



# CaDDANZ

Capturing the Diversity Dividend  
of Aotearoa/New Zealand

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## THE 'CULTURAL GENERATION GAP' IN NZ REGIONS

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### Background

New Zealand is a superdiverse country, and ethnic diversity is expected to increase over time. However, while all regions of New Zealand can expect to experience increased ethnic diversity, these increases will not be experienced equally in all regions.

In this CADDANZ Brief, I outline New Zealand's changing ethnic geography, using Census data from 2001 to 2013. These data provide some indication of the future trajectory of ethnic change, because of in-built 'momentum effects' - the ethnic mix of young people now will be reflected in the ethnic mix of older people in the future, while the ethnic mix of people of prime childbearing age will be reflected in the ethnic mix of future children.

To illustrate this, I focus on presenting results based on the 'cultural generation gap', which U.S. demographer William Frey (2015, p.12-13) described in the U.S. context as the gap "between the increasingly diverse child population and a largely white older population". Following Frey (2015), I calculate the cultural generation gap as the difference between the percentage of seniors (aged 65 years and over) who report NZ European/Pākehā or New Zealander (NZE) as one of the ethnic groups to which they belong, and the percentage of children (aged under 20 years) who report NZE as one of their ethnic groups.

Figure 1 (see page 2) presents the cultural generation gap for New Zealand as a whole, for the 2001, 2006 and 2013 Census. In each bar on the graph, the total height of the bar represents the percentage of the population aged 65 years and over that is NZE. The dark blue portion of the bar represents the corresponding percentage of the population aged under 20 years. The light blue portion of the bar is the difference—the cultural generation gap. The cultural generation gap demonstrates that New Zealand's ethnic mix will be less NZE in the future.

In 2001, 88.6% of the population aged 65 years and over were NZE. This proportion is fairly stable over time (88.9% in 2006, and 85.0% in 2013). However, the proportion of the population aged under 20 years that were NZE has been declining, from 72.2% in 2001 to 70.9% in 2006 and 68.1% in 2013. The cultural generation gap was 16.4% in 2001, 18.1% in 2006, and 16.9% in 2013.

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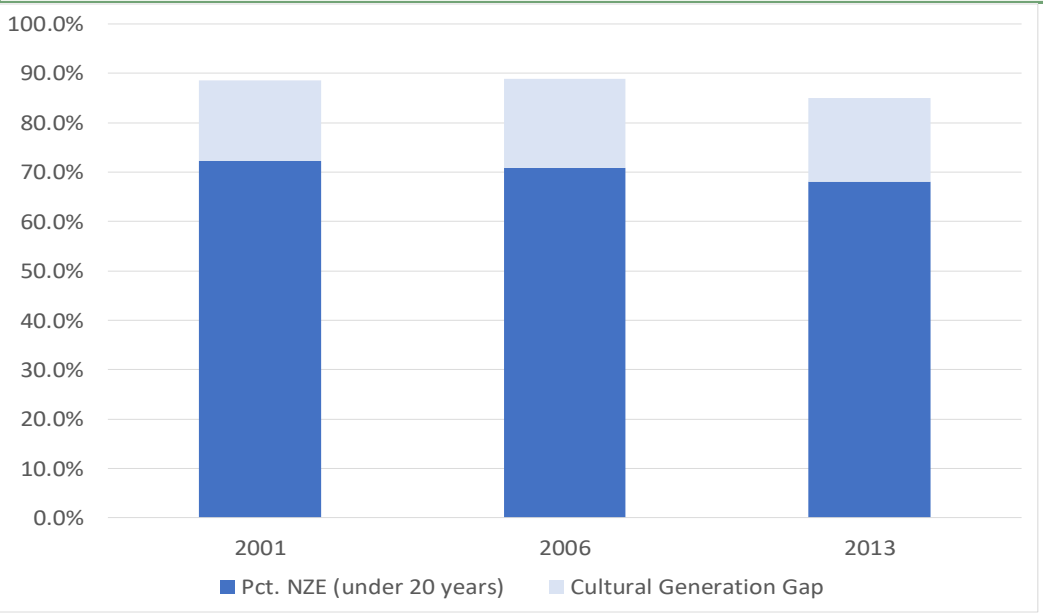
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**Figure 1: New Zealand's Cultural Generation Gap, 2001-2013**

