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“Can I just be me?”
Looking at the importance of culture in education through an analysis of Austrian and Aotearoa New Zealand education policy

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Acknowledgments

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Thank you.

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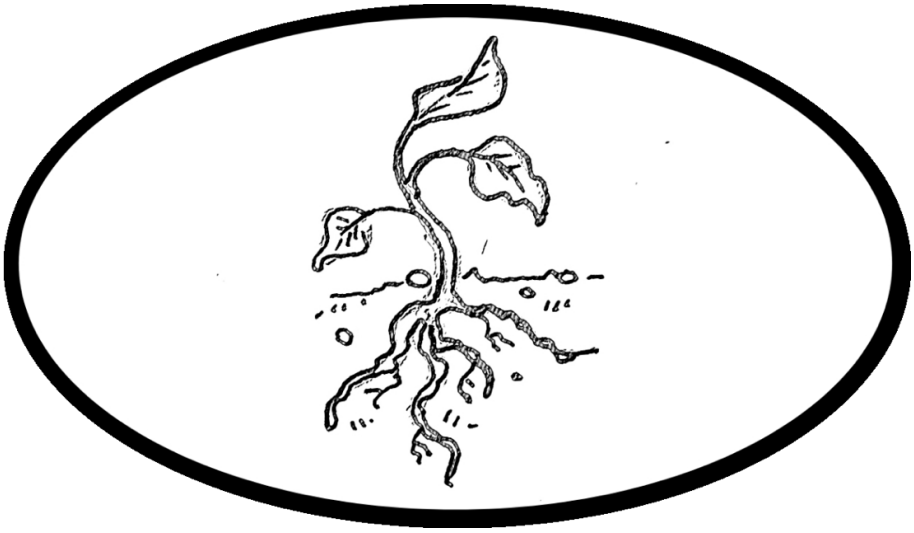
Prologue



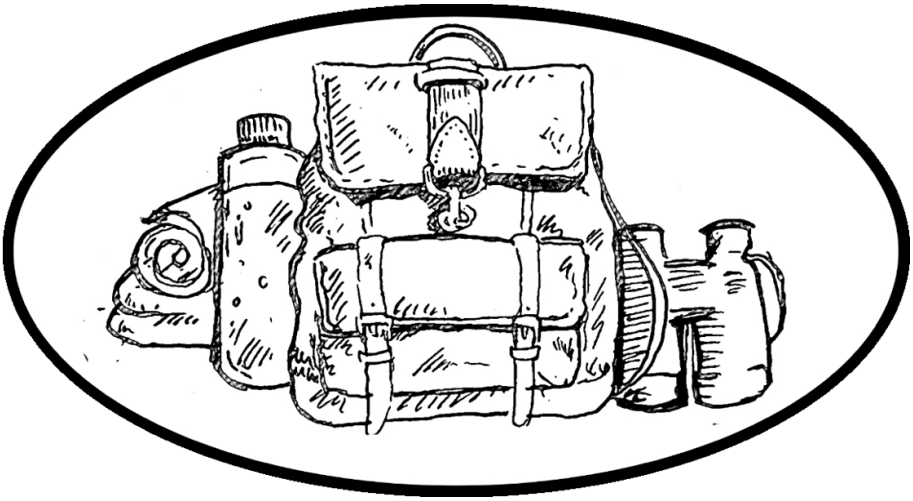
Growing up in the Austrian countryside, my village community provided a space to live and celebrate Austrian culture and traditions. I could embrace traditional dress, food, music, language, and festivities as an important part of my life. It gave me a place to develop my musical skills, make friends, discover my surroundings and learn valuable life lessons about navigating the social world.

All those experiences inspired a fascination with other cultures within me. What do people celebrate throughout the year in other places, how do they go about it, what do they eat and wear, what are their songs, and how do they dress for the occasion? My curiosity has led me to many different places, allowed me to meet the most wonderful people, and to learn so very much about our unique differences and manifold similarities.

It was this journey, driven by my curiosity, that has led me to where I am today, writing this dissertation far from home for the University of Glasgow. This work has been preceded by a High School project on the use and variations of Scots, by an undergraduate dissertation on the use of dialect and standardised language in Austrian kindergarten children, and another paper on the importance of language for our personal identity. Now, I am turning towards education to better understand the role that culture plays in schools, inspired by my very own experiences in Austria.

If you are curious and want to hear more, I would like to invite you to come along and continue reading. I hope that you will enjoy the way that this story unfolds, a story of research inspired by my own experiences, by the educational system, and by the many cultures and people I have encountered up until this point. Maybe you will learn something completely new, maybe you will be able to look at the world from a slightly different angle, or maybe it will just make for an interesting read to pass the time. Whatever it might be, I am glad that I get to share my story here with you.

Chapter 1
Before the journey begins...



In which we find out where it all began, what road lies ahead, and how the journey shall be undertaken.

This master's dissertation, which you are currently reading, is an exercise in storytelling. While stories and scientific work tend to be seen as if they were polar opposites, science is but a story told in a particular fashion (Hoffmann, 2014). This piece of work wants to lay bare its intentions, origins and desired outcomes, and will make no secret of the human bias within it. Objectivity is a fickle thing for humans, who always carry their own agendas, hopes, fears and what not, into their work. While objectivity is what the Western scientific tradition strives for, some would argue that acknowledging the subjectivity of all human experience enhances our understanding more than it reduces it (Battiste, 2008; Bishop, 2011). Meyer (2008) explains how only when we are aware of our own positioning, we can begin to grasp the differences between people, and gain insight that no longer confuses uniformity and universality but allows for a deeper understanding instead. However, I can tell that I am getting carried away in my explanations. Allow me to take a step back and share with you how this story came to be.

The story begins

Like other stories, scientifically and non-scientifically, this one begins with a human who asks a question. In this particular case, the human posing the question was myself. Allow me to indulge you with a short and sweet insight to get us on track.

My travels around the world, experiences with educational systems, and encounters with different cultures have pushed my curiosity over the years towards wanting to better understand how things are done throughout the world. Venturing beyond Europe, my road led to Aotearoa New Zealand (ANZ). It was a fascinating trip, full of new discoveries and encounters with the most wonderful people. I tried to understand what made ANZ the place it is, and rather specifically what it is they do differently to vastly outrank Austria's schools in the standardised PISA tests of educational systems around the world (OECD, 2018). As I accumulated information, I stumbled upon debates over debates about culture in school. Particularly for Māori students, underserved significantly by the ANZ educational system, this was of utmost importance (Stewart, 2014; Hoskins & Jones, 2019). The government tried to combat low achievement, high suspension rates and students failing by ensuring that Māori students would be acknowledged for who they are, as Māori (Bishop, 2003; Bishop, 2011). That means their culture, customs, and language form part of the educational setting, just as much as Pākehā (European New Zealanders) culture and customs define the educational setting. In the end, that was what Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi), the founding document of ANZ, prescribed when manifesting equality between Māori and Pākehā (Bishop, 2003; Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006; Bishop, 2011).

Reading about the importance of giving students room to be themselves and acknowledging their cultural experiences to allow success made me question how my own culture and its values had been represented in my education. I eventually realised that my own culture, alive and kicking in every village and town, was left at the school gates once I moved past Volksschule (primary school, for children aged six to ten). My spare time was invested in traditional events and cultural festivities, yet the knowledge I gained from them, the experiences I made, were never of any use in class, alles für die Katz, almost. A pastime, a hobby, learning for life – but clearly not for the formal educational system. Many of my practical skills, understandings of the world, and social knowledge were passed on through my culture and traditions, but not to be mentioned within the school walls.

I wondered then: How might my educational experiences have differed had my culture been a part of it? As McCaslin and Breton (2008) said, only when we understand ourselves will we gain a deeper understanding of others, as we begin to unravel our relationships, our

similarities and differences. They speak of colonisers, of European descendants all over the globe who have lost touch with their own culture, and they muse whether it might not benefit everyone if those colonisers were able to reconcile with their ancestral roots and understand where they came from. It made me wonder whether my school could have done differently by my culture, too.

The more information I gathered, the more questions interrupted my research. I learnt of the educational reform in ANZ, and how, slowly but surely, positive effects of it cropped up, impacting on young Māori. It made me wonder: What could Austria and its educational legislation learn from ANZ about acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds?

Where the road shall lead from here

As a consequence of this curiosity, I decided that the journey of my dissertation should be in search for an answer; this is what I have found. Yet, these are only the first pages, you still have a long way ahead.

I begin by drawing a map of what I will look at throughout this adventure, explaining the rationale, the roadmap and giving some reasons for why this story is told in a format rather unusual for a master's dissertation.

In the following chapter, theoretical lenses will be crafted: Kaupapa Māori, decolonial theory and critical theory. They will shed light on the questions raised, ways to read the answers and gaining a deeper insight.

Next we embark on an autoethnographic journey, dedicated to my personal experiences that gave rise to my questions, leading me to policy and legislation.

I chose two policy documents from ANZ, and two from Austria, to analyse and compare. This will shed light on their differences – and similarities – and what lessons Austria may take away from ANZ's approach.

Finally, the knowledge discovered and the insights gained will be laid out in a concluding chapter. It will tie up loose ends, bring everything together and back in, to see the bigger picture and peek beyond at what is yet to be uncovered.

However, before we move on, a word or two needs to be said about the presentation of this research, and why it matters that it is not quite the usual academic format, but with a particular creative touch many academic work never gets to experience.

On storytelling

Berryman, SooHoo and Nevin (2013) describe how storytelling falls within both the arts and sciences. Particularly in the social sciences, what we study are the stories of human experience, because stories are how we make sense of our lives (Bishop, 2003). There are many different ways of telling a story, and many different factors that influence it. Some scientists are therefore inherently suspicious of them, as stories and storytelling are not an exact science (Dahlstrom, 2014; Hoffmann, 2014). Rowcliffe (2004) describes it as a skill to be acquired and honed. Richardson (2003) pushes this another step further, encouraging scientists to step outside their comfort zones, understand writing as an important part of the scientific inquiry and suggesting for them to look at it in a new light: try new formats, new styles, new perspectives along every step of to the process, to deepen understanding and broaden the scientific approach in an overlap with the creative process.
Looking at the Cambridge Dictionary, a story is defined as “a description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events”. Storytelling, according to them, is “the activity of writing, telling or reading stories”. Ultimately, research is the telling of a – scientific – story. Indeed, historically, cross-culturally, some might even say universally, humans have used stories to share their knowledge (Englehart, 2011; Gela, Hayes & Usher, 2013; Iseke, 2013; Bowman, 2018; Fernández-Llamazares & Cabeza, 2018). Narratives engage their listeners (Rowcliffe, 2004), involve them emotionally (Egbokhare & Oyelude, 2010; Bowman, 2018) and are used, increasingly, as pedagogical devices (Iseke, 2013). I want to pay tribute to this, and set a reminder for my readers, hence this is how I have chosen to tell you the story of my research.

Another important point to remember, explained by Smith (2012), is that history is always written by those holding power. Keeping in mind that colonialism is a significant aspect of ANZ history, we ought to remember that many stories recorded about Indigenous peoples and their lands were told from a Western European perspective. She explains how therefore, only what colonisers wanted recorded was recorded, in a way that suited themselves and served to justify their actions. Early stories of travellers spoke of adventure, bravery, a fascination with the unknown, von Abenteuerlust und Wagemut. The stories of scientists would often classify and exemplify superiority and differences between humans, pointlessly justifying the distribution of privilege. Stories of colonisation and encounters with Indigenous peoples were shaped to mask and reason for cruelty, war and dehumanisation (Smith, 2012). When telling a story, the moment someone listens to what we have to say, we are

given power. Bishop (2011) calls researchers to caution, to keep our guard up and tread carefully, forever mindful of the power we hold, that any story we share can shape another's view and understanding of the world, and sometimes even sway them one way or another (Dahlstrom, 2014).

