

THE CONCEPT OF INDIGENOUS PLANNING AS A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

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There is a curious irony in juxtaposing at a planning congress, the notion of social inclusion with indigenous peoples, when the very canvas that planners work with has generally been the site of such a violent contest for space and position.

Indigenous people the world over continue to face a myriad of problems borne out of displacement, dislocation and disenfranchisement from and within the colonial cities and rural spaces that planners like you and I continue to "plan for."

Like an archaeological site, these spaces contain layers of history, landscapes, place names and sites of meaning and significance deeply embedded in the memory of their traditional owners and inhabitants. However, colonial imperialism over space has resulted in the creation of new identities, new landscapes, new monuments, new histories and new sites of significance.

Therefore the fundamental opening question for planning practice is whether it is able to deal with indigenous memory and association with place that covers 1000 years, in the case of the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand and 40,000 years in the case of the indigenous people of Australia. Clearly the intellectual, quite apart from professional and political challenges for planning, are immense.

However like an archaeological dig perhaps it simply requires a variant form of excavation, but

in this case an excavation for the truth followed by reconciliation, then planned inclusion of indigenous peoples on their own terms, in the common spaces we now inhabit as human communities.

I will resist trans-Tasman rivalry and banter over whose planning system might be better or whose might make better provision for indigenous peoples. While indigenous people across the world (including New Zealand and Australia) may share common experiences of colonialism, the nature, gravity, and often violence of that experience is spatially and temporally varied. Diversity of colonial experience through time and space has also created a diversity of response to this experience.

Therefore planning's response must be equally nuanced, contextualised and imagined within the communities' own vision for their individual and collective futures. Planning's challenge is to create the broad conceptual tools, frameworks and practices to enable this to happen.

Maori and Planning: A Very Brief History

My formulation of what indigenous planning might be, is indelibly hitched to my analyses of cumulative Maori experience and response to planning and "the system" from the early days of colonisation to the present. Therefore my

discussion about the concept of indigenous planning is of necessity considered against the backdrop of these experiences.

The Treaty and Planning Legislation

The Treaty of Waitangi 1840 still provides New Zealand with the clearest articulation of how a partnership between indigenous peoples and exogenous – "settler" – communities in governance, planning and development might actually have worked. The Treaty recognised a causal nexus between Maori people, their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands and other resources.

It also acknowledged an explicit (or implicit) right to participate in management and planning decisions about these resources. The 1852 New Zealand constitution Act extended this notion by recognising Maori rights to self-government similar to local government. In essence a broad and innovative foundation for a duality in government between Maori institutions and settler governments (and perhaps a dual planning system), was established during the early phases of the colonial encounter.

However, the violent jockeying over the next 100 or more years systematically destroyed any illusion of partnership and mutual co-existence that might have existed. Maori simply became invisible and subsumed within the (at

the time) normative ideal of a homogeneous undifferentiated public. Despite the passage of the 1926 and 1953 Acts, it wasn't until the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 that the unique relationship between Maori communities and their ancestral lands and resources was recognised as having some importance, worthy of legitimate planning endeavour.

The period since then has ubiquitously been defined by Maori as a period of recovery, renaissance, and arguably- reconciliation.

The Resource Management Act 1991

The comprehensive review of legislation culminated in the Resource Management Act 1991 at least in word, if not unmitigated fervour, brought the Treaty, Maori notions of environmental stewardship, the relationship between Maori, their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands and resources, into the regulatory planning framework of the country. Only in the recent 2002 Local Government Act has Maori participation in Local government decision-making been given any serious or constructive consideration.

Of greater significance though and possibly for the first time in the world, what the Resource Management Act 1991 did through its acknowledgement of 'planning documents recognised by iwi', was give statutory recognition to the existence of a parallel or dual planning system.

Effectively it recognised the legitimacy of another approach to planning albeit grounded in indigenous knowledge, processes and institutions. It also created a statutory requirement for

local and regional government to "have regard to" iwi planning documents. In so doing, it set in train a sequence of events which, today sees iwi management planning as an indelible part of New Zealand's planning landscape.

