Te Hoe Nuku Roa: A Journey Towards Maori Centered Research

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Abstract

Maori people have a unique body of knowledge that, while based on ancestral traditions, has adapted to meet contemporary challenges. While Maori knowledge is widely applied in Maori communities it is now increasingly being used in mainstream domains.

This paper will focus on a project known as Best Outcomes For **Māori**: **Te Hoe Nuku Roa Maori** Profiles, a longitudinal Maori household project with a focus on Maori development in cultural, social and economic terms. This project is based on a cultural framework that has been formulated from 'traditional' principles. It provides a model for the interaction between Maori knowledge and mainstream social science practices and demonstrates how Maori knowledge and the Western scientific tradition can be used together to resolve critical failings in previous research and advance the aspirations of Maori people. It is just one example of how traditional principles are demonstrating their continuing value in contemporary Maori development. "The challenge today is to survive as **Māori**, to retain a Maori identity, while still being able to participate fully in society and in the communities of the world." (Durie 1997)

Introduction

MAori[1] knowledge, while often applied in a Maori cultural context is increasingly being applied to contemporary mainstream situations. In the tradition of their ancestors Maori people today use Maori knowledge, values and principles to understand and interpret new experiences and to conceptualize new technologies. In the area of research on Maori people, in Maori communities or on issues of interest to **Māori**, Maori knowledge, principles and traditions have been used to develop appropriate research methodologies and processes. In some cases developing appropriate methodologies and processes has been described as research that is 'essentially scientific though incorporating Maori styles (Durie 1996a). In this context the development of appropriate methodologies can be seen as a bridge between Western scientific traditions and Maori knowledge.

Maori Knowledge

Maori knowledge is a body of knowledge that is intricately linked with Maori cultural and personal identity. Awareness of history, customs, and traditions informs identity and establishes an individuals place and part in society.

Maori knowledge is based on an oral tradition and is expressed in a variety of forms such as **karakia** (prayers), **korero pakiwaitara** (stories), cosmological narratives, **waiata** (songs), **moteatea** (poetry), **tauparapara** (phrases), **poroporoaki** (laments or farewells) and **whakatauki** (sayings). It can also be expressed as a principle, **kawa** (laws) or **tikanga** (rules and practices). Maori knowledge has shaped and continues to shape the values, beliefs, customs and practices of Maori people. In fact teachings of the past including philosophy and traditional values, all

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contribute to the development of pathways for the future by forming the rationale for reflection, choice and action.

This body of knowledge is maintained through continual use. While it is often applied in a Maori cultural context to ensure retention and relevance for future generations new domains of application within contemporary mainstream society must be explored.

Adaptation to Meet Contemporary Challenges

Application of Maori knowledge in a wider mainstream context has often been restricted to the context of the Treaty of Waitangi (the Treaty). The Treaty[2] is often referred to as the founding document of New Zealand. While it is not entrenched in the New Zealand Constitution, its principles are recognized in some legislation. In recent decades the Treaty has become linked with the concept of **tino rangatiratanga** or Maori self-determination and used to address past grievances with respect to alienation of **Māori** from land (Durie 1998, Walker 1996).

In 1975 the Treaty of Waitangi Act established the Waitangi Tribunal. This Tribunal heard claims and made recommendations to the Government regarding past actions of the Crown that were inconsistent with the 'principles' of the Treaty. To allow for the fact that the Treaty was written in 1840 and the existence of an English and a Maori version with different meanings, recommendations are based on the principles or 'fundamental motive or reasons for the provisions' (Waitangi Tribunal 1988) rather than the, or a particular text. The Waitangi Tribunal built on the principles considered in the decision of the Court of Appeal in New Zealand Maori Council v. Attorney-General (1987) NZLR 641 which determined that:

> ...the key to defining the principles of the Treaty is to be found in the idea of partnership and that cooperation is at the heart of the agreed relationship. A principle of protection is nonetheless inherent in that partnership, creating responsibilities - Waitangi Tribunal 1988.