Perspective also powerfully influences our understanding, and always creates bias. Jones and Jenkins (2008) retell historical events from both Māori and Pākehā perspectives. They begin with an example of a first encounter: While Pākehā described the display of a mere show-fight, the Māori described an important ceremonial act establishing their relationship with the colonisers. Another example is that of the first missionary school: Pākehā closed the school disappointedly in light of low and infrequent attendance from Māori; simultaneously, Māori celebrated a success, since they had introduced the teacher to Māori culture and language, te reo Māori.
Delpit (2013) talks of perspectives when speaking of Brown vs Board of Education in the US: On the one hand, school segregation was banned by law, and race would no longer be a factor deciding school attendance; on the flipside, African-American teachers lost their jobs and African-American students, now taught alongside white students, were disenfranchised through their teachers' racist attitudes, eine wichtige Kehrseite der Medaille.

"Until the lion can tell his own stories, tales of the hunt will be told by the hunter." That is how Lincoln and Denzin (2008, p. 563) paint it. Perspective matters, and that of the lion would differ rather vastly from that of the hunter in all kinds of ways. We need to be aware where a story is told from. Therefore, the formatting here is inspired by that of a novel, complete with chapters and all. This story on legislation in ANZ and Austria is researched and formulated by me, and I do not want the readers to forget about the inevitable bias that comes with that for even a moment. The style resembles that of the stories I have grown up with, the books of (non-)fiction that I read to this day. It will hopefully remind you, dear reader, of the biases within these pages. We often tell the stories of the facts, Hoffmann (2014) says, and forget about the story of the researcher. Yet, researcher subjectivity shapes perspective and understanding. The lion has different communal structures, social rules, and language; their account would be based on a whole set of different assumptions. My perspective relies on patterns of sense-making and assumptions about the world that you as a reader might relate to, or that might be completely alien and new. Keep that in mind and beware of it as you read on.

Culture shapes all of our sense-making. From the little things, like tone of voice and articulation (Delpit, 2013), to our assumptions about society as a whole. Smith (2012) speaks of how imperialism and colonialism, over many decades, have shaped our understanding of the world, eventually shaping contemporary philosophies of capitalism and globalisation. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) point out how capitalism, neoliberalism, and neo-colonialism now frame the world. Ideas about how our society works help us build models and lenses for making sense of it. They are provided by those around us, so we understand the world we live in and not be lost as we grow up. No matter how hard we try, we may never be able to really shake off their influence, but they also help us understand why society has become the way it is. They are not an ultimate evil, so long as they are used cautiously and with eyes wide open for other ideas.

I was trained at a Scottish university in the scientific discipline of Psychology. I know of positivism and universality, which shaped Western science for many a century, and still do to this day (Henry & Pene, 2001). All my life, I have been familiar with the disciplines of Western science, and while Smith (2012) understands that these categorisations implicates and insulates them within each other, it is a system that has existed for a long time and which is now culturally ingrained in our understanding of science in Europe. This, again, is not an evil in and of itself, kein Grundübel, but a way to make sense of the world, that has shaped European societies. It is a bias to be aware of and employ where appropriate.

Further, Western European cultures tend to favour individualism over collectivism. We build from the individual to the collective (Smith, 2012); the whole exists because of its individual parts. In other societies, the individual exists because of the collective within which it is embedded; community precedes the individual. Yet again, simply another thing to remember when reading this story.

This is the second reason for the format of this work. The stories I grew up with were stories of individuals, von Einzelkämpfern und ihren Abenteuern. My perspective, which sits at the core of my research, is more individualistic, and I want you to remember this as you read through the chapters.

Last but not least, let us talk about language. Language is a powerful tool: It holds forms of knowing, socialising and interpreting our environment (Battiste, 2008). Boler and Zembylas (2003) emphasise how it shapes our world: How we name things, which meanings are attributed to what, even the simple differences in what we can and cannot describe with the words and grammar structures available impact on what we (cannot) understand. Different

languages use different concepts, and often, as Battiste (2008) explains, these are not translatable. This is particularly important as we navigate three languages: German, English and te reo Māori.

German is my first language, the language I used to access the world as a child, that I have grown up with and that always reminds me of home.

English is a language I have been learning since age ten, that I completed my higher education in and that sometimes these days seems more familiar to me than German.

Te reo Māori is a language different to any I have studied before, that I am still only beginning to have the faintest hint of an idea of, and that has given me insight into completely new understandings of the world.

For reasons of accessibility, and the simple fact that this dissertation is written at Glasgow University, the language chosen for writing is English. However, I want to honour German and te reo Māori by using their terminology and providing translations for understanding. If there are no equivalent translations available, elaborate definitions will take their place. I want to do these languages as much justice as I can from my position, rather than creating a convenient experience for readers, and honour their particular contributions to our understanding of the world. As you may have already noticed, I am choosing my formulations deliberately, as a storyteller and researcher, but also from the perspective of treating with respect those whose work, culture and language I am working with. Using terminology like Indigenous peoples, rather than people, signifies the diversity and complexity of this umbrella term (Smith, 2012), and is only one example of many other deliberate choices I have made. Another choice is implementing the odd German word or phrase to remain without translation, nothing crucial for comprehension, but a treat for any German speaking readers, and a reminder that German is, after all, my first language.

I am also aware that each culture is very different, and that I have differing degrees of familiarity with them. They have their own operational codes, some I am well acquainted with, while others are completely unfamiliar (Delpit, 2006).

Having spent the majority of my life in Austria, I am familiar with its cultural norms and understandings, and feel comfortable navigating them.

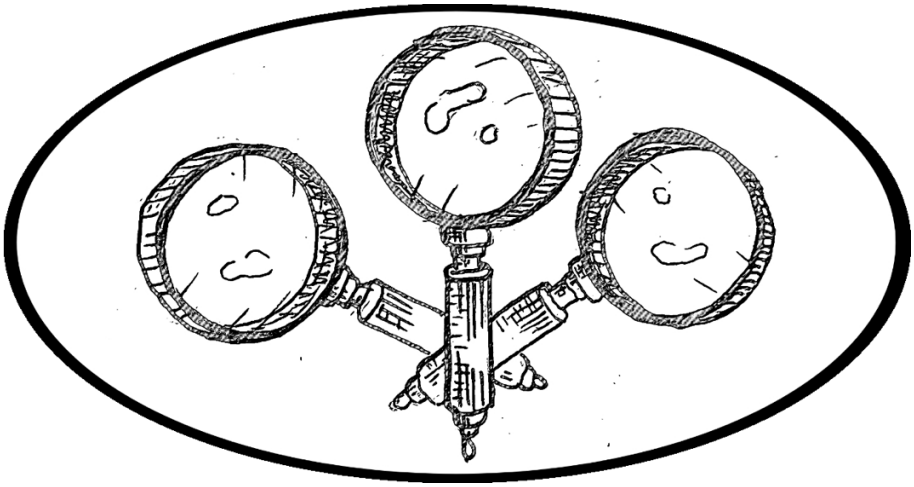
I have travelled ANZ for several months and become familiar with different sides of it, but I am only beginning to build my understanding of it, and oftentimes through my knowledge of Scottish culture as a shorthand in the process.

Māori culture is still unfamiliar to me, and I discover something new about it almost every day. I seek out as many learning opportunities as possible, yet that there is only so much I will ever be able to grasp from far away, and with my personal background.
Additionally, this story also needs to navigate British academic culture, which I have been familiar with for many years. This inevitably enforces another layer upon format and methodology that shall not be underestimated. As much as I try to take my liberties, I am also within a system placing its own demands on everything I do.

Let the adventure begin

So here we are then, ready to begin: a white Austrian cis-woman of working-class background, identifying within the LGBTIQA* community, who has been privileged to travel near and far, but has yet a lot to learn, and you, dear reader, whatever your story may be. We have begun to explore the origins of this pursuit, looked at the tasks ahead and built an understanding of why I do what I do the way I do it.
As much as the presentation and the information I share is mine to decide upon, what you as a reader take away from it is really out of my hands, and very much your own responsibility.
But enough has been said about the introduction, let us begin this journey and see where it leads.

Chapter 2
Understanding the World



In which we build three lenses to see the world.

Humans are innately curious creatures, who take pleasure in discovery and exploration. Although Western science has taken an institutionalised approach to research, it remains an inherently human act of hope, curiosity and collaboration (Smith, 2012). Humans engage with it across cultures, each with their own histories and traditions, languages and ways of knowing. Berryman, SooHoo and Nevin (2013) encouraged their readers to ask fundamental questions about the nature of knowledge: What is it, how is it produced, who holds the power to produce it, whose benefit is it created for and much more. Delpit (2006) sees this kind of questioning as an opportunity to come together and acknowledge differences in epistemologies.

We should seize opportunities to share, rather than engage in endless competition for domination (Smith, 2012; Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013). Instead of enforcing our frameworks upon others (one of the many affinities of colonialism) (Jones & Jenkins, 2008; Smith, 2012) or showing an interest in differences only when it promises profit (another affinity of colonialism, and capitalism) (Battiste, 2008) we can grow our understanding and transform science as we know it (McCaslin & Breton, 2008).

Western European epistemologies, the ones I developed my understanding of science in, are marked by ideas of Cartesian Dualism, which, in the simplest of terms, has a tendency of splitting the world in binary, mutually exclusive opposites (Smith, 2012). Additionally, Smith (2012) considers Western European thinking as more humanistic than naturalistic:

Humans are separate from nature, rather than part of it. We developed a knack in Western science for categorising strictly between subjective and objective perspectives; the first tainted by bias and circumstance, the latter striving for deeper understandings and universalities. It renders us prone to forgetting that observations in our environment are, as a matter of fact, place bound, and decontextualizing can erode half an answer (Delpit, 2006). Henry and Pene (2001) argue that striving for universality in a positivist fashion restricts the information available, as environmental factors are pushed aside. Indeed, attempting to make all knowledge neutral and devoid of context has made particularly Indigenous peoples wary of Western research (Bishop, 2011). For most Indigenous peoples, Bishop (2011) explains, the knower and the known are intricately linked and semantically involved. Battiste (2008) emphasises that Indigenous knowledges relate directly to their environments and are not as easily generalisable. This allows the generation of a variety of unique outlooks on humanity, enriching our knowledge. Rather than holding on to objectivity and unquestioningly accepting universal truths, I found myself pushed to look at circumstances and how things work in relation to each other.

Western research and research theory are inextricably connected to colonialism and imperialism, which was used to manifest power and superiority (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Smith (2012) understands that theory can be used as a tool of oppression. All research can be used to liberate – all research can be used to oppress (Bishop, 2011). A wealth of Indigenous knowledges, science, literature and art was left ignored by colonisers (Giroux, 2003; Battiste, 2008), alternative myths about them were spread instead under the guise of truth (Bishop, 2011), and a number of so-called universal truths about human behaviour and biology resulted from enforced Western thinking (Tejeda, Espinoza & Gutierrez, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) call to decolonise the academy, and protect it from neo-colonial influences, to no longer undermine the wealth of knowledges out there. Bishop (2011) encourages us to create our understanding of the world together, mutually evolving as we expand our knowledges. By changing our angle, we can productively grow our epistemologies (Jones & Jenkins, 2008; Meyer, 2008). Walker, Eketone and Gibbs (2006) call on us to revise our ideas of who is an expert and who is not, of what we count as truth and how we reach it, so we can create a broader approach to science that sees the bigger picture, rather than focusing narrowly. Maybe, Heshusius (1994) muses, we can move on from Cartesian dualities, simplifications about subjectivity and objectivity, and grow a way of participatory consciousness that allows us to enter new spaces of sense-making.

It was all these researchers and theorists that convinced me that, in order to be successful on this journey, more than one epistemological lens would need to be crafted, um meinen Horizont zu erweitern. Indeed, I eventually settled on three different ones.
The first to be crafted is Kaupapa Māori, an epistemology developed by Māori, for Māori.
The second lens is decolonial theory, so we confront research's colonial history.
Lastly, critical theory will hopefully provide a critical Western European lens.
So, let us move ahead, and learn to see the world, und etwas mehr Licht ins Dunkel zu bringen.