The 2005 RMA amendment further entrenched iwi management planning by requiring local government to keep and maintain records, including planning documents of each iwi and hapu (sub-tribe) in their region or district. The potential for mutual engagement was also extended by providing local and iwi authorities with the opportunity to make joint management agreements for any natural or physical resource.

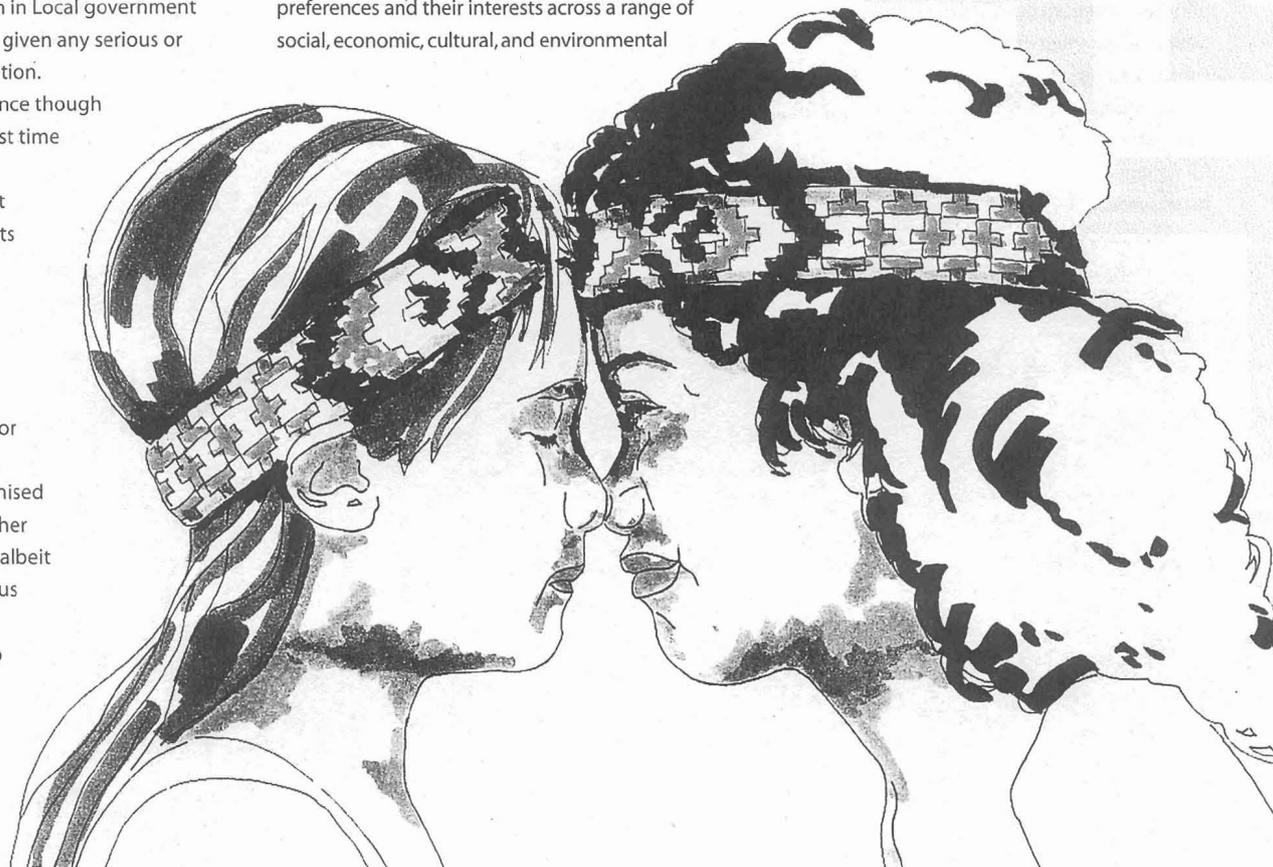
Maori (iwi) Management Planning

Iwi management plans are simply the codification of a tribe's prescription for its future, where it sees itself now, where it wants to go and how it might get there.

They provide tribes with their own framework for defining themselves, their history, their preferences and their interests across a range of social, economic, cultural, and environmental

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fronts. Importantly for planning and planners they generally identify procedures for engagement with external agencies such as local government. More importantly though they prescribe management, planning and decision-making processes to guide iwi toward their concept of self-determination.