In 1988 the Royal Commission on Social Policy extended this definition to include five principles for Crown action on the Treaty: the principle of Government, Self-management, Equality, Reasonable Cooperation and Redress (Royal Commission on Social Policy 1988). The intention was to use principles as a framework for dealing with contemporary issues that arise from the Treaty.

Treaty of Waitangi arguments have been used as a means of acknowledging the role and status of Maori people, knowledge, values and philosophies in contemporary New Zealand society. The use of the Treaty in this respect coincided with a cultural renaissance demanding self-determination and reaffirmation of Maori cultural heritage. There were calls for greater recognition of Maori language and practices (Durie et al. 1986). In addition low socio-economic performance as highlighted by the Hunn Report (1961) and the widening gap between **Māori** and non-**Māori** led to calls for increased participation within New Zealand society.

Since the 1980's Maori development has been promoted as a vehicle for addressing these issues. While acknowledging the aspirations for progress in 'traditional' areas such as cultural and political terms it also promotes advancement in social and economic terms and within both Maori and mainstream domains (Durie 1998). Maori development is intrinsically linked to self-determination or Maori control and authority and it was therefore not surprising when in 1984 at **Hui Taumata**, the Maori Economic Summit, **iwi**[3] were identified as the preferential provider of services to **Māori**.

Maori development is generally focused on five broad areas. These are development in a cultural, social and economic context plus the development of political autonomy and natural resources. The goals are to achieve economic self-sufficiency, cultural affirmation, social well being, environmental sustainability, self-determination and mutually beneficial partnerships (Durie 1998).

Research in a New Zealand Context

Maori people have been observed and described in detail since first contact with Europeans in the 18th Century (Salmond 1997). From early contact well into the middle of the 20th Century ethnographic and anthropological researchers such as Joseph Banks, Elsdon Best, Augustus Hamilton, John White, Percy Smith, Sir George Grey, Sir Peter Buck and Raymond Firth wrote extensively on aspects of Maori society and traditional practices. The western scientific tradition was used to redefine Maori people and their lifestyles based on European values and norms. Romantic notions such as the 'noble savage' justified zealous missionary practices and later in the 19th Century assimilation policies. The net impact was that, as with many other indigenous peoples, Maori knowledge, values and philosophy was eroded and replaced with European law and traditions. In New Zealand legislation was used to suppress Maori knowledge.

> "But the greatest blow to the organization of Maori knowledge and understanding occurred in 1907 when the Tohunga Suppression Act was passed. By outlawing traditional healers, the Act also opposed Maori methodologies and the legitimacy of Maori knowledge in respect of healing, the environment, the arts, and the links between the spiritual and the secular." (Durie 1996b)

In the 1960's research on Maori people became demographic in nature and involved comparative analysis with the non-Maori population (Hunn 1961). This type of re-

search perpetuated the notion of **Māori** as a homologous group and fueled the creation of negative stereotypes. It identified domains in which Maori people were performing poorly in social and economic terms, revelations, it is criticized, that were not new to Maori or the wider community. In addition the comparative focus failed to address strategies to resolve the social and economic problems facing Maori people.

In the context of contemporary society, the tendency to regard **Māori** as a homogeneous group is problematic. The reality is that while Maori people share a number of commonalties there exist also many differences. Today, Maori people can be found across a wide range of cultural, social, and economic circumstances. In recent years this has been referred to as **Matatini Maori** or diverse Maori realities (Durie 1995).

In recent decades with the emergence of a critical mass of indigenous researchers, the positivistic approach to research has been challenged. Associated with this is the development of research processes that are more appropriate for research involving **Māori** or on issues of interest to Maori people. Many of these approaches are based on Maori values and philosophy yet also utilize and build on standard Western research methodologies. 'Building bridges' across research paradigms has therefore involved recognizing the impact of historical research on Maori people. It is also about acknowledging the criticisms of past research and ensuring that by incorporating the strengths of Maori knowledge and practice into research design these issues can be addressed in current and future projects.