Kaupapa Māori: Renewing Roots

Kaupapa Māori, which can be translated as collective vision philosophy (Bishop, 2003) or collective philosophy principle (Cram, Pipi & Paipa, 2018), refers to research that is being done with, by, and for Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001; Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006). The history of Kaupapa Māori for the West begins in 1840, when Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed – and immediately ignored by the colonisers (Bishop, 2003; Bishop, 2011; Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006). Followed by decades of suppression and discrimination, Māori never ceased to fight, and the tables finally began to turn in the 1960s with the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal, where claims on treaty violations can be made (Smith, 2012).
When general educational reform began in the 1980s, there was a loud call to finally address the widely known disparities in educational success between Māori and Pākehā students, and to work towards equality in education (Bishop, 2011; Tocker, 2015; Cram, Pipi & Paipa, 2018). This included a call for education in te reo Māori (Smith, 2012; Tocker, 2015) but also to address struggles within mainstream (English-medium) education. Māori aspirations, preferences and practices needed to be acknowledged in education (Bishop, 2003; Cram, Pipi & Paipa, 2018; Hoskins & Jones, 2019). This was when the foundations of Kaupapa Māori research were laid (Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013).

Rather than taking a reactive stance to injustice, Kaupapa Māori is a way for Māori to take agency over the research conducted on and about them, moving from being research objects to subjects with fully realised agency (Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013; Rico, 2013; Berryman, Egan & Ford, 2017). After a long history of having their knowledges appropriated (Smith, 2012), Kaupapa Māori looks to the past to learn from it and employ the tools now available to build towards a better, more just future (Henry & Pene, 2001).

At Kaupapa Māori's basis stand a few assumptions: Being Māori is the baseline, der Ausgangspunkt, and Māori philosophies, principles, beliefs, practices and language are legitimate and valid. Kaupapa Māori acknowledges Māori struggles for autonomy and challenges colonial assumptions (Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006; Bishop, 2011; Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013). It focuses on self-determination, empowerment, legitimacy and authority (Henry & Pene, 2001). Bishop (2003; 2011) and Kana and Tamatea (2006) give five core issues of power that need always be at the forefront of research: Initiation (How does the research begin? Who defines its outcomes?), benefits (Who will gain from this research? Who will be disadvantaged?), representation (Who does this research speak for? How is their reality displayed?), legitimacy (What legitimacy can be claimed by whom?) and accountability (Who does the researcher need to answer to?). This calls for co-operation with communities, with elders, and to do so in a culturally safe way (Henry & Pene, 2001; Smith, 2012).

Looking at the literature, I found many helpful guidelines to assist researchers in establishing a Kaupapa Māori approach (i.e. Smith, 2012; Cram, Pipi & Paipa, 2018). They are usually rich in application of te reo Māori and Māori principles. While this can render them complicated to understand at first, their many explanations and examples assist in building familiarity over time. A comprehensive breakdown is that of Hiha (2015). The first principle they introduce is *whanaungatanga*, which means recognising, and respecting the connections of *whānau* (family; Bishop, 2011), *hapū* (subtribe; Bishop, 2011) and *iwi* (people; Bishop, 2011) through *whakapapa* (genealogy; Bishop, 2011). This is often also connected to *whakawhanaungatanga*, the process of establishing relationships through the interconnectedness of all people (Bishop, 2003; Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006). The second principle is *manaakitanga*, the way of nurturing connections and relationships through actions, such as *titiro, whakarongo...kōrero* (Look, listen...speak) and *ngākau māhaki* (calm and caring). This is followed by *tino rangatiratanga,* the principle of relative autonomy, the self-determination principle (Cram, Pipi & Paipa, 2018) or the ability and right to each determine our own destinies (Smith, 2012). *Taonga tuku iho* stands for cultural continuance, the treasure passed from the ancestors (Bishop, 2003), traditional protocols and mechanisms (Bishop, 2011); this includes walking the talk (letting our actions reflect our words) and therefore acting with integrity (*Ko te mana ko te kupu)* and not flaunting knowledge unnecessarily, but for the communities' benefit (*kaua e mahaki).*

Many of these principles were new to me and reading their manifold translations and interpretations across literature allowed me to understand the contextualised nature of

Kaupapa Māori. Rather than striving for universality, particular moments and circumstances need to be considered and respected, in order to truly understand what is happening. It also means treating Māori peoples respectfully and looking at their culture as another status quo. It means treating their language as equal to English, and carefully handling their cultural concepts and ideas. Particularly as a non-Māori, I shall treat the use of their epistemology and culture with utmost care and hope to move away from it with greater understanding and appreciation than I had before.

Kaupapa Māori will help get a deeper understanding of the scientific processes from a different angle, one not informed by Western European thinking so much as Māori traditions. It can help us see our path more clearly and recognise what we may otherwise not realise to be there. It moves away from the hierarchical nature of academia and forces a look beyond the approach to science I am so familiar with.

Decolonial Theory: Understanding the Past

Decolonial theory (DT), this may not come as a surprise, is concerned with the effects of colonialism (Smith, 2012). Oftentimes compared to postcolonialism, it differs in its more activist stance (Swadener & Mutua, 2008), and is defined by many as a reaction (Rico, 2013) and resistance to colonialism (McCaslin & Breton, 2008). For some, this distinction is critical, as is well illustrated in a quote from Indigenous researcher Bobbi Sykes: “What? Post-colonialism? Have they left?” (Smith, 2012, p. 25). DT encourages us to look at what we can do about the effects of colonialism, rather than moving forward with ideologies built on it, such as capitalism (Tejeda, Espinoza & Gutierrez, 2003) and globalisation (Smith, 2012).

DT is a reminder that we live in multicultural societies. We are far from all being the same, rather we have an array of differing experiences which are all equally valid (Giroux, 2003). However, being written by those in power, history tends not to reflect that (Smith, 2012). As Smith (2012) poignantly summarises historic events of colonialism: “They came, they saw, the named, they claimed” (p. 83). Tejeda, Espinoza and Gutierrez (2003) emphasise that we cannot afford to have the history of research be ridden with amnesia, not if we claim to work towards social justice. They call on us to remember the persistent effects of colonialism and acknowledge the direct relationships between political processes, social structures of colonialism and Western knowledge representation. Smith (2012) adds that research subjects who previously had little say in what happened to them and the knowledge claimed about them, would finally receive an active role. Indeed, similar to Kaupapa Māori, DT

demands for researchers to first and foremost respect those they work with, rather than asking the participants to respect the research. It also asks: Who benefits from this research (Swadener, & Mutua, 2008)?

Smith (2012) sees a path leading to new cooperation: personal development through involvement by the researcher, prior and continuous consultations with the (often Indigenous) populations, and creating spaces for participants within the research, rather than demanding of them to fill the spaces the researcher allocates to them. Jones and Jenkins (2008) suggest to not eliminate differences, but seek them out, contrast them actively and accept them for what they are. In doing this, we are asked to step away from old norms and widely accepted understandings. We may even move past deficit theorising: rather than looking for what is wrong with the people, we can question the systems we are in (Bishop, 2003; Delpit, 2006; Smith, 2012; Berryman, Egan & Ford, 2017).

Swadener and Mutua (2008) extend this embrace of differences from conducting the research to representing results also: rather than prescribed papers, DT gives opportunity to showcase knowledges in all their various forms, whether that involves dance, poetry or song. The status quo need not be the norm anymore, in der Vielfalt liegt die Würze.

DT encourages us to look at colonial history and realise how it still resonates today. It reminds us that our past created our present, and that many of the ways we use research stem from oppressive techniques, and many common-sense ideas we hold are based upon attempts to suppress others. DT asks us to step away from thinking that we can truly understand the individual as an entity in and of itself, and to instead look at the inescapable systems all around us.

DT will help me remember how we have come to where we are and help me develop a better understanding of colonial influences. Having grown up in a country disconnected from the British empire, my comprehension of it was limited for a long time, and its effects only partially clear to me. Yet, in the globalised world colonialism has facilitated the creation of, it is crucial to see its effects and build an understanding of it, especially in times of global comparisons like PISA. We cannot reverse the effect of colonialism, but this lens will help us see the past more clearly and the traces and trenches it has left on our present.

Critical Theory: Tearing Down the Curtain

Tejeda, Espinoza and Gutierrez (2003) see critical theory (CT) as the opposite to positivistic, ahistorical analysis. It challenges inequity and social injustices, by realising that they were

created and maintained by authority and power in the hands of a privileged few, man könnte sagen von den oberen zehntausend (Berryman, Egan & Ford, 2017). In that, it encourages us to look towards those who experience disadvantage, discrimination and suppression, listen to them as the experts of their own lives, and build our understanding from there (Bishop, 2003; Berryman, Egan & Ford, 2017). CT asks us to do just that: be critical. It asks us to confront what we accept as reality that we so comfortably take for granted, to look beyond what we consider absolute knowledge and reassess our understanding of reality (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). This might be an uncomfortable process, and lead to possibly painful realisations (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Giroux & Giroux, 2008). However difficult and complicated, it is especially the uncomfortable feelings that show us that, indeed, this might be something we need to look at.

One of the main figures of CT is Paulo Freire and his critical pedagogy. He calls on us to stand with the oppressed, rather than exerting our (often colonially bestowed) privileges over them (Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013). Bishop (2011) proposes that using Freire's model can help us unravel the structures through which colonisers built the world and change these dynamics in favour of the oppressed.

One of Freire's main concepts is conscientisation: A process in which the oppressed grasp their situation, realise their circumstances and historicity, and begin to understand how they can free themselves from their oppression (Glass, 2001). The next step that occurs is humanisation, as people fully realise their potential and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and others (Blackburn, 2000). All this is supposed to take place through dialogues and mutual exchanges, during which silence is overcome and knowledge is co-created through personal experiences (Blackburn, 2000; Glass, 2001). Freire encouraged others to use his work throughout a variety of contexts, and to apply whenever people find themselves disempowered (Weiler, 1991; Blackburn, 2000).

Berryman, SooHoo and Nevin (2013) describe how some have picked up Freire's ideas: Kaupapa Māori and other Indigenous epistemologies are often likened to CT and its ideas of conscientisation, moving away from being reactionary to proactively freeing themselves from oppression. They carry similar ideas on the importance of critique, resistance, struggle and emancipation (Smith, 2012). They are also connected in being embedded within particular historical and societal contexts which inform the powers at play and influence possibilities for change (Berryman, Egan & Ford, 2017). However, that is not all which Berryman, Egan and Ford (2017) find in similarities: they both highly value human dignity and strive for allowing people to use their own voices. Both honour the necessity of

relationships and dialogue in fighting for multicultural reform, rejecting hierarchical power structures and instead supporting epistemological pluralism. They envision self-determination through power over one's destiny, and there are so many more big words and fancy descriptions of all that connects them. Maybe Grande (2008) describes it best when likening CT to the holy grail for Indigenous researchers.
Walker, Eketone and Gibbs (2006) also described Kaupapa Māori as a form of localised CT, yet one thing is crucial to remember: Despite its connections to Indigenous epistemologies and knowledges, ultimately, CT is deeply rooted in traditions of Western European thinking (Grande, 2008). Caution needs to be employed with its interpretation, as Blackburn (2000) points out, as sometimes CT does not see the oppressed to hold any power within themselves. Rather than realising the power they already have, some theorists focus on giving power, and therefore putting the oppressed in a position of need, counter to Freire's original ideas (Blackburn, 2000).

Questioning the status quo, and considering pluralities and diversities is at the heart of CT (Edwards & Usher, 2003). It teaches us to look past current structures and understand how they dehumanise and keep people in positions of perceived helplessness. It encourages us to look for the societal power everyone holds and move from there towards reformation.
This is particularly relevant in societies that built around power structures. Schools for example are often deeply hierarchical institutions. Education itself is hundreds of years old, and many of the practices we employ today are granted validity partially through their long-standing establishment. CT can help us uncover that, and question where exactly educational ideas and legislations originate from.

There now is a lens to broaden our understanding of epistemology, one to keep in mind the history of research and theory, and one to question the fabric which our understanding of knowledge is made of. With those three lenses in place, we might just have decent enough footing to move ahead. Demnach, eine, zwei, drei, dahin geht's!

Chapter 3
Unravelling the Past

In which we look towards the past to unravel what is hidden there.