However, because it connects specific peoples to specific spaces, Maori planning isn't just a glorified wish list of broad political strategy, uncluttered by sometimes messy conflicts and disagreements over contested space.

Maori planning and associated policies and approaches are firmly located in territorial space set during the precolonial era, generally fixed at the point of colonial contact, and which now define the spatial parameters of modern iwi management planning. In other words the notion of spatial specificity connecting people to place since time immemorial is a defining characteristic both of the practice and theory of contemporary Maori planning.

On a related front, Maori are considerably under-represented both in the profession and politics of planning in New Zealand. That they will continue to be so in the immediate and distant future, is almost an immutable truth. Therefore, the concept of iwi management planning as a method for engaging with and better understanding the Maori world, further heightens its significance.

Iwi management plans have assisted Maori to break through a default mainstream planning position which often in the past either ignored them, made assumptions about what might be important or was itself constrained by the limits of what statute or indeed the planning imagination might have allowed.

The Brazilian educationalist, Paulo Freire (1978) eloquently defined colonisation as being "....defined by someone else and to believe it even though confronted daily by evidence to the contrary" and the importance of 'naming the world by naming the word'. Iwi management planning is a specific Maori response to Freire's musing on the meaning of colonisation.

Iwi management planning, has enabled Maori

to self define and to cut through the colonising, totalising tendencies that often smother innovative planning practice. In so doing it is presenting another definition of the world and what might be important.

However, it would be churlish not to acknowledge the planning profession's role in supporting and in some cases, leading the shift in thinking in New Zealand. For instance the NZ Planning Institute's constitutional review in 2002 now sees a revised constitution which defines planning as:

"...a continuing, comprehensive process which involves the formulation, implementation and review of iwi management plans, public and corporate policies and proposals on local, regional and national levels concerning:

- Land, water and air resources
- Social, economic and cultural development

The management of the natural and modified environment."

and includes the goal:

"to promote the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and the needs and interest of the tangata whenua in the practice of planning."

To the question of whether planning in New Zealand has moved from being an exclusionary to a more inclusionary practice, the answer would have to quite clearly be yes. However the push – pull factors that have forced this shift should not be masked. Maori communities aided at various times by the environmental and planning lobby has engaged in a high degree of polemic positioning to force change in the politics and the law of planning..

The Concept of a Dual Planning Tradition

Importantly, Maori planning or iwi management planning is not simply a response to colonisation. Therefore, any theorising about what it might constitute needs to accept five key assumptions (Matunga, 1999).

Maori as iwi and hapu have a planning tradition that predates though was affirmed by the Treaty

A contemporary Maori planning which is grounded in Maori tradition and philosophy, though evolving and being reshaped by experience and responses to colonisation, exists.

• The Treaty provided the basis for evolution of a dual planning tradition, one grounded in Maori tradition, philosophy, and practice, and the other in the imported traditions and practices of an introduced "western planning tradition:

Past and recent, colonialism has required Maori to make explicit and codify in written form what previously might have been implicit and embedded in their culture and tradition.

Planning in New Zealand has a dual planning heritage which needs to form the basis for a new paradigm in planning.

Planning in New Zealand has finally woken from a deep sleep to embrace an inherent duality originally forged in 1840. In short, planning did not arrive with the colonial ships. Maori, like all other indigenous communities have always planned and still plan.

Indigenous Planning

The words indigenous and planning continue to be highly contested terms. Indigenousness, indigeneity and indigenisation are becoming increasingly hitched to the debate in the social sciences about how we understand culture, tradition, race and ethnicity. Suffice to say that indigenous people seem to know who they are.

First nations inhabitants of defined lands and territories, colonised by settler governments, marginalised, dispossessed, threatened minorities, socially, politically and economically vulnerable, are some of the common characteristics and words that spring to mind. Original inhabitants since time immemorial is another definition sometimes invoked. In the case of the yagumbah peoples of this land, that definition has a particularly deafening resonance to it.