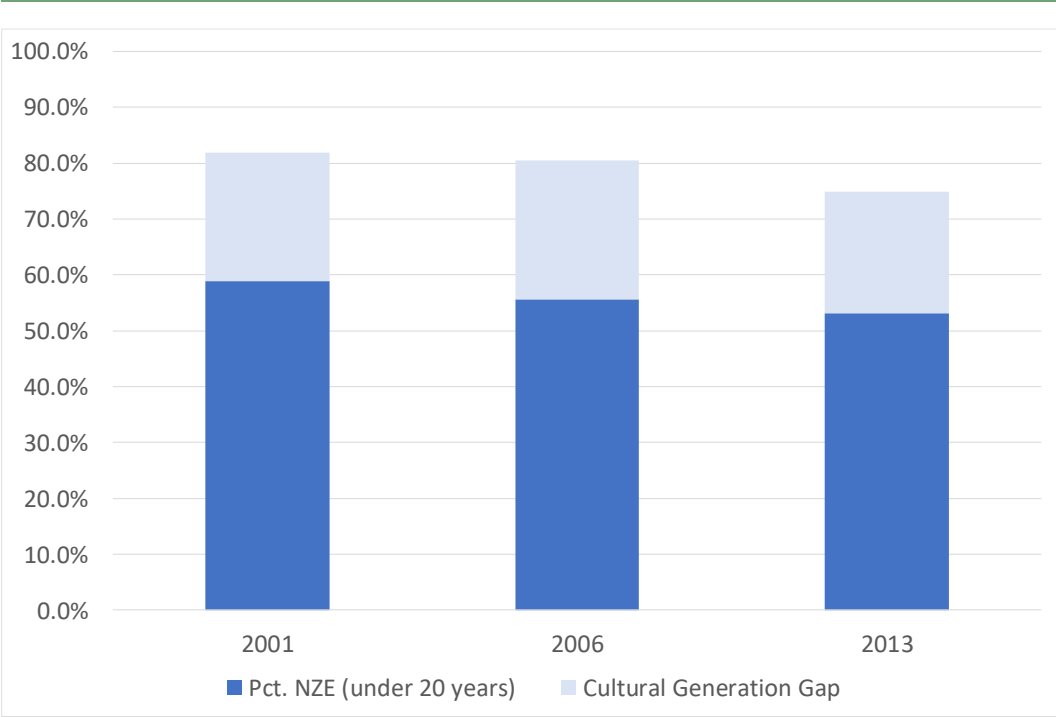


**The Cultural Generation Gap in Auckland**

Auckland is already one of the most superdiverse cities in the world, with the most diverse population in New Zealand. How does Auckland compare with New Zealand as a whole? Figure 2 presents the cultural generation gap for Auckland over the period from 2001 to 2013.

There are a number of things to note from this figure. First, the total height of the bars is less than for New Zealand as a whole (as shown in Figure 1). This means that the senior population is more diverse than New Zealand as a whole. The declining height of the bars over time shows that the senior population is becoming more diverse over time. Second, the light blue bar (representing the cultural generation gap) is a greater proportion of the total height of the bar. The cultural generation gap in Auckland was 23.0% in 2001, 24.8% in 2006, and 21.6% in 2013. This means that, not only is Auckland already more diverse than New Zealand as a whole, but that diversity is also going to grow faster than the rest of New Zealand.