Maori Appropriate Processes for Research

The idea of developing Maori appropriate processes in social science research was first posed by Stokes (1985) and built on by others (Bishop 1994, Irwin 1994, Smith 1990, Te Awekotuku 1991, Tuhiwai-Smith 1996). These ideas have been encapsulated by the phrase 'research by **Māori** for **Māori**'.

Maori values and attitudes towards knowledge are found in the cosmological narrative nga kete e toru or the three baskets of knowledge. This narrative describes Tanenui-arangi (a higher being in Maori cosmological thought) and the pursuit of knowledge and teaches that the process of research is just as important as the information generated (Smith 1913). The phrase 'by **Māori**' assumes that a Maori researcher is more likely to possess the skills and knowledge to perform the research and interpret the results from a cultural context. This phrase also reinforced calls for Maori autonomy and self-determination, a continual theme of cultural affirmation.

The 'for **Māori**' component of the phrase 'research by **Māori** for **Māori**' refers to a preference for applied re-

search, particularly the type of research that will remedy critical social issues and/or benefit the community who are participating in the research. It reflects dissatisfaction with previous research that sought primarily to describe the problem.

There are two key approaches emerging in the development of Maori appropriate processes: **kaupapa Maori** (Bishop 1994, Irwin 1994, Smith 1990, Te Awekotuku 1991, Tuhiwai-Smith 1996) and a Maori centered approach (Durie 1997). Generally speaking these approaches have been developed to achieve similar goals. Firstly, they are a response to the impacts and limitations of the positivistic approach to research on Maori people. In this sense they address critical failings of previous research methodology. Secondly, they recognize Maori aspirations and expectations towards research. Thirdly, they draw on traditional Maori values to guide research design and methodology.

Best Outcomes for Maori: Te Hoe Nuku Roa Maori Profiles

The Best Outcomes for **Māori**: **Te Hoe Nuku Roa Maori** Profiles[4] project is an example of a Maori centered approach to research. It is a longitudinal household survey developed by staff at **Te Pūtahi-ā-Toi**, School of Maori Studies, Massey University, New Zealand, to better understand the actual circumstances of Maori people and the broader issues of Maori identity and values in contemporary New Zealand society. The project provides comprehensive integrated information about the circumstances of 650 Maori households and is based on a multi-axial relational framework (Durie et al. 1995) that identifies key elements relevant to contemporary Maori society. A stratified random sampling technique called **Whaihua Tatau** (Fitzgerald et al. 1996) was utilized to select the sample.

The project takes its name from the concept of breaking new ground in the research of Maori households. This research was compared to early Maori mariners embarking on an exploration of unknown places. **Te Hoe Nuku Roa** is an extract from a **karakia** (chant) offered by **tohunga** (experts) when setting out on an uncharted journey. It refers to the '**hoe**' or paddle necessary to power the canoe during the '**nuku roa**', long journey.

Te Hoe Nuku Roa utilizes a Maori centered approach to research. A Maori centered approach to research 'focuses primarily on Maori people, as **Māori**, and the research methods and practices employed take full cognizance of Maori culture, Maori knowledge and contemporary realities (Durie 1998). It is an approach that seeks to incorporate Maori aspirations of research, to build the capacity of **Māori** to research and to promote appropriate methodologies for use with Maori people, in Maori communities or on issues of interest to **Māori**. This approach is founded on the Maori concepts of **Whakapiki Tangata**: Enablement,

Enhancement or Empowerment, **Whakatuia**: Integration and **Mana Māori**: Maori Control.

Whakapiki Tangata: Enablement, Enhancement or Empowerment

With regard to research this principle refers to addressing the criticisms that in the past, **Māori** have received few benefits from research. In the context of **Te Hoe Nuku Roa** this is expressed by ensuring that the research outputs are of use to the Maori community. The database will provide information for Maori and other planners and facilitate development of policy and programs for Maori development and advancement in social, cultural and economic terms. This enables **Māori** to take control of their own futures.