The questions I am asking on this journey are directly inspired by my own experiences and past. As I moved forward and learnt new things, I was forced to look at my own life, and be able to shed new light on it from a different angle. This autoethnography serves to share these reflections with you, and help you understand this story better.

What it means to look back

Autoethnography, as the name says, is a type of ethnography, albeit a more biographical one (Curtis, Murphy & Shields, 2014). While ethnographies strive to systematically analyse (-graphy) cultural experiences (ethno-), the autoethnography focuses on the author's personal experience (auto-) (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). By so doing, it understands our social realities as constructed by ourselves (Méndez, 2013). It relies on personal stories, feelings, experiences, anecdotes and observations (Curtis, Murphy & Shields, 2014) to make sense of our social realities, what they mean for each of us and, consequently, our shared experiences (Belbase, Luitel & Taylor, 2008). It acknowledges that there is something deeply personal about social research (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011) and shifts from seeing others as 'them', to understanding people as interlocutors of their own stories. Conquergood (1991) describes autoethnography as an embodied form of research: Our most important tool is our physical body and the way it experiences the world. We communicate those experiences through thick descriptions, that help us share them with

others (Curtis, Murphy & Shields, 2014). As such, autoethnography directly acknowledges the connection between the researcher and the topic observed (Anderson, 2006). Conquergood (1991) and Hoffmann (2014) encourage researchers to realise their importance as communicators and storytellers of their work and experiences.

Being what it is, autoethnography is often criticised as self-indulgent (Curtis, Murphy & Shields, 2014). It is important to remember that much autoethnographic work stems from the "crisis of representation" in the late twentieth century (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011; Méndez, 2013; Hughes & Pennington, 2017), a time during which the God's eye view of research and its approach to objectivity was questioned (Butz & Besio, 2009). During that period, notions of 'neutral' science were called into question (Pillow, 2003) as researchers engaged in moral and ethical debates about results and their interpretations (Bochner & Riggs, 2014; Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Researchers were called upon to be more present in their research in order not to disguise their bias (Anderson, 2006) and to reveal reflections of their personal interests (Butz & Besio, 2009).

Belbase, Luitel and Taylor (2008) explain how this can, in time, inspire other researchers to find their questions within their own stories - as it happened with me. Indeed, rather than self-indulgent, Butz and Besio (2009) see autoethnography as an opportunity: we can use self-narratives to look at wider societal contexts through critical reflection. Pillow (2003) acknowledges the many different ways of forming narratives, to gain a deeper understanding of personal experiences, and therefore of reality. DT and CT similarly call to focus on circumstances and contexts, rather than blind universalities (Conquergood, 1991; Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Particularly within the highly decontextualized setting of much Western European education and research, Delpit (2006) emphasises, we can reverse the effects of cultural neglect through heightened awareness. Telling our stories can help us see the world more clearly (Bishop, 2003).

However, one important element needs to be well in place in order to successfully approach autoethnography: theory (Bochner & Riggs, 2014; Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Hughes and Pennington (2017) lay out how theory sets up frameworks for critique and lenses for interpretation that clear the picture for a deeper understanding. Holman (2016) describes it as a framework to embed it into, a vocabulary with which we write our stories. The theory of this story was established before: Kaupapa Māori, DT and CT. CT in particular encourages us to look behind what we see, to question systems and hierarchies. It tells us not to take for granted what happens but dig deeper and uncover the underlying workings. This autoethnography is evocative (Anderson, 2006; Méndez, 2013) in nature as it is

introspective towards the feelings my memories are connected to, denn Erinnerungen sind Gefühlssache, in order to allow you to better understand my experiences and shine a light on what it means.

Shining a light on days long gone

In order to be able to unravel past experiences, I needed a system that allowed for analysis. Primarily, there needed to be a question: What were my experiences with regards to seeing my own culture reflected in the Austrian educational system?
When answering such a question, it is important to remember the three positions I had held in the Austrian educational system. Firstly, I was a student in school. Secondly, I spent several months in teacher training at Salzburg University and for a diploma to teach German as a second/foreign language, called DaF/DaZ. Thirdly, I worked as a teacher aide, workshop facilitator and private tutor. I decided to reflect in written form, to facilitate the analysis, but also because I enjoy writing. Richardson (2003) encourages researchers to use writing throughout different stages of their work, which is something I have always enjoyed. Keeping journals and creative writing have always been how I organised my thoughts, so the obvious choice for recording my reflections was through writing them down. They are all my personal memories of my own experiences, of conversations I had with teachers, friends, and family, things they told me, things I told them, and shared memories. I chose to write them in English, as it has become my primary language of written communication. In the end, my recollections covered just over 2,500 words, which you can find in the appendix.

The analysis I chose was searching for recurring themes. Reading the reflections multiple times, I identified emotional themes that kept resonating throughout. There were multiple instances of feeling disconnect from others, particularly in a schooling context, which I identified as ‘alienation’. Contrasting that were memories of ‘community’, of working together and learning from one another, a second thematic category. There was also mention of the way ‘language’ was used, particularly looking at dialect and formal language. Lastly, ‘local knowledge’ cropped up, ranging from geographical knowledge to understanding traditions and culture. I am using these four areas to unpack my memories systemically, and compare the impact of them on my experiences across the three different positions I was in. It helps in unravelling the emotional impact they had, individually and collectively. Allow me to now show you what I have found.

Out of place - Alienation

The very first memory that came to mind when thinking of school was that of a fish out of water: struggles with new environments, transitioning from a village where people greet one another to the anonymous ways of the city. Being amongst children that were, majorly, more familiar with these social structures, made me feel alone with the nature of my struggles, distant to the experiences of others. There were other examples of alienation, like the ridicule of traditional songs during choir practice, and a belittling of the musical contributions of village bands, which I participated in. Indeed, there was no place and time where stories of life in my village, the traditions and culture I participated in, ever seemed appropriate within a class context. Discussing global issues, we were looking out into the world, spiced up with stories of others' holidays in foreign nations, there was no place to share that which happened outside our front doors. The strangest occasions were those when culture was welcome for show purposes: when traditional dress and song would be used to present Austria to foreign visitors, yet subsequently shunned again once the performance had served its purpose.

My parents often shared similar feelings, as they found themselves out of place amongst other parents. While appreciating my friends, and happy for the connections I made, they struggled to find their own place with the other parents, and mostly kept to themselves, which was very different to the village context, where everybody knew and appreciated my family. Looking towards memories of teacher training in Austria, no matter what the subject, no lecturer seemed to be concerned with the students' cultural background as an enriching factor for learning. What mattered was the curriculum, that was all.

There is a feeling of distance and disconnect to other students with regards to home life and school experiences. Generally, there was a sense of obligation to leave behind village life at the school entrance. Using a CT lens, there is little evidence of any form of empowerment. There are no traces of establishing a personal connection to facilitate learning as suggested by Freire (1970). Looking at it through DT, there are patterns of delegitimization instead, and of one culture (the academic and 'neutral' setting) being perceived as preferable to that of the other culture (the private and 'unprofessional' setting), as was illustrated through the ridicule of village musicians by the choir leader. All this creates a systemic partition between home life and school experiences, neatly shielding one from the other, creating two separate worlds and two separate experiences for me and people in similar circumstances.

Where we belong - Community

The first mention of community compares the anonymity of the city to the friendly attitudes of the village. The community was also expressed through musical education provided by the local village band. I was able to learn instruments and develop my proficiency because of the opportunities and knowledge provided by fellow band members. The ridicule they received through choir conductors and music teachers stung doubly for that, as the skills I brought to class were credit of my village's support.

A blossoming friendship with another student in much a similar position paid service to that too. It was a friendship based on the fact that neither of us had another person to relate our cultural adventures to in school. It was forged based on mutual understanding of the shenanigans and banter that tradition and culture brought with it. It was a firm enough basis to build a friendship that was to last for years.

Indeed, village support culture could serve as a buffer from bad experiences, like school failure: If the system let the students down, if they struggle to make it through and feel devalued by teachers claiming they performed insufficiently, they can fall back on the positive experiences from their hometowns, that remind them that they are more than their failure in one subject in school. The village and traditional cultural settings bring to the forefront their core qualities and give opportunity to develop them in a community setting.

The village culture described is connected to a feeling of community. Community, belonging, ownership – according to CT, they are crucial aspects of successful education and empowerment. Especially the safety net of success and integration in the village community when there is trouble with academic culture, shows the empowerment it facilitates. The sense of community connected to culture is linked to validation and a space to be oneself. This is also in the spirit of Kaupapa Māori in education (allowing Māori to succeed as Māori). Kaupapa Māori emphasises the integration of cultural values and experiences, that knowledge from their home can be taken into school and applied usefully. While there is knowledge acquisition through the opportunities in the village, there is no recognition of that through the teachers. Yet, when the school system fails the students, it is the communities that catch them, which is reminiscent of issues addressed by Kaupapa Māori. Would the community and schools work together, in a Kaupapa Māori or CT proposed fashion, rather than from almost oppositional angles, the emotional experiences for those involved may be less conflicting.

'Tis in the way you say it – Language

Dialect was perceived to be the language spoken at home, while standardised language was encouraged in school. Some teachers did so more subtly, while others blatantly refused to acknowledge dialect as a legitimate form of speech with value in and of its very own. Memories of not using dialect were often connected to experiences of alienation – reduced use of dialect was connected to increased distance from family members, who were put off and felt estranged through a wall made of academic language between us. Colloquialism, oder wie einem der Schnabel gewachsen ist, was simply not appropriate.

Yet, DaF/DaZ training highlighted again the importance of using dialect. In order to participate in communities and be seen as part of Austrian society, it was crucial for our refugee students to learn appropriate greetings and cultural norms within them. We also often discussed alienation from family and community when shifting to a standardised, more formal way of communicating.

One memory showed another side of this, with language decreasing the distance between people. In an instance of difficult discussion during a workshop, I recall shifting from standardised language, more common for teaching, to a dialect closer to that of the students. Within moments, they opened up and joined the conversation enthusiastically, as the perceived distance between us was bridged through shared use of language. Using dialect despite the academic setting helped students find their voice and confidence to speak up, and consider their own experiences in a more valued manner.

The core themes on language emerge as ownership and relatability. Using familiar language and terms renders knowledge relatable and understandable, another major aspect of Freire's (1970) work: Teaching people through what they understand and are familiar with is crucial to show them the power they already hold. This is not to say that learning new ways of expression is an issue per se. The question is how we integrate the new with the old. If it is possible to express ideas in a colloquial, relatable way that bridges gaps and distances, why should we instead endeavour to cloud our knowledge through academic mumbo-jumbo that keeps the information from the communities that matter to us? Through a DT lens, it is a way of asserting dominance and building power structures. This undermining of students' knowledge and confidence by discrediting their language can majorly impact their academic performance (Delpit, 2006), especially if it builds alienation. It creates uninviting environments that can halt learning.

The way we are - Cultural Knowledge

Cultural knowledge appeared, largely, completely irrelevant. Discussing geopolitical issues in class, a smaller scale view of the world never seemed to be asked for. While some teacher aide memories mentioned local knowledge as part of education in Volksschule (primary school), there was a clear distinction and disappearance of it upon entrance to Gymnasium (a form of secondary school). In Gymnasium, the aim was to learn about other cultures and understanding the world – separate and not necessarily in relation to one's own. While students would write about hobbies, spare time activities and family structures, possibly comparing those to other countries, the consideration of what it was that makes our own culture was sacrificed in favour of looking to the outside only. An air of irrelevance was built around local knowledge, fast ein bisschen nach dem Motto aus den Augen, aus dem Sinn.
Yet, dialect was an important aspect of our DaF/DaZ discussions, particularly when working with students keen to participate in Austrian society. Cultural knowledge about daily life and traditional events was crucial and directly connected to language use. Long hours were spent emphasising its importance – especially as we knew that, except for our extracurricular foreign language classes, our students might never receive another opportunity to learn about these things. But in order to carve their own places in village communities, they needed to have the cultural basis of linguistic and social norm knowledge to successfully navigate these spaces, wie ein Fisch im Wasser.
In one instance, I speak of a potential loss of cultural knowledge. I remembered reading a book on local stories and legends that had been all but forgotten by my own family. Never coming across them in school either, not even in Volksschule, I wondered how long it would be until those stories would be forgotten for good.