**Figure 2: Auckland's Cultural Generation Gap, 2001-2013**

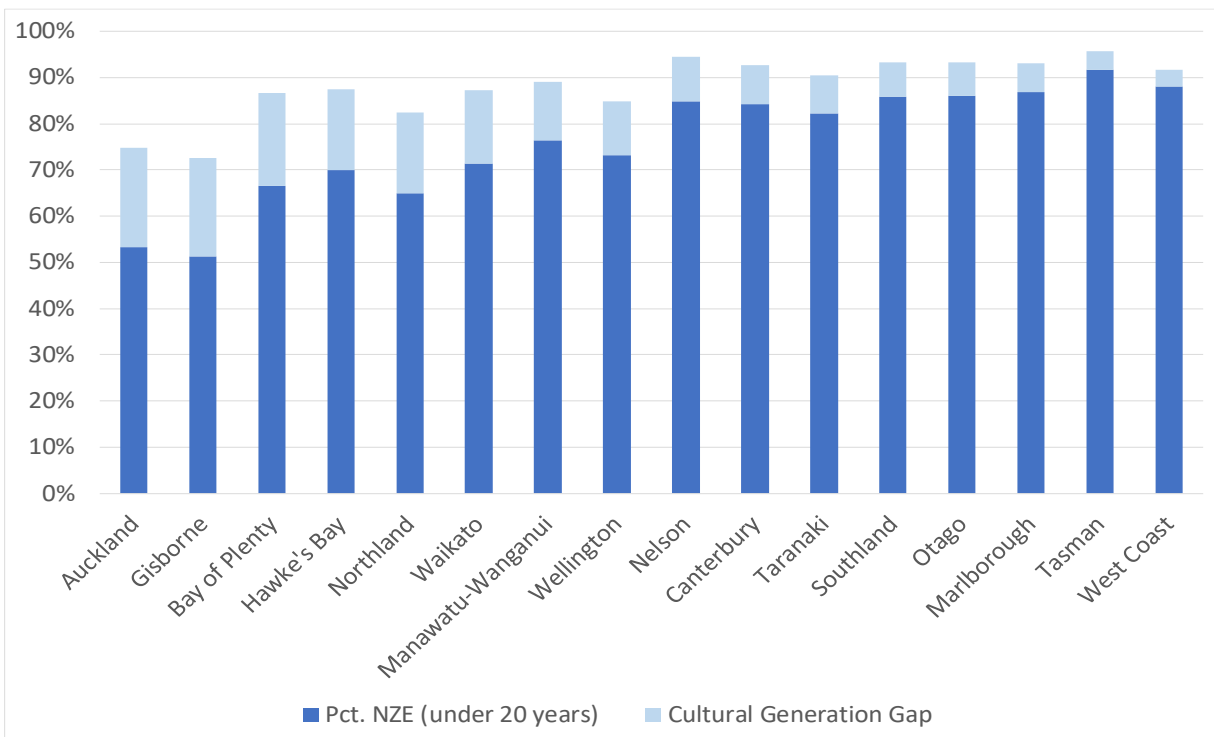


## The Cultural Generation Gap Across New Zealand's Regions

The cultural generation gap varies considerably across New Zealand's regions. Figure 3 presents the cultural generation gap for each region in 2013 (for other years, the results are similar), ranking the regions from the region with the largest cultural generation gap (Auckland; 21.6%) on the left, to the region with the smallest cultural generation gap (West Coast; 3.6%) on the right.

It may be surprising to note that the Gisborne region ranks second in terms of the cultural generation gap. This is because of Gisborne's high proportion of Māori, and the relative youth of the regions' Māori population. Overall, there is a clear divide between the North Island, which is likely to become substantially more ethnically diverse in the future, and the South Island, which is less likely. Only the Taranaki region ranks below *any* South Island region in terms of the cultural generation gap.