Whakapiki Tangata is also about upholding the dignity of individuals and the collective. At the individual level this is achieved by utilizing processes that protect the individual such as stringent confidentiality and consent processes. At the collective level it involves remaining accountable to the community. This is expressed by the continual involvement of key interest groups and Maori institutions across all phases of the research, as researchers, in the project design (advisory team), data gathering (community interviewers), and dissemination (accessibility of research information and findings for all **Māori** and non-**Māori**).

Whakatuia: Integration

Underpinning the concept of **Whakatuia** is the holistic approach that incorporates notions of relationships and interconnectiveness. This concept illustrates the links between the spiritual, physical and environmental domains. These links impose a series of responsibilities and obligations.

In the context of the **Te Hoe Nuku Roa** project this concept is reflected by the intersectoral nature of the project. The **Te Hoe Nuku Roa** project is premised on a Maori relevant framework (Table 1). The framework ensures that a holistic approach is utilized by identifying four key interacting axis of inquiry - **Paihere Tangata**: Human Relationships, **Te Ao Maori**: Maori Identity, **Nga Ahuatanga Noho-a-tangata**: Socio-economic Circumstances and **Whakanekeneketanga**: Change Over Time.

Table 1: **Te Hoe Nuku Roa Maori** Relevant Framework (Durie 1995)

Nga Putake Axes	Nga Peka Subsets	Nga Rau Focused units of inquiry
Axis 1 **Paihere Tangata** Human Relationships	Individual Family Household **Whanau** (extended family)	Household Roles and relationships **Whanau** cohesion Interdependence
Axis 2 **Te Ao Maori** Maori Identity	**Mana ake** (personal identity) **Taonga tuku iho** (cultural heritage) **Nga rawa a Rangi raua ko Papa** (natural resources) **Whakanohohanga Maori** (Maori institutions)	Ethnic affiliation Language **Tikanga** (rules and practices) Land Fisheries Forests Environment **Marae** (meeting house/place) **Hapu** (subtribe) activities **Iwi** (tribe) links
Axis 3 **Nga ahuatanga noho-a-tangata** Socio-economic circumstances	**Oranga tangata** (well being) **Whai Tunga** (societal standing) **Whai huanga** (economic position)	Health Education Housing Employment Lifestyles Income
Axis 4 **Nga Whakanekeneketanga** Change over time	Changing household dynamics Wider interactions Shift in cultural identity Altered circumstances	Mobility Stability Realization of aspirations Vulnerability Impact of external factors New groupings

The **Te Ao Māori**: Maori identity axis provides the areas of cultural inquiry such as **Mana Ake**: Personal Identity, **Taonga Tuku Iho**: Cultural Heritage, **Nga Rawa A Rangi Raua Ko Papa**: Natural Resources and **Whakanohohanga**: Maori Institutions. It is through this axis that contemporary attitudes to ethnic affiliation, Maori language and **tikanga** (rules and practices), relationship with natural resources such as land, fisheries, forestry and participation in **marae** (meeting places), **hapu** (subtribe) and **iwi** (tribe) activities are explored.

Analysis between the four axes provides the link to other contemporary issues. Therefore the framework allows for the explorations of complex interactions between individuals, families, communities and society, between people and the environment and between the past and the future.

Mana Māori: Maori control

Mana Māori: Maori control is closely linked to the concept of **Tino Rangatiratanga**. **Tino Rangatiratanga** encapsulates the political aspirations of Maori people. It could be loosely translated as autonomy, control and self-determination. In the context of research it demands that **Māori** have some form of control over the research. Control over participation, the research process and the protection of information generated by the project.

This concept has been addressed in the **Te Hoe Nuku Roa** project in a number of ways. Firstly, Maori scholars and **Iwi** set the research agenda. In order to make informed decisions on social, economic and cultural issues it was necessary to collect reliable empirical data. This is the prime objective of this project.