Overall, there was a clear dominance of academic knowledge over cultural knowledge. Looking at it through DT, academic culture positions itself as superior, discrediting traditional knowledge as something possibly interesting, but not particularly relevant in comparison to the curriculum. There is, again, a lack of possibilities for empowerment as encouraged through CT, replaced by disempowerment as knowledge is discredited and put at peril of being forgotten. Kaupapa Māori, which majorly focuses on local and cultural knowledge, can also provide a relatable lens to emphasise this.

The lessons to learn

Looking back into my past, it becomes clear that the relationship between school and my personal cultural background was not a favourable one. Feelings of alienation, of not belonging, were present across all encounters with education. CT's empowerment model draws attention to the importance of education being relevant and connected to the students' life realities, yet the memories recollected gave testament that this was not the case. Remembering the works of Delpit (2016), Bishops (2003, 2011), Stewart (2014), and Smith (2012), this seems like a significant flaw of the educational system. Leave alone looking at the impact it had on how I felt about my education, it is a flaw that needs fixing if we want an educational system that acknowledges all students' cultures. Kaupapa Māori and DT both call for that, to not just embrace the convenient aspects of culture that more easily slot in with ideas of intellectualism and higher education, but acknowledge them in their entirety. Both CT and DT warn us of the power structures that were at play in the creation of these systems, and to see beyond them and consider what ought to change. If we want to build an education system in which families, students and teachers work together productively, we must not alienate any of them by discrediting them.

My own experiences have shaped the way I approach others. Having my own culture only valued in certain settings and fighting for it to be recognised helped me grow appreciation for other cultures in ways I may have otherwise not experienced. Understanding where my questions originate from, and what inspires me to ask them, helps one better understand why this is an issue in need of consideration. It is also an issue not directly addressed in public debate at this point. Our culture is alive and thriving, and Austria in general prides itself in how well it is still preserved, but the importance it can hold for young people's development is only marginally noticed. Inspired by my personal experiences, I decided to turn to educational policy in Austria and ANZ, and see what we might be able to learn from one another to change this.

Chapter 4
"Die Worte, die die Schule bedeuten"

In which we look at the words that define school as we know it, knew it and will yet see it be.

Here, finally, we turn towards the policy documents that shape education. I have chosen two documents from the Austrian system, and two provided by the ANZ government. The Austrian documents define the layout and principles of the Austrian educational system. For the ANZ side of things, it was possible to use documents focusing majorly on the issue of cultural representation, particularly representation and acceptance of Māori. I will briefly introduce the documents, and then analyse the messages they hold. This will be followed by an analysis inspired by Bacchi (**2009)**, that will look at what is said between the lines. Finally, the lessons from the analysis will be connected.

Ploughing through legislation

The Austrian educational system is, in its very foundations, laid out by the Schulunterrichtsgesetz (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2019). It is the law that defines how schools are laid out in order to ensure that they fulfil their educational duties towards children, regulates forms of representation, and duties and rights of all those involved in the educational system.

Grundsatzerlass (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2017) is what we call documents that define guiding principles. Rather than the Lehrplan, which is tailored to specific subjects and lays out what students should be taught in each subject during each year on their educational journey, a Grundsatzerlass formulates ideas and

principles, perspectives and attitudes that need to underlie all of education and guide teachers' work, regardless of subject or school type.
Together these two form an outline of what, generally, the educational experience of students ought to be, and what it ought to teach them in preparation for participating in society.

The documents of Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education - Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, 2009; 2013) are measures of the Ministry of Education in ANZ to support educational success for Māori students. A monocultural educational system, which in ANZ favours Pākehā culture above others, is detrimental for those diverging from the system. Often, it leads to a deficit focus against those who differ from the dominant culture (Bishop, 2000). That is why Bishop and other researchers (Bishop, 2000; Bishop, 2008; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop, Berryman, Wearmouth & Peter, 2012; Berryman & Bishop, 2015) gathered their resources to develop educational strategies based on Kaupapa Māori philosophies: Te Kotahitanga. They are largely based on *tino rangatiratanga*, a principle of self-determination, and look for ways allowing Māori to be successful in an educational system not by adjusting to the mainstream, but by staying true to themselves and working towards their goals as Māori. They developed teacher trainings, leadership trainings and new ways of approaching education through interviewing teachers, students and also Māori communities, reaching out to iwi, hapū, and whānau. Their project successfully led to positive developments in many schools, and the insight they gained was used to establish Ka Hikitia. Ka Hikitia is a multiphase project to reform education in favour of the Māori students it has underserved for generations. The documents here stem from its first and second phase (which were 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 respectively; it is currently in its third phase) and will serve to look at how cultural background with regards to Māori should be embedded in the system.

Reading legislation

Policy is its very own genre, with particular rules on message delivery, often in ways not directly accessible to its casual readers. To understand what the Austrian and ANZ policy documents are trying to say, I broke them down in two steps.
First, I did a thorough reading looking at what it is the texts say. I paid close attention to wording, formulations, and the overt plans expressed in the text. The focus was on what is said explicitly, and what messages are put forward.

Secondly, I used Bacchi's (2009) 'What's the Problem represented to be?' (WPR) model to read between the lines. In WPR, she poses questions that can be used to discern the meanings of policy. The emphasis is to remember what policy is usually built for: problem solving. The focus therefore is on what the policy considers the problem, how it is supposed to solve it and what the problem with that particular approach might be. While Bacchi's full WPR includes six different sections, I made adaptations for this story: the first four questions of Bacchi's model were used, and an additional question was added by myself.
Bacchi's first question is 'What is the problem represented to be?'. The second point covers 'What presuppositions/assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?'. Third, she outlines 'What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the problem be thought about differently?'. The fourth step is based upon 'What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?'. The question I added to the current analysis is 'What's the solution represented to be?'.
Let us move ahead and try to untangle what the four policy documents are talking about. Auf los geht's los.

Foundations of education - Schulunterrichtsgesetz

The Schulunterrichtsgesetz (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2019) is the pillar upon which the organisation of the Austrian educational system rests. First published in 1974, and has been updated many times over the years. The version I analysed was last updated on June 21, 2019. It is a pillar which, upon closer inspection, says little to nothing about the daily bearings of the educational system and the way those within it are seen and treated. Most of the document refers back to its paragraph §2, one of the opening sections, in which it is laid out that this document shall lay the basis for the structure of the educational system to allow teachers, students and guardians to build the school community: "für die Ordnung des Schulwesens als Grundlage des Zusammenwirkens von Lehrern, Schülern und Erziehungsberechtigen als Schulgemeinschaft" (p. 2).
This generous and really all-encompassing statement is then followed by over ninety pages filled with instructions on teacher (e.g. pp. 56-59), student (e.g. pp. 59-62) and parent (e.g. pp. 62-64) forums and councils, how to congregate them, elect official representatives (i.e. p. 65), and how exactly the procedures shall come about for them to bring change to the educational experience and shape them according to the needs of all involved (e.g. pp.64-72).

Several sections discuss the rights of all groups involved for participating in the educational process: Teachers have to prepare their classes and support the students in their personal and professional development (p. 54); students ought to participate actively and assist in shaping their education according to their own needs and desires (p. 59); guardians ought to ensure that students are equipped with all they need for participating in class and can make suggestions for shaping the educational experience (p. 62).
While the structures prescribed are clearly defined, the actual execution of the educational process is vague and, putting it mildly, open to interpretation. Culture as a factor for education is mentioned, throughout the document, only twice. Once in reference to Schulveranstaltungen, events organised by the schools (p. 11): "Aufgabe der Schulveranstaltungen ist die Ergänzung des lehrplanmäßigen Unterrichtes durch unmittelbaren und anschaulichen Kontakt zum wirtschaftlichen, gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Leben", stating that school events should provide opportunities for students to learn of economical, societal and cultural life. The second time culture could be interpreted as mentioned is on page thirty-eight, when inclusive pedagogy and diversity are outlined as important aspects of the educational setting.

Bacchi's WPR shines a different light on the Schulunterrichtsgesetz. The problem it appears to address is preventing schools from being non-participatory spaces. It lays focus on building systems of participation for all parties involved. However, it also reinforces throughout that the school officials are encouraged to listen to the councils' suggestions but are under no obligation to act upon them. Indeed, that this could lead to pseudo-participatory structures is left without commentary. It is also left unproblematic that electing a representative from a group of random people congregating (like parents) may not, ultimately, be an actually representative choice. Communication guidelines for representatives are few and far between, leaving it up to representatives' personal interpretations how they communicate within their group, and how they choose to represent them. This opens space for silences, as quiet or minority group members may easily be outvoted and left behind in group debate scenarios. Rethinking representation, and communication within and between the groups concerned, could provide a different insight to the overall scenario. The effects of the current model could be, quite simply, a misrepresentation of those involved, and those who need to be listened to. The solution of a simple system of councils, representatives and frequent meetings in which issues can be discussed is a sweeping, one-size-fits-all system with little to no room for variation, and therefore little to no room for considering cultural differences and other factors.

Overall, the Schulunterrichtsgesetz is mostly concerned with structures and general forms of representation. Culturally sensitive education is not something considered overtly relevant. Even though it largely focuses on representation, the problems that might arise from cultural misunderstandings or monocultural domination go unmentioned.

The guidelines for a brighter future - Grundsatzerlass

Multiple Grundsatzerlässe were published over the years. They span a variety of topics and act as guides and indicators of issues that need to be relevant across all subjects and educational settings. They speak of political education, environmental protection, gender equality and many other social justice issues, and encourage teachers to bring these topics into their daily teaching, as they are considered relevant across the board. Considering the issue of culture, the Grundsatzerlass Interkulturelle Bildung (intercultural education) (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2017) was chosen for analysis.

Interkulturelle Bildung has been a Grundsatzerlass since 1992, although it was updated in 2017. The main message is that we live in a globalised, multicultural world of heterogenous life models that are reflected in the classroom: “Die soziale, kulturelle und sprachliche Vielfalt in der globalisierten und individualisierten Gesellschaft führt zu einer steigenden Heterogenität von Lebensentwürfen. Diese vielfältigen Lebens- und Familienrealitäten mit ihren unterschiedlichen Erfahrungen spiegeln sich auch in den Klassenzimmern wider.” (p. 1). It calls to develop open and diverse ideas of culture, across society, different in-groups and social practices (p. 3). It works in an inter-, trans-, and multicultural fashion (p. 2) and is based on the scientific and pedagogical discourse (p.2). Indeed, a statement on page three explicitly and clearly says that intercultural education is an attitude and position that needs to be lived in order to create a respectful learning atmosphere filled with connection and solidarity that enables shared learning experiences: “Interkulturelle Bildung ist eine Haltung, die am Schulstandort von allen gemeinsam gelebt werden muss, um wirksam zu werden. Sie ist ein wichtiger Beitrag zu einem von Zusammenhalt und Solidarität getragenen Schulklima und trägt zu einer wertschätzenden und respektvollen Lernatmosphäre bei.” (p. 3). They make it clear that it is an approach to fight notions of othering towards non-mainstream groups, and to work towards a better understanding of Eurocentric and ethnographic approaches to making sense of the world, dismantling them through means of critical reflection. Even use of language is brought to attention, to use group-appropriate and

individualised language as necessary (p. 3). They emphasise the importance of critical yet appreciative attitudes (p. 4), and that education needs to work with the lived experiences and attitudes of students, to use biographical and linguistic approaches that help to understand the diversity of cultures: “Interkulturelle Bildung setzt an der Lebenswelt, den Vorerfahrungen und Sichtweisen aller Schülerinnen und Schüler an und nützt biographische, linguistische und weitere geeignete Ansätze, um die Vielfalt von Kulturen und Lebensentwürfen zu bearbeiten.” (p. 4). They emphasise that the document is based upon a number of UN agendas, like UN-Agenda 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development goals (p. 2), inspiring their objectives and aspirations.