However indigeneousness or indigeneity is

often vaporised either hithin the wider rubric of planning for cultural and other ethnic minorities or planning for difference and diversity, thereby minimalising the colonial experience to that of yet another worthy interest group. Though, unlike any other interest group, indigenous peoples ultimately carry the unique burden of the colonial encounter.

Indigenous peoples and their environments also risk being treated as a museum piece of heritage and sacred site curiosity, again minimising the present through over romanticisation of the past.

Neither position does any justice to the vibrancy of contemporary indigenous communities, trying to find their place in a modern world that has done as much to dispossess, disempower or destroy them, on the very land that defines them.

As to what planning is or might be I'll leave that discussion to planning theorists. However I borrow from John Friedman's definition of planning as a professional activity and social process that links knowledge with organised action (1974).

The universality of this definition appeals because it seems to define planning, as an "all too human activity". In other words all human communities plan. Maori people plan. Aboriginal peoples plan. Indigenous peoples plan – because planning is a human activity. Therefore to be human is to plan.

The context might be different. The knowledge bases may differ. The institutions, decision processes and approaches may vary. But planning (including spatial planning) it nevertheless is.

In other words what indigenous peoples do, needs to be reconceptualised as planning, and recognised as legitimate planning endeavour.

Indigenous planning therefore, can be defined in a number of different ways:

An indigenous devised process for linking indigenous (and other) knowledges with decisions and actions managed and

controlled' by indigenous people.

A process devised by indigenous peoples to manage change in their environment, or

- A process prescribed by indigenous peoples to manage relationships with their environment and resources.

Extrapolating from earlier theoretical assumptions about Maori planning, and universalising the local, indigenous planning assumptions might be:

Indigenous peoples have a planning tradition that predates the colonial encounter,

A contemporary planning grounded in indigenous tradition and philosophy though evolving and reshaping as a response to colonialism, exists.

- The colonial encounter provided the basis for evolution of a dual planning tradition, one grounded in indigenous tradition, philosophy and practice, the other in the imported traditions and practices of an introduced "settler," western planning.

Past and recent, colonialism has required indigenous peoples to make explicit and codify in written form what previously might have been implicit, orally transmitted and embedded in their culture and traditions

- Planning in all colonised countries has a dual planning heritage which needs to form the basis for a new paradigm in planning.

Concluding Thoughts

Planners are well used to being the proverbial meat in the sandwich. It's a tricky place to be but at least it's familiar territory. The sandwich might be politicians or the community, greens or developers, local and regional or central government. Planners therefore are used to negotiating their way through tricky situations as communicators, facilitators, negotiators and mediators.

My argument is that indigenous planning can be used as the basis for a more socially inclusive planning practice and in so doing re-include

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some of the more marginalised, disempowered communities in our society, on their own terms and in their own way. Planners potentially can be the process guardians between two peoples and two planning traditions and as a professional ethical practice, weather the vagaries and uncertainties of politics.

However, the inclusion of indigenous peoples in planning needs to proceed on a number of fronts.

First, a general acceptance that all countries with Indigenous peoples have an indigenous planning tradition and practise. In other words indigenous planning exists, has always existed and is not dependant on 'mainstream' planning for its existence.

Secondly, the profession if it takes its role as agents of social change seriously, needs to accept the legitimacy of indigenous planning. It may not fully understand it, comprehend it, understand its knowledges, processes or institutions. Therefore, professional development in indigenous planning might be an appropriate practitioner response.

Thirdly, the academy is the critical training ground for successive generations of planners.

Therefore to what extent do universities incorporate indigenous planning in academic programming. Are planning graduates equipped with the theoretical and practical skills needed to be process guardians, between dual planning traditions?

Fourthly, does local, regional and central government have the statutory, regulatory and institutional machinery to accommodate indigenous planning?

The final responsibility ultimately rests with the profession, the proverbial meat in the sandwich between politics and planning practice. If planning is part of being human,

and if indigenous peoples plan, indigenous planning provides a mechanism for recognising the humanity of indigenous peoples. It also provides a basis for the "planned inclusion in planning" of indigenous peoples on their own terms, in their own way, and in the common spaces we jointly inhabit as human communities.

This is an abridged version of the paper presented at Imagine - Impacts, the *NZPI*® and *PIA* Congress, 2-5 April 2006.