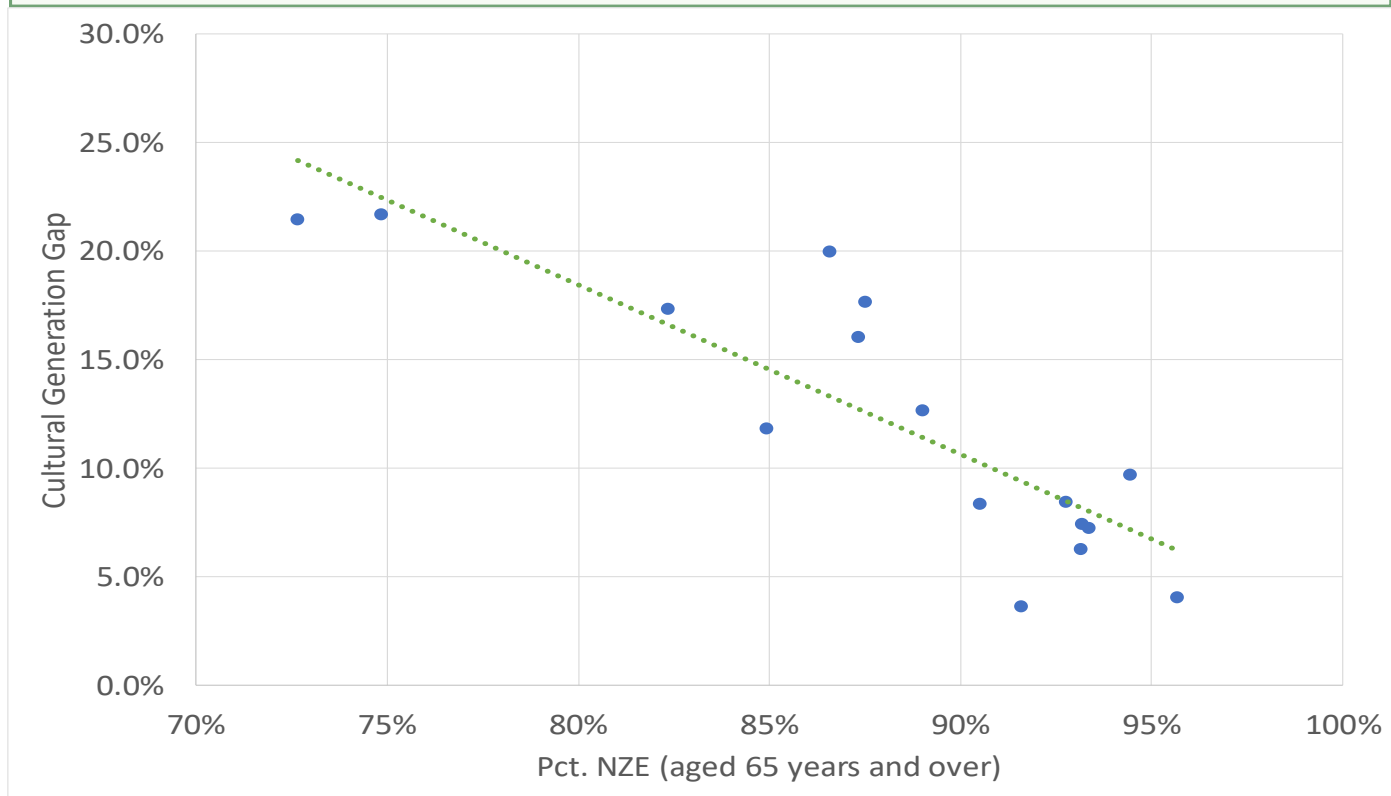
**Figure 3: The Cultural Generation Gap by Region, 2013**



## The Projected Persistence of Ethnic Diversity Across New Zealand's Regions

To illustrate how persistent the change in ethnic diversity will be across regions, Figure 4 plots the cultural generation gap in 2013 (y-axis) against the percentage of seniors who are NZE in 2013 (x-axis). Each blue dot represents one of New Zealand's sixteen regions. The green dotted line is a linear trend line. The trend shows that areas that have a higher proportion of NZE also have a lower cultural generation gap—that is, those regions that are already less diverse are also expected to experience the least change in future diversity.

**Figure 4: Cultural Generation Gap, by Percentage of Seniors who are NZ European or New Zealander**



## Conclusion

New Zealand is a superdiverse country, but not all regions are equally diverse, and neither will the future diversity of each region grow at the same rate. The cultural generation gap provides a simple way of illustrating the future ethnic diversity of New Zealand's regions. It shows that those regions that are likely to grow more diverse the fastest, are those that are already the most diverse.

However, the cultural generation gap is necessarily a crude measure of future diversity. The CaDDANZ research programme is currently developing better tools for understanding future ethnic diversity in New Zealand. These include a new method of projecting ethnic populations that will be especially useful for projecting small ethnic groups (currently, Statistics New Zealand only projects New Zealand European/Pākehā, Māori, Pacific, and Asian, as well as Samoan, Chinese, and Indian).

We are also developing a spatial microsimulation model of the Auckland region, that incorporates modules to simulate future migration and ethnic mobility. This will allow us to better understand the spatial distribution of ethnicities in Auckland.



### References:

Frey, W.H. (2015). *Diversity Explosion—How New Racial Demographics are Remaking America*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.