The problem represented is a lack of understanding of cultural differences in a multicultural, globalised society, something to be combated by the educational system. It assumes that multiculturalism is one of the foundations of modern cohabitation, and that mutual understanding lies at the core of being able to create a peaceful co-existence in society. How exactly culture or a harmonious community are actually defined is left unproblematised. While a general understanding of culture and a reference to non-European cultures is established, it is either presupposed that students already have an accurate understanding of their own culture, or that it is not necessary. The Grundsatzerlass only once mentions specifics about culture, when stating that Euro- and ethnocentrism need be avoided and combated by education. Still, it remains vague on which cultures to teach about and how to do so. It points towards appreciation of students’ backgrounds, their experiences and stories – but there is silence around the details, and silence around the groups it may concern. The Grundsatzerlass remains as a vague suggestion. Particularly when considering the potentials for co-operation with communities outside of school that the students are involved with, it could provide more straightforward suggestions. A possible effect of this representation of the problem is an outward focus that shifts towards multiculturalism in a manner forgetting the students’ personal backgrounds. The solution is represented as teaching students cultural awareness from a non-Eurocentric viewpoint – unclear on what that exactly means.

The Grundsatzerlass focuses directly on cultural issues and understandings, but it remains vague in its outlines and ideas. It suggests the importance of the issue, emphasising it further with the UN documents it was inspired by. Yet, it remains vague in its suggestions, with sweeping statements that leave more than a little room for interpretation. While it focuses in on the issue, the picture it delivers remains blurry and unclear.

Initiating change - Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success (2008-2012)

Turning towards the work of the ANZ Ministry of Education, the Ka Hikitia documents hold one key message, formulated as "Māori enjoying educational success as Māori" (p. 18), and for them to "excel and successfully realise their cultural distinctiveness and potential." (p. 18). It focuses on "education outcomes for and with Māori learners", acknowledging that the "system has to change to meet the needs and interests of learners rather than learners having to change for the system" (p. 10).

Reading Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success (KHMfS) (Ministry of Education - Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, 2009) felt like reading an instructional manual. It clearly states its principles, focusing on a Māori Potential Approach that acknowledges culture and embraces its contributions to what students bring to their education (p. 19). Setting a precedent for that, it uses the Māori idea of *ako*, which means both teaching and learning, and elaborates on making language, identity and culture count in educational settings, and to establish productive partnerships between teachers, communities and students to provide the best possible education. Basing their statements on scientific evidence with regards to using culture in education, they emphasise the importance of bringing home and learning environments together productively, to make the students feel at home in their classroom. They also emphasise the importance of reciprocal relationships between people in order for education to succeed. They clearly indicate looking for feedback from iwi, hapū, and communities in general, to inform the work of the ministry. They clarify that the goals will shift as knowledge is accumulated and integrated (e.g. p. 27, 29). To ensure that the government follows through on their promises and that the targets will actually be accomplished, they set strategic goals, for example to increase the number of Māori school leavers qualified for university from 14.8% in 2006 to 30% in 2012 (p. 33). Across pages thirty to thirty-seven, they set out their ideas with concrete goals and measures to attain them with.

The formulation of the problem in KHMfS is clear in its rationale: Māori students are underachieving in an educational system that does not serve them as it does other student groups. The assumption underlying this representation is that the educational system does not see the students for who they are, to allow them to embrace their Māori identity and achieve success through it. It punishes them for their cultural background diverging from

that of the Pākehā majority. What is left largely unproblematic are underlying issues of racism and discrimination, which Māori have struggled with since the beginning of colonisation. While it talks of allowing Māori to be Māori, their authentic selves, the root causes for why they were unable to do so are left out, ignored in favour of focusing on the current situation. There is a silence around many of the pleas put forward by Māori, which defeats the point of what KHMfS stands for. Incorporating this could expand the focus on wider systemic change, looking at an even bigger picture than the schooling system alone, and possibly help to achieve changes on a larger scale. In this representation, the role of the system in Māori's struggles is downplayed. There is a lack of recognition that Māori were systemically marginalised and discriminated whenever they stood up for themselves (Bishop, 2003). The solution represented is a system in which Māori are seen as Māori, and appreciated for it, a system which cooperates with iwi, hapū, and whānau to ensure that the students' needs are recognised and met.

KHMfS has a clear structure, defined goals and a set path to get there, es scheint beinahe glasklar. Ideas are based upon scientific findings throughout the document, cooperation with the groups involved is a major focus and there is room for change and improvement. Yet, there are many silences around the root cause of the problem, and the wider issues throughout all ANZ systems that impact Māori. The silences only become apparent upon familiarity with the history of KHMfS, but the document itself shifts focus away from that, which is also very problematic from a DT viewpoint. Yet, it does acknowledge the problem of lack of cultural recognition and strives to work against it.

Change continued - Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success (2013-2017)

Continuing the work of KHMfS, Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success (KHAS) (Ministry of Education - Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, 2013) builds upon five principles from the beginning: The Treaty of Waitangi; the Māori Potential Approach; Ako; Identity, Language and Culture Count; and Productive Partnerships. While most of these are familiar from KHMfS, KHAS expands them in more detail. Including Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a crucial document that establishes a shared responsibility between Māori and the Crown (represented by the government) to provide equal opportunity for all those living in ANZ, acknowledges the

difficult colonial past. It hearkens back to Māori peoples' continued struggle for equality in ANZ, as recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi has been a long standing and ongoing fight.
KHAS reads much like a sequel to KHMfS. Lessons have been learnt, some goals were met and others not so much, some points they double down on, while others they revise and reformulate. One thing they changed is the identification of focus areas: rather than looking at early education and young school children, they now split their focus distinctly between Māori language education, early education, primary and secondary education, tertiary education and organisational success (p. 11). Language education and recognition of te reo Māori is still, possibly even more so, an important factor for the success of KHAS, and the involvement of iwi, hapū, and whānau emphasised more explicitly (pp. 28-29). Teacher education is a point they double down on: briefly mentioned in KHMfS, KHAS has several sections emphasising its value and impact on the success of KHAS to ensure that the system no longer disadvantages Māori students (p. 24, 37). A novel issue is accountable organisational structures and putting into writing that school boards need to be held responsible for what happens within schools (p. 39). After another commitment to continuing to invest in research (p. 48), a new set of goals is identified for 2017 (pp. 56-58).

The problem KHAS focuses on remains the same as that of KHMfS. Despite the mention of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the silence around the past remains. A silence that tells not of the struggles of Māori and how it was their own initiatives that moved the government to finally take action (Bishop, 2003). The representation has shifted slightly as greater emphasis is put on the relationship aspect between students and teachers, and teacher education is seen as a more important factor in achieving lasting success. KHMfS mentions a need to move from deficit thinking to potential perception, but KHAS leads this more directly into teacher education, indicating a shift in the perception of the issue. The effects of this representation, however, are largely the same as with KHMfS. There is a realisation of a systemic problem, but the scope and history of it is underrepresented and therefore understated. However, (institutionalised) racism and similar issues remain unmentioned. The overall solution of establishing a setting in which Māori are appreciated for who they are, and their iwi, hapū, and whānau are active part of having their full identities recognised, remains.

KHAS reads similarly to KHMfS and clearly builds on it. As a sequel, it throws old and new ideas together, merges them, expands on them, leaves behind what did not work and tries new things. The messages are largely the same, and while there has been some shift in

focus and an expansion of principles including Te Tiriti of Waitangi, the silences, unfortunately, remain.

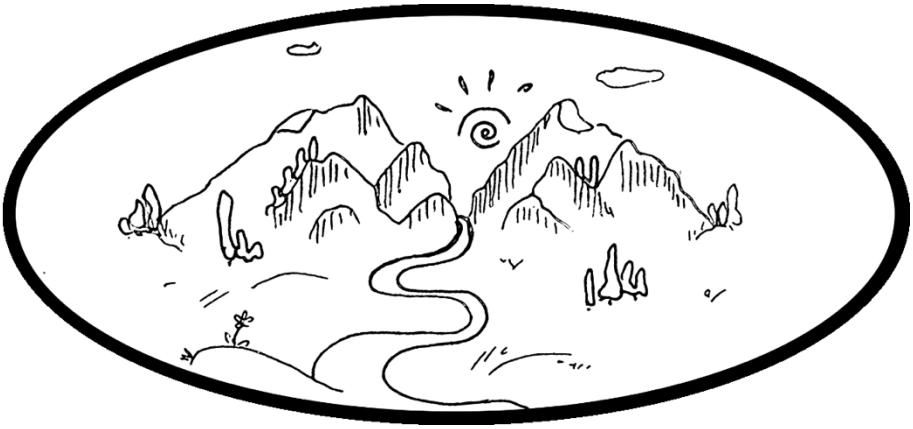
Putting the pieces together

We have looked at what the documents say, how they say it, and what they imply between the lines and messages which they put forward directly. They are different in nature, so it is no surprise that their messages differ also. The Austrian documents focus on establishing the educational system and give a general underlying principle for dealing with student participation, success, and cultural understanding. The ANZ documents narrow in on bringing Māori culture and appreciation thereof into the classrooms. However, let me bring this discussion back to question all this started with: What could Austria learn from ANZ?

KHMfS and KHAS do an excellent job at setting out clear goals. While their initial messages are vague, all-encompassing, grandiose statements of a better future, they do not stick with that. They bring forward concrete ideas, clearly defined strategies, and measures to rate their success by. All the while, they emphasise the flexibility of it, that only in dialogue can it be defined which strategies will lead to success, and which strategies are needed to implement change not only suggested by the ministry, but defined and established by everyone coming together. The Schulunterrichtsgesetz provides structures and systems supposed to facilitate interactions, yet these structures receive greater emphasis than actual dialogue and communication. The ANZ documents try to allow for circumstantial flexibility – the Austrian documents ensure a veto by the school. Even though the Grundsatzerlass speaks of moving away from Euro- and ethnocentrism, it shows no influences of groups this would be of interest to, or of any consultation with those involved. It gives the air of a document written by those higher ups, von Schreibtischattentätern, informed by studies and UN resolutions, but not necessarily connected to the communities, or even remotely familiar with them.

KHMfS and KHAS have their own issues with failing to acknowledge the full scope of the story, and the full impact of issues such as racism, discrimination and marginalisation of Māori. Yet, their structure is clearer, their outline is more defined, their scientific basis more prominent and their actual measures of success spelled out. They focus on relationships, on co-operation, and trying to find ways to define this in more than just lip-service. All those are lessons that could be incorporated more across the many pages of the Schulunterrichtsgesetz and the Grundsatzerlass.

Chapter 5
To the Future



In which we remember, (re)consider and move forward.

It has been a long and curious journey, learning of ways to make sense of the world, of past experiences that inspired future questions, and wading through the swamp of hundreds of pages of government legislation to better understand where we are and what to do with the position we are in. Let us look back to what has been, what we have (not) learnt and where we can go from here.

Understanding what we have seen

Throughout this story, a lot of new information has been gained. I looked at my personal experiences, reflected on them with the help of Kaupapa Māori, DT, and CT, and then moved on to analyse policies from Austria and ANZ with the help of Bacchi's WPR model. I now want to pull it all together and see what can be untangled from the information we have accumulated. I shall use the three lenses, each in turn, to try and see more clearly what has surfaced throughout this story.

Let us begin with CT, the lens that encourages us to look towards those who have struggled in the system, who have been marginalised and ostracised by the way things are done, and that encourages us to facilitate for them to find their own ability to change the system. It demands of us to look at power structures and tear them down, reinvent and dismantle them to create a better understanding of the world where there is no veil of silence covering their

experiences (Blackburn, 2000; Glass, 2001; Bishop, 2003). The silence that resonates throughout this story is that of culture that differs from academia, cultural knowledge that is silenced by institutions of education. The autoethnography gave voice to feelings of alienation triggered by that silence, and the negative consequences it can have for those involved in education.

The Austrian documents give little space to those silenced voices. They are structured and based around ideas put forward by the government, and while they try to put forward a representative system, there is little to no evidence of having consulted minority and marginalised groups in any shape or form, or of engaging even more generally with those that these systems ought to represent. Even though the Grundsatzerlass is partially based upon UN resolutions and agendas, the groups involved in the educational system remain unnamed. The documents aim to be as inclusive as possible by being as open-ended as possible, which results in little to no mention of anyone specifically.

