They can recognize the uniqueness and complexity of each culture and understand that differences are not a threat but rather a source of richness.

In the context of multiculturalism in New Zealand, nurturing understanding and empathy is achieved through social interactions, education, and cultural awareness. Nurturing understanding and empathy is a crucial step in strengthening relationships among individuals and communities, aiming to create an inclusive society and reduce the potential for social conflicts caused by ignorance or misunderstanding. Through understanding and empathy, New Zealand can build bridges between different cultural groups and create a social climate that is harmonious and supportive.

### **b) Promoting Social Cohesion**

Promoting social cohesion is an important goal of multiculturalism in addressing social conflicts in New Zealand. The concept of social cohesion refers to a state where individuals in society feel connected, supportive of one another, and have a strong sense of unity despite cultural or ethnic differences. In the context of multiculturalism, promoting social cohesion involves the recognition and appreciation of diverse cultural identities. New Zealand has implemented policies and practices that support cultural diversity, ensuring that every individual feels acknowledged and valued regardless of their background. In an inclusive environment, people feel that they have a place and make valuable contributions to society.

In promoting social cohesion, New Zealand also emphasizes the importance of building a strong national identity that involves all its citizens, regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds. This includes promoting shared values such as equality, mutual understanding, and justice, which serve as the foundation for harmonious relationships within society. By fostering social cohesion, New Zealand creates an environment that allows individuals from diverse cultures and ethnicities to coexist in understanding and tolerance. This helps reduce tension and social conflicts that may arise from cultural or ethnic differences. In a cohesive society, individuals feel that they are integral parts of the whole and work together to create a better future.

### **c) Facilitating Intercultural Dialogue**

Facilitating intercultural dialogue is a crucial aspect of multiculturalism in addressing social conflicts in New Zealand. Intercultural dialogue creates a space for individuals from different cultural backgrounds to interact, share ideas, and understand each other. New Zealand promotes intercultural dialogue by providing platforms and opportunities for people from diverse cultures to meet, speak, and listen to one another. This can occur through various activities such as public forums, seminars, or cultural events that involve active participation from different cultural groups. Through this dialogue, individuals can express their views, share experiences, and explore different perspectives.

Intercultural dialogue also involves an open and empathetic approach to listening. This allows individuals to understand the cultural backgrounds and values that shape the perspectives and actions of others. In this dialogue, intercultural conflicts or tensions can be openly and constructively discussed, with the aim of achieving deeper understanding and seeking mutually beneficial solutions. This dialogue plays a crucial role in bridging cultural groups, strengthening social cohesion, and promoting peace. In constructive dialogue, misunderstandings can be corrected, prejudices can be overcome, and new perspectives can be discovered. By facilitating intercultural dialogue, New Zealand creates a strong foundation for achieving understanding and harmony among diverse cultures. This brings long-term benefits in reducing social conflicts, promoting inclusivity, and building a society that respects one another.

d) Implementing Inclusive Policies And Laws

Implementing inclusive policies and laws is one of the effective ways that New Zealand undertakes in resolving social conflicts. The country has established a framework that supports multiculturalism and protects the rights of diverse communities. Inclusive policies and laws aim to ensure equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and cultural expression for all citizens. New Zealand has enacted laws that safeguard human rights, including the rights of individuals in cultural, religious, linguistic, and ethnic contexts. The presence of these laws provides assurance for individuals from various cultural backgrounds to live free from discrimination and maintain their identities.

The New Zealand government strives to create an environment where the voices and interests of all cultural groups are recognized and valued. By implementing inclusive policies and laws, New Zealand establishes a framework that promotes equality, reduces systemic injustices, and mitigates potential conflicts arising from cultural differences. This helps foster a more harmonious social environment, where all citizens feel respected, acknowledged, and engaged in the broader life of the community. The implementation of inclusive policies and laws also provides a strong legal foundation for addressing discrimination, hatred, and harmful actions against diverse communities. It offers protection for individuals and groups who may be vulnerable to conflicts or unfair treatment. It creates a comprehensive framework that not only respects cultural diversity but also ensures that all citizens feel valued, protected, and have equal opportunities in the social, political, and economic life of the country.

e) Improving Education And Cultural Awareness

Improving education and awareness is one important aspect in resolving social conflicts in New Zealand. The education system in this country plays a crucial role in promoting multiculturalism and addressing social injustices. Through education, New Zealand introduces programs that encourage a deeper cultural understanding among students. It is evident that New Zealand society highly values education, with an adult literacy rate of 99% and an average school duration of 12.5 years (CultureGrams, 2014).

Schools often integrate multicultural education into their curriculum, teaching students about various cultures, histories, and perspectives. This helps develop a sense of mutual respect, appreciation, and understanding among students, and contributes to a more inclusive society. Additionally, education also plays a role in increasing awareness of human rights, equality, and rejecting discrimination. Students are taught to appreciate differences and understand that all individuals have an equal right to live in freedom and dignity. By expanding knowledge and understanding of various cultures, New Zealand creates opportunities for individuals to interact, learn from each other, and build positive relationships. Arifudin (2007) defines multicultural education as education that encompasses cultural diversity in response to demographic and cultural changes in specific communities and even the world as a whole. Meanwhile, according to Rustam (2013), multicultural education is a policy in educational practice that recognizes,

accepts, and affirms the differences and similarities of humans associated with culture, gender, race, and social class.

Education helps reduce conflicts that may arise due to ignorance or misunderstanding between cultural groups. Enhancing education and awareness comprehensively is a long-term investment in creating a more inclusive society and reducing social conflicts. By increasing knowledge, understanding, and positive attitudes towards diversity, individuals can act as agents of change in society. They can promote intercultural dialogue, avoid prejudice, and work together to achieve common goals that reflect equality and peace.