Secondly, **Māori** were involved in all aspects of the project design. The research team was predominately although not exclusively **Māori**. Collectively, the team has skills and expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research particularly in the areas of Maori health and well-being, Maori language, linguists, education, housing, economics and the family, policy and Maori development.

An advisory committee was established to provide guidance and input from interested parties and to ensure that the research team was accountable to the participants and the community. The committee featured prominent members of Maori society, representatives from Maori organizations and research specialists. With regard to accountability relationships were also formed with key organizations and people in the community. Information and research results were disseminated regularly.

Research processes

Research processes were based on culturally sensitive ways of collecting, disseminating and interpreting infor-

mation. With regard to collection of information this included the use of the face to face mode of interviewing, applying the principle of reciprocity, the option of completing an interview in the Maori language and the use of Maori people from the community as interviewers. Face to face interviewing enables trust and respect to be built between the researchers and the researched.

Reciprocity is based on the practice of giving and receiving. In exchange for participation in the project a koha or gift is returned as an expression of the respect and value the research team place on that input. It is also an acknowledgment of the obligations and responsibilities that the researcher now has for the protection and utilization of the information gained.

Use of the Maori language may facilitate participation for some interviewees. It is however an expression of **tino rangtiratanga** autonomy, control and self-determination, in the sense of ensuring that Maori language, a crucial element of Maori identity and knowledge, is retained and enhanced.

There were a number of reasons for using Maori people from the community as interviewers. Firstly, training community people in the skills of research increases both the local and collective capacity of **Māori** to participate in research. Secondly, this approach is based on a belief that Maori people share similar experiences and that often participants would prefer to talk to another **Māori**, particularly on issues relating to Maori cultural identity. Thirdly, a Maori researcher is more likely to be able to speak the Maori language and understand and respond in an appropriate manner to the intricacies of Maori culture.

Dissemination of information begins well before research is initiated and continues well after the interview process has been completed. The content of the information is dependent on the phase of research. Dissemination involves providing information in accessible forms to participants, communities and relevant organizations.

Analysis of information occurred within both a Maori cultural and Western scientific framework. Standard social science research methodologies and tools are utilized in recognition of the strength of robust and rigorous research.

Concluding Comments

While Maori-centered approaches to research have developed primarily in the area of social science the concepts and principles are transferable between disciplines. This approach enables interaction between Maori and research communities. It is based on developing enduring, reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships. A Maori-centered approach recognizes and acknowledges the

importance of cultural practices and knowledge and provides a forum in which traditional principles can be applied to contemporary issues. However, the approach must be used in ways that maintain the integrity of Maori knowledge, while promoting its ability to be used for positive Maori development. A Maori-centered approach enables Maori people and communities to more effectively participate in mainstream research disciplines thereby contributing to the goals of Maori development and towards the maintenance and revitalization of traditional practices and knowledge.

NOTES

1. **Māori** are a Polynesian people indigenous to New Zealand. Maori people are an integral part of **Aotearoa** /New Zealand society. People of Maori descent make up 16% of the New Zealand population.

2. Maori chiefs of New Zealand and representatives of the British Crown signed the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. It is a document that ceded sovereignty of New Zealand to the British monarchy in exchange for the continual possession of the tangible and intangible assets of the Maori people. **Māori** have always interpreted this clause to include environmental assets such as land, rivers and coastal areas plus the Maori language, knowledge and customary practices.

3. **Iwi** was the largest socio-political organization in Maori society commonly referred to today as a tribe. It was a group of communities linked together by descent from a common ancestor (Henare 1988).

4. For more information visit http://www.tehoenukuroa. org.nz/

5. Written down by H.T. Whatahoro from the teachings of Te Matorohanga and Nepia Pohuhu, priests of the **Wharewananga** of the East coast, New Zealand; translated by S. Percy Smith.

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