Ka Hikitia fares differently: it directly mentions Māori, involves te reo Māori in an attempt to have Māori culture and language reflected, and clearly states the involvement of iwi, hapū, and whānau in all processes. They explicitly identify the importance of the participation of all parties, as success can only be achieved through everyone coming together and being able to have their voices heard and concerns answered to.

CT advises us to look towards those who were left unseen. While the Austrian documents acknowledge this and advise in form of pointers and general ideas towards listening to all voices, they fail to acknowledge specifics and to consider the peculiarities of each form of marginalisation. ANZ only acknowledges parts of their own, and leaves out parts of the historical contexts, yet they still acknowledge specifics and name relevant issues and contexts.

While both the Austrian and ANZ documents have room for improvement when seeing them through CT, ANZ builds a clearer picture of what needs changing.

The next lens we shall use is that of DT. This is the lens that requires us to look at the effects of colonisation, how it has suppressed cultures and forced people to submit to a Western perspective, and also how its effects still resonate in our daily lives.

While the Austrian documents speak of avoiding a Euro- and ethnocentric perspective, that we need to widen our approach and the way we look at the world, there is little mention of why this has become the dominant approach to begin with. While it is established that, in a globalised, multicultural society, we need to understand others and embrace diversity, there

is no mention of how this world came about and the price many had and to this day continue to pay for it.

While Ka Hikitia might be expected to be clearer on this front in consideration of ANZ's history as a British colony, it is equally non-committal. While KHAS brings to the forefront Te Tiriti o Waitangi, its mention is brief and the ramifications it had (and the consequences of not staying true to its intent) are given no attention. Globalisation and the importance of being able to navigate a globalised world are mentioned without reference to how they connect to colonialism.

Using the lens of DT is rather disappointing. While it appears that we have learnt to listen to one of its messages, that we live in a multicultural society and need to understand one another (Giroux, 2003), the documents in consideration have arrived at this without looking too closely at how history delivered us here. The DT lens allows us to see current problems and the path ahead – but looking at the past it shows a blurry and unclear picture.

Lastly, let us employ the Kaupapa Māori lens, which speaks of cultural diversity, acknowledging Māori as Māori, seeing potential in differences and alternative points of view. It reminds us to remember the past, and then use the tools that are available now to build towards a better future.

The Austrian documents, understandably, have little to offer in a Māori context. They are not concerned with Māori as a people, and therefore understandably hold no reference to Māori perspectives. However, I would argue that the stance Kaupapa Māori offers, to allow for diverse viewpoints and consider a variety of cultural and societal frameworks to make sense of knowledge, indeed, to consider new forms of knowledge, is something Austrian legislation should take on board. Hearing other points of view, abandoning absolute truths and certainties, would also benefit Austrian students. One cannot say that this is in order for them to be able to achieve success as Māori, but to achieve success authentically as who they are, no matter their background. Even just looking at alternative forms of representation and allowing for greater diversity in forums and councils could lead to significant positive change.

Ka Hikitia, on the other hand, is directly inspired by Kaupapa Māori. While it does not take on board its reflections on colonial history, it embraces the approach of giving Māori agency as Māori. By focusing on co-operation with iwi, hapū, and whānau, asking for their support and to work together, it embraces the Kaupapa Māori idea of cooperation. Their emphasis on the many things the Ministry and other agencies have yet to learn from Māori is also in

the spirit of Kaupapa Māori. Most importantly, the potential approach acknowledging being Māori as an advantage definitely shines bright in light of this theory.
While Austrian legislation can take on board principles of diversity reflected in Kaupapa Māori, Ka Hikitia reflects significant parts of it. Being closely related to the work of Te Kotahitanga, which is significant Kaupapa Māori research, it is built on promising foundations to embrace Kaupapa Māori philosophies and move ahead seeing the world through its lens.

Depending on which lens we apply, the conclusions drawn from this work differ. According to how we look at it, the results will be more or less favourable, there will either be more to learn or more that has already been put to practice. This goes to show again that, depending on where we come from, we see different aspects, positions, and points of emphasis. It also shows that both Austrian and ANZ documents had very specific strengths and weakness, at times in a borderline complementary fashion. While the initial question revolved around what Austrian legislation could learn from ANZ legislation, this shows that there are possible lessons on either side. Both Austria and ANZ enforce that, in a globalised world, we need to understand each other and benefit from our differences and our diversity. Comparing legislation on the same issues, but from opposite sides of the world, could help us build something new, possibly something better than what we are currently working with.

The other paths we did not take

Of course, this is one particular piece of work with particular theories and particular documents. Had my sources of inspiration differed, I may not have decided to pick the particular theories I ended up using for this. Having read Smith (2012) and found a lot of inspiration in the questions she asked, those were the frameworks I eventually settled on. Indeed, having done this particular course at the University of Glasgow, the modules I attended throughout the year guided my thinking and approach in a certain direction. Any shift, any theory in class exchanged for another, might have given me a completely new perspective.
Equally, a different choice of documents for analysis would have created a shift. The number of documents analysed was limited by time constraints, as was the absolute amount of analysis I could conduct. The approach to analysis would have further changed the results. A linguistic breakdown of the policy phrasing would have revealed very different information. Replacing Bacchi‘s WPR model to understand policy would have revealed another set of

information drawn out from in between the lines. Indeed, even another person conducting the same analysis may have warranted different results. Not because I lacked thoroughness or investment – but simply because any dissertation only ever gives so much space and so many words to say, and another analyst may have chosen to highlight messages that I decided not to focus on and vice versa.

Of course, this analysis is also biased in the shape of other personal perspectives: I am an Austrian, my first language is German, English I am intimately familiar with, and te reo Māori is something I only marginally understand. A person whose first language was te reo Māori, was intimately familiar with English, and only began to understand German would have had to work with these documents in a different way, but would also approach them from a completely different angle and with an understanding shaped by different views. Their representation of results could have further shifted their understanding.

Moving ahead

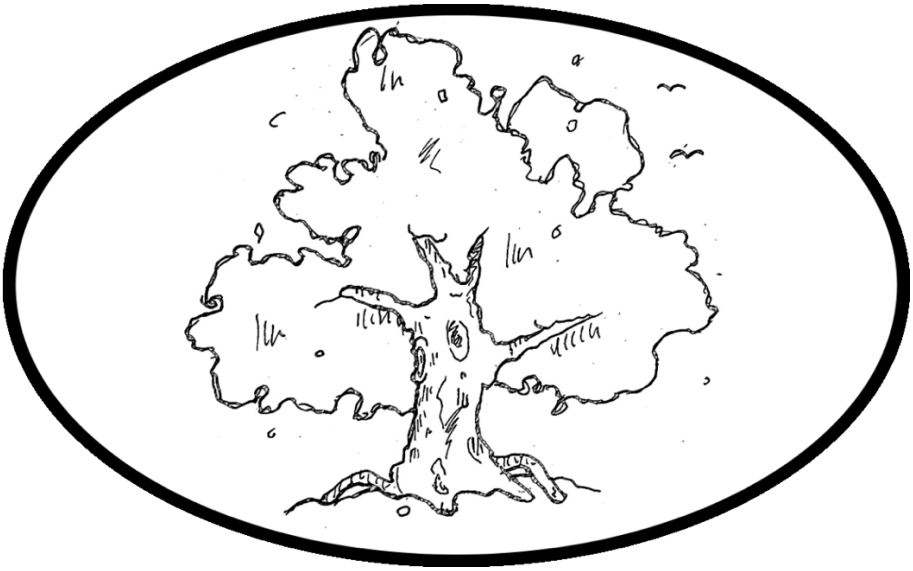
When I call now to move forward, to take this information and see what else is out there, I think I want to do so in the sense of Kaupapa Māori. The Kaupapa Māori approach is to learn from the past, build tools with the current knowledge we have, and therefore create a better future. Let us embrace what has been learnt, try to improve our tools for the way ahead, and expand on these solid foundations as we go ahead.

In order to succeed in education, students need to be seen for who they are, and be given opportunity to achieve success as that person. Ka Hikitia points this out, but every aspect of education needs to embrace this principle. Austrian education cannot get away with ignoring this important aspect of students' success, just as ANZ could not ignore that this is what they need to change in order to give Māori students a fair chance at success.

This work has shown that legislation can try to deal with the ins and outs of as many things as possible within as wide a framework as possible. Thus, it can sometimes lose sight of what is immediately relevant to the students or leave out important aspects of the road that got us to where we are. We need to embrace our history – the good and the bad – and acknowledge what is happening now in order to create the best possible circumstances for learning and development. We need to see students for who they are, not for who we want them to be or, more tragically so, what we want them to learn. And as we see students for who they are, it is not enough to know their hobbies and favourite films. We need to go beyond that, see their connections to the world around them, their cultures and communities.

When we reach out to cooperate, grow our own understanding of where they come from, and allow them to fully embrace it, to see their cultural background as a strength, not a weakness or something to belittle and joke about, we can create environments that stand for empowerment and positive development. Only then will we be able to build an education system that does right by all our students.

Epilogue



In Gymnasium, I learnt that my culture does not have a place everywhere. I had to learn that being Austrian can mean many different things, not all of them equally applicable across all contexts.

I had to learn that sophisticated wording and a specialised vocabulary could alienate me from one group, while my culture and spare time activities might alienate me from another. I had to balance and code-switch knowledges and language depending on the social setting.

I had to see my family struggle in academic contexts, and knowledge from within these settings pass them by because of insurmountable cultural differences.

But that can change.
I have encountered many cultures, learnt languages, tried to learn as much about various traditions across the world as possible, and still I try to expand my knowledge about them. Throughout all that, I have seen so much that is shared, so many beautiful differences, and experienced how wonderful it can be to embrace that diversity.

I want culture to no longer be something to be frowned upon (particularly when it does not inflict harm on anyone), but something that we are allowed to embrace.

Not blindly and unquestioningly, because I want us to understand our cultures better, where they come from, how they impact and shape us. I want for us to be able to embrace that, and see it as a valuable part of how we learnt to make sense of the world. Our very own blueprint to continue to learn, so that we no longer need to compete and fight, but allow our cultures to truly co-exist and sometimes mingle and possibly even evolve together.

I believe that we can learn to no longer judge and belittle but embrace and celebrate different cultures instead.

Hopefully, amongst all the other work that is out there, this dissertation will also contribute towards reaching this goal one day.

Die Hoffnung stirbt zuletzt.