### **Multicultural Education in New Zealand in Cultivating Understanding and Tolerance Among Cultures**

Multicultural education in New Zealand plays a vital role in fostering understanding and tolerance among cultures within the education system. The country actively recognizes the importance of nurturing students' understanding and respect for the diverse cultures around them. Multicultural education serves as a strong foundation for promoting awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity, with the aim of creating a more inclusive and harmonious society. One key role of multicultural education is to provide students with opportunities to learn about different cultures, traditions, and perspectives. Individuals with bicultural skills are often utilized to bridge two culturally conflicted groups due to their different viewpoints (Kiri & Linda, 2010). Therefore, when students receive multicultural education, there is a significant possibility of becoming individuals who are bicultural, enabling them to address conflicts effectively.

The multicultural education curriculum is designed with consideration for the diversity of New Zealand society and the global community as a whole, exposing students to various diverse cultural experiences. Through interactions with different cultures, students can develop a broader worldview and gain valuable knowledge in dismantling stereotypes and prejudices that often arise from ignorance. Multicultural education also encourages the opening of dialogue and discussions about cultural differences and similarities. A safe and inclusive learning environment is created for students to freely express their perspectives, share experiences, and ask questions about different cultures. Through such interactions, students can gain a deeper understanding of diverse cultural practices, beliefs, and values.

Multicultural education also aims to develop cross-cultural skills and competencies. Students are taught how to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, communicate effectively, collaborate, and solve problems collaboratively amidst cultural differences. These skills enable students to easily adapt to diverse social environments, build positive relationships, and find common ground and shared understanding that can reduce the potential conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings. Multicultural education plays a crucial role in fostering open dialogue and discussions about cultural differences and similarities. In a multicultural educational environment, students are provided with a safe space to express their perspectives, share experiences, and ask questions about culture. Through these interactions, students can gain a deeper understanding of diverse cultural practices, beliefs, and values. This process is essential in cultivating empathy, respect, and understanding, which are key elements in promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence among cultures.

Multicultural education plays a vital role in challenging biases and discrimination by highlighting the contributions and achievements of different cultural groups. Through this approach, multicultural education addresses social inequalities within society, promotes social justice, and empowers students to challenge unfair practices. Multicultural education in New Zealand plays a significant role in promoting understanding and tolerance among cultures. By introducing students to diverse cultural perspectives, multicultural education helps develop the ability to engage in open dialogue and build inclusive relationships. It also serves an important

function in fostering a tolerant attitude within individuals. Multicultural education can address differences of opinion regarding cultural diversity, ethnicity, race, religion, language, and more (Effendi, Yoga, & Hafizh, 2021). Moreover, students are taught important intercultural skills to address misunderstandings and cultural conflicts. Multicultural education challenges biases and discrimination by emphasizing the valuable contributions of different cultural groups. Through a deep understanding of social justice, students are encouraged to take a stance and action that promotes equality and fairness.

There have been several previous studies related to the implementation of multicultural education, including Stübig's research (1995) on multicultural education in the UK, Kahn (2008) and Mahiri (2017) in the United States, Karatas (2015) in Antalya, Chang (2012) and Shen (2019) in Korea, Tran & Johnston-Guerrero (2016) in Ohio, and Jackson & Nesterova (2017) in Hong Kong. The findings of these studies generally provide similar arguments and recommendations, stating that multicultural education can provide equitable opportunities for all students, even those from minority cultural groups (Hidayat, R., Bunyamin, & Elly, M., 2020).

In an inclusive and respectful learning environment, multicultural education equips students with the necessary tools to build bridges between cultures and promote a harmonious society. By emphasizing social justice and recognizing cultural diversity, multicultural education encourages students to become agents of change, bringing about positive transformations in their communities. By maintaining this approach, New Zealand is committed to creating a generation that understands, appreciates, and respects diverse cultures, making the country an inspiring example in building an inclusive and harmonious society

## CONCLUSION

The social culture of New Zealand plays a vital role in resolving conflicts and promoting peace within the country. The emphasized cultural norms and practices in New Zealand contribute strongly to conflict resolution and efforts to create a peaceful life for its inhabitants. One significant aspect of New Zealand's social culture that has a significant impact on conflict resolution is the emphasis on open dialogue and communication. The people of New Zealand highly value the exchange of ideas and opinions, and there is a strong tradition of engaging in constructive conversations when faced with conflicts. With values such as "manaakitanga" (hospitality), "whanaungatanga" (kinship), and "tikanga" (Maori cultural principles), New Zealand society is open, friendly, and their lifestyle is more relaxed and informal. The role of New Zealand's social culture in addressing conflicts includes fostering understanding and empathy, promoting social cohesion, facilitating intercultural dialogue, implementing inclusive policies and laws, and enhancing education and cultural awareness. Overall, multicultural education in New Zealand plays a crucial role in promoting understanding and tolerance between cultures. Multicultural education serves the important function of nurturing tolerance within individuals. It also has the potential to reconcile differences in opinions regarding cultural diversity, ethnicity, race, religion, language, and other aspects.

This is supported by previous research related to the implementation of multicultural education, where the average findings consistently provide arguments and recommendations stating that multicultural education can provide equal opportunities for all individuals, even those from minority cultural groups. Therefore, New Zealand emphasizes multicultural education to help address conflicts or build conflict resolution skills within society.

Advice for researchers interested in studying the social cultural conflicts in New Zealand is to collect data through direct engagement to obtain deeper insights and more accurate results.

Researchers should explore the various cultures that play a role in conflict resolution or contribute to peacebuilding. The current research has limitations due to the lack of firsthand data, which restricts the analysis to previous studies and online discussions with experts.

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