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Appendix

Glossary

Te re Māori vocabulary often has a variety of definitions and translations, as Māori language varies contextually and is strongly connected to place and time (Hiha, 2015). If no explicit reference to the source of the translation and/or definition is provided, it was taken from the https://Māori dictionary.co.nz

Te reo	Translation	Explanation
ako	To teach; to learn Reciprocal learning (Bishop, 2003)	Culturally Preferred Pedagogy Principle (Cram, Pipi, & Paipa, 2018)
hapū	Pregnancy; subtribe (Bishop, 2011)	
iwi	Bones; people (Bishop, 2011)	
ka hikitia	Stand up; lift up; lengthen one's stride (Berryman, Egan & Ford, 2017)	
kaua e mahaki		Using knowledge for the community's benefit, not flaunting it unnecessarily (Hiha, 2015)
kaupapa		Collective Philosophy Principle (Cram, Pipi, & Paipa, 2018) Collective Vision Philosophy (Bishop, 2003)
ko te mana ko te kupu		Acting with integrity (Hiha, 2015)
mana	Spiritual power; authority (Henry & Pene, 2001) Power (Bishop, 2011)	Our standing in the eyes of others and therefore our own (Smith, 2012)
manaakitanga		Nurturing the connections and relationships through action (Hiha, 2015)
ngākau māhaki	Calm and caring (Hiha, 2015)	
pākehā	New Zealander of European descent	
raranga korero		Our (life) stories, linking us to all living and inanimate objects (Bishop, 2011)
taonga tuku iho	Treasure from the ancestors (Bishop, 2003)	Cultural Continuance (Hiha, 2015)

		Cultural Aspirations Principle (Cram, Pipi, & Paipa, 2018) Cultural Aspirations (Bishop, 2003) Treasure passed down from ancestors; traditional management/control mechanisms (Bishop, 2011)
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi (Smith, 2012)	
tikanga	Social practices (Henry & Pene, 2001)	Customs of a family (Bishop, 2011)
tino rangatiratanga	Ranga (weave together) + tira (a party of people) (Berryman, Egan & Ford, 2017) Relative autonomy; self-determination (Bishop, 2003) Sovereignty; self-determination; governance; autonomy; independence (Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006)	Our ability and right to determine our own destinies (Smith, 2012) Principle of relative autonomy (Hiha, 2015) Self-Determination principle (Cram, Pipi, & Paipa, 2018) Operationalisation of self-determination; sense of ownership and active control over the future (Bishop, 2011)
titiro, whakarongo...kōrero	Look, listen…speak (Hiha, 2015)	
Whakapapa	Genealogy (Bishop, 2011)	Record of genealogical relationships (Cram, Pipi, & Paipa, 2018)
whānau	Extended family (Bishop, 2003) Family (Bishop, 2011)	Extended family structure principle (Cram, Pipi, & Paipa, 2018) A place for communication, sharing outcomes, constructing shared common understandings and meanings, a place of responsibilities for one another (Bishop, 2011)
Whakawhanaungatanga		Process of establishing relationships in a Māori context (Bishop, 2003)

		Key principle showing the interconnectedness of people (Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006) Process of establishing whānau relationship literally by means of identifying, through culturally appropriate means, your bodily linkage, your engagement, your connectedness, and, therefore, an unspoken but implicit commitment to other people (Bishop, 2011)
Whanaungatanga	Collective (Henry & Pene, 2001)	Recognising and respecting the connections of whānau, hapū and iwi through whakapapa (Hiha, 2015) Kinship relationship network that binds the world (Cram, Pipi, & Paipa, 2018) Recognition of deeper kinship between ourselves and other; Māori term for connectedness and engagement by kinship (Bishop, 2011)

Autoethnographic recollections

As a student

While in my village, it was ‘clear’ to everyone that I would one day go to a Gymnasium, eventually get my final exams there and possibly move on to university, Gymnasium felt alien and strange to me. I had to travel into the city by bus each day, and that was already a big hurdle. I used to have a 10 minute walk to my school, along fields, not even needing to cross the road – suddenly, I had to navigate my way through town each day.
When I first arrived in the classroom, I didn’t really know any of the other students either. I had seen some of them during the entrance exam, but there were hardly any familiar faces. Many of them lived in the city, knew their environment, had gone to see plenty of schools before taking their pick. I barely had a grasp of what it meant to be in this school. I had picked my school because I really wanted to study Latin, and from the information I had gathered in primary school, I had thought that I would be able to study more Latin in that school than any other – only through the following few years would I find out that actually, I could have done that in any Gymnasium. Finding that there were so many things that others assumed I would know, and running into walls time and time again, never stopped being terrifying. I felt like a fish out of water when I was in town.
Most of the other students also didn’t speak with as strong a dialect as I did. Many used more standardised language, as was usual in the city, and our teachers also often demanded of us to use standardised language over dialect. One teacher explained how dialect might be fine at home, but in serious settings we needed to use High German (the standardised variant) in order to act appropriately for the setting.
Another thing I needed to get accustomed to was the anonymity of the city. While at home, everybody knew everyone, and greeting others on the street was standard, custom in the city was not to acknowledge other people.

My parents often felt uncertain when asked to attend school events. They felt out of place because the culture at a Gymnasium in Austria was something they were not familiar with. Many of my classmates were from the city, their parents with university degrees or in higher ranking positions than my parents. This clash of worlds made my parents uncomfortable, and rendered it difficult for them to feel as part of the school community. Even though they appreciated the friends I made, they never felt fully comfortable being around their families.

This had been very different in primary school, where everyone was familiar and a friend to the family of sorts.

One of my teachers discredited my use of language as he sweepingly judged using dialect to be the farmer's choice, the voice of the uneducated, wrecking our language and distorting its beauty. He complained about the use of dialect in texting, and how he saw it as a threat to young people's expressive abilities. His dislike of the use of dialect went so far as that he once even wrote a letter to a local newspaper complaining about its detrimental effects on young people's language. While he was generally ridiculed for his strong opinions, some of them were still reflected, albeit in a lighter way, by other staff. Their commentary mostly just expressed that dialect was for home and our friends, and High German was to be used in professional settings.

When I first went to my Gymnasium, I always felt out of place. I felt like all the other children knew more and had seen more – their holidays had taken them exotic places, they were versed in basic language skills for English and French, and their parents were often fluent in more than one language. I didn't have these things in my background, and I often ended up feeling silly when there were things they knew that I didn't. Even though I was vastly more knowledgeable in Austrian traditions, cultural events and the connected musical and dance knowledge, this never seemed to measure up to what others new. In the end, I was never able to apply any of that knowledge within my daily school life. This became more apparent over the years, as I got more engaged in my village on the weekends, and would end up not being able to even relate the stories from my weekend when in class on Monday again. Even amongst my friends, I would often choose not to talk about it.
Especially when it came to exchanging experiences in school and relating school knowledge to our lived experiences, I felt that I had little to contribute. Most of the curriculum revolved around 'worldly' affairs and geopolitics, which meant that my localised knowledge was never really needed or asked for.

In my third year in Gymnasium, I met a girl from the same year who went to a different class. She was also from the countryside and participated in traditional cultural events in her hometown. Her and I bonded during a skiing excursion weekend, and consequently hung out together in breaks. Neither of us had anyone to relate to in our respective classes to chat with about what we did on the weekends, how we hung out with the people from our village communities and celebrated a variety of events in our neighbourhood, with our

families and town. Throughout the remainder of my time in Gymnasium, her and I stayed in touch and grew our friendship from that connection point. Especially during seasonally busy times, we felt like we were the only ones that understood what kept us on our feet all weekend.

Much of my musical knowledge and education was received by means of participating in the village concert band. Practicing with them once a week, going to different festivities throughout the surrounding villages, and having like-minded musicians around me helped me learn about music, grow my confidence and gave me opportunity to see practicing music as a social activity.
Yet, in school, where I joined a choir and enjoyed music classes, several of my music teachers throughout the years ridiculed such activities. Not knowing that I was part of a concert band, they would comment on the 'unprofessional' way of playing 'layman's music', that was deemed light-hearted, not particularly challenging, and even in that badly executed as no 'true professionals' who would 'take music seriously' were ever involved. The many hours we spent each week practicing, the education that was provided by more experienced people from my town, how they showed me to take care of my instruments, play different pieces and really listen to each other while making music was not accredited, as their focus was simply on the mastery of the instrument on a scale from professional to hobby. Especially the concert band's traditional clothing and their involvement in year round cultural events was seen as a distraction and lack of professionalism.

Our Arts teacher once reprimanded us for not recognising a mountain that was from a nearby region, about half an hour's drive away. He exasperated about us not being aware of our surroundings while knowing so much about what was happening in the world. In his rant, he pointed the fault with us, and how we should gather this knowledge through learning about our surroundings - really, we just shrugged our shoulders at his comments, as we knew that nobody in school taught us about these things, that nobody at home felt they needed to educate us as school-knowledge was to be prioritised, so how was it our fault that we didn't know our immediate surroundings? Our parents' local knowledge was discredited by the curriculum, our teachers weren't asked to teach us about local matters, and we were left running with what was demanded of us. After all, we had plenty of tests to keep us on our feet all year around, we didn't feel the need to pile even more onto that.

In primary school, every year, there was a ‘book offer’ with specialised books sold only within the schools to promote reading. One year, the books on sale were ‘Sagen aller Länder’, stories, fables and mares told in various regions of Austria. While my family ordered the book and I did read the stories, I realised that many of them I had never heard before and many people no longer even really knew about them, so they were eventually forgotten. My parents did recognise some of them, but as there had never been a great culture of storytelling and this was the first time we had these tales in written form in our house, they had never before been passed on. It made me wonder, even at a young age, whether we had all just collectively forgotten the stories of our home.

The few occasions I can think of that I showed up in traditional dress and performing traditional music was whenever we had foreign visitors. As soon as people from outside were to arrive and we should share our culture with them, that’s when we got to get our Dirndl out of the closet and learn traditional tunes to perform for them. As soon as the were headed away, those things would stop again also.

As a teacher trainee

In DaF/DaZ Training, we discussed how higher education levels can lead to alienation within families. When one family member suddenly uses words that are unfamiliar to siblings and parents, it can lead to them feeling more distanced. We discussed it as a point that even within a particular language system, differing levels of language use and comprehension can lead to alienation. I could relate to this strongly on a personal level, as it reflected the personal experiences I had made within my family. As I moved onto university and started using words that were commonly known amongst other students but not non-academics, my family often found it difficult to follow what I was saying based on my choice of words. It took me years to understand which words are not commonly known, to practice how to express myself alternatively and to really value the positive consequences of adjusting my language use to the culture and background around me. It had taken me a while to realise how academia had shifted my language use, as I had simply fallen into no longer using my dialect when at uni, as it simply didn’t seem appropriate. It was also through this experience, however, that I really grew to appreciate my home dialect. Certain words and phrases, that didn’t exist in High German or English, would be missed sorely when trying to make a point. Concepts and ideas that would be familiar to anyone from my region would take lengthy

explanations when discussed with speakers from other places, making me acutely aware of the cultural treasures that lie within my dialect.

Most of my time in teacher training was with regards to focusing on how we can find ways to teach the children what we want them to know. Especially at university, there was little mention of the skills the children already brought along, while there was a major focus on how we can make them participate actively in what we wanted to teach. Techniques, topics that were supposedly connected to their lived realities – without asking the children what their lived realities were. Most of the topics covered in my classes, indeed, were highly abstract and removed from even my academic life reality.

Only after leaving university teacher training and engaging with teacher training for DaF/DaZ did we focus a little more on culture. We focused strongly on the importance of local knowledge for successful immigration. Particularly for refugees building their home in small villages in the countryside, becoming part of the community meant growing their understanding of local customs, traditions and language use; they defined the community and its interactions, and our responsibility as German Foreign Language teachers was to take that into account.
Unfortunately, around 95% were to teach adults outside schools, again not bringing our culture into the educational system.

Working in Austrian schools

Culture was barely mentioned in classrooms when I worked as a teaching assistant. Mostly, when Austrian culture was spoken of, we talked about specific words we use in comparison to speakers of German from Germany, or literature produced by Austrian writers. Traditional culture, even within the context of the village the students went to school in, was no longer part of the classroom. This was different in the primary school, which tried to allow the children to participate in village festivities. Once they reached secondary schooling at age 10, that stopped completely.

When working with a group of young trainee mechanics who were all from the countryside, we first started our class using standardised language. Failing to capture their attention within the first ten minutes, I decided to shift my use of language and fall into my home dialect, using expressions and idioms that were more likely to resonate with the young

people's used language. Within a few minutes, the group opened up, listened up and spoke up more, appearing more comfortable in an environment where their ways of expressing themselves were acknowledged and not out of place. Even though we had been previously warned that the class could be quite difficult, we ran into no trouble with them whatsoever and spent a productive workshop during which we got to really talk about their personal concerns.

Working as a tutor for two years, I helped my students write a number of pieces on other cultures. They were asked to learn about and understand the cultural landscapes from places all over the globe, yet when it came to their personal writings, it was mostly confined to daily routines and hobbies. The students were not ever asked to compare their own culture to that of others – they were asked to compare the minute details of their routines, but not see the bigger picture. Even students that were involved in a variety of cultural practices would keep those to themselves, never asked to bring them forward in their work. This was something I recognised with students across the board: all ages, all school types, from schools all over town.

In many instances, when there would be school failures within my own family, they would be brushed aside as things that don't really matter. When the children showed good engagement in their home culture, their ability to establish friendship groups there and be dedicated to the tasks they have within the community, this would be seen as what 'really matters'. Especially with students that were struggling, there was a tendency to see school as a thing that needed to be completed, but that was separate of their actual life realities, and more temporary than their involvement with their village community. The village community was a safe haven, showing their true skills and knowledge, while also further removing them from school and the possibility of academic achievement.