

# A matter of personal and national identity

A note on revitalising Maori culture. Colin James for Te Puni Kokiri, 4 August 2016

## 1. What culture is: the working assumption

Culture is taken in this note to be: the way people live their lives, including how they provide for their needs and desires (the "economy") and how they allocate and manage power (the "polity"); the beliefs and fictions which guide the way they live those lives; the traditions, practices, ceremonies and rituals which frame, reflect, give authority to and embed those beliefs and fictions and connect present to past; and the expression or encapsulation of those lives and the way of living in language, story, poetry, song, music, dance, art and craft.

People share culture – the way of living, belief systems, traditions and expressions, etc – in peer, ethnic, local, national, transnational or other groups. Individuals can move between cultures. Cultures evolve over time in response to endogenous and exogenous influences.

Exogenous influences can enrich or add diversity to a culture or can disrupt, subordinate or enfeeble a culture. They can speed up or slow endogenous change.

Revitalising a culture implies injecting new energy. That may be to recover as much as practicable and desirable of a culture as it was before the impact of an exogenous influence or it may be to stimulate endogenous evolution of the culture as it has become or a combination of those two. The evolution of Maori culture under colonisation, then during the resurgence through the past 40 years, which some call the renaissance, suggests revitalisation in the 2010s and into the 2020s will reflect both pre-colonial and post-colonial, including global, influences.

### ***Looking in from the outside***

*I am an outsider to this issue, with no Maori whakapapa. From 1973-78 I lived in London. I travelled throughout Britain and Europe, for work and personal reasons, including time with my half-German partner's family.*

*I connected with my heritage: the landscapes, cityscapes, buildings, arts, history and ways of thinking. I returned in early 1978 as someone strongly New Zealand – my birthplace – but also strongly reinforced in my origins, my cultural inheritance.*

*This gave me a subconscious feel for why Maori activists were reclaiming their lost or tenuously surviving heritage, their culture. That is a way of becoming stronger in oneself and in the surrounding society. The activists were not rebels or nihilists or seeking to revert to a lost past, as many of their critics thought and said. They were building a future.*

### ***1a. Culture is closely linked with and defines identity***

The link between culture and identity operates at both the personal and national level.

At the **personal level**, identity is a mix of some or all of family/whanau, neighbourhood, social, ethnic or belief (or other) group, land, heritage and nation plus what one makes of oneself.

At the **national level**, identity is the sense a nation has of whom it is made up from, who constitutes it, the set or sets of values the nation (or a predominant majority of those in a nation) holds or claims to hold and to which primacy is given and, if more

than one set of values, the relative weight to each set. National identity can also to some extent be influenced by the alignments and alliances the nation has with other nations.

There can also be subnational identities, either lateral across the nation (as in two different cultures) or geographical within the nation (as in pre-1850 France).

For there to be national identity, there must be a nation. Aotearoa before 1840 was a diversity of tribal nations governed by separate sovereign iwi or hapu. Attempts in the nineteenth century to weld a Maori nation within and/or parallel with the colonial nation failed.

There is also an emerging global identity in that the internet enables ready, easy and (virtual) face-to-face interpersonal and group communication, purchasing and selling across national boundaries. That is beyond the scope of this note.

### ***1b. So revitalising Maori culture is not just a Maori issue***

It is in its contribution to national identity – and wellbeing – that the critical value to non-Maori of Maori culture in Aotearoa/New Zealand lies.

Maori art, haka, craft, language, mythology, history, insights into nature and ethnic-Polynesian characteristics are among the defining features of this nation and its peoples. New Zealand is not just another former British settler colony. It is Aotearoa with eight centuries of human habitation and markings.

It is equally critical that revitalising Maori culture does not generate two separate identities within or of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Aotearoa/New Zealand culture cannot be other than a joint, entwined culture. Separate cultures separate, which invites strife and, possibly, disintegration.

The significance of Maori culture to national identity makes the vitality of Maori culture an issue for all citizens, not just Maori. That is the essence of the bicultural project. Thus revitalisation is a national project, not just a Maori one.

## **2. The evolution up to now: from subject to bicultural**

### ***2a. An animist culture***

The spiritual system underlying Maori culture was animist: each individual's oneness with nature and relatives and ancestors. A river or mountain or relative or ancestor is integral to a person(ality).

Land was held not by individuals, including rangatira, but was held by the collective in trust for the collective and for future generations.

That was/is profoundly different from the individual-centred, monotheistic British culture to which British set out to convert Maori, starting in 1814, believing British culture to be higher or more advanced than Maori culture. While the Treaty of Waitangi allowed in article 2 the possibility of parallel cultures and specifically protected taonga, by the 1860s the path was set to assimilating Maori into British culture.

In British culture all land was held by grant from the Crown, though by 1840 a systems of rights protecting individual title to that land had been developed. Thus land was also individual-centred.

## ***2b. Subjection***

Many British in New Zealand (for example, Sir Donald McLean, chief land purchase commissioner from 1853 and later Native Secretary) respected or at least remarked on the intelligence, sophistication and skills of Maori. But by the 1860s the majority of British in New Zealand (epitomised by Chief Justice Sir James Prendergast) regarded Maori as "savages" to be led out of darkness into enlightenment.

This applied not only to religious belief and other practices but to productive use of land. British technology and technique could produce far more from land than Maori customary use. Purchases of land were initially constrained by a policy of state "pre-emption" imposed by the British Colonial Office (though McLean employed devious means to get sales). But the Native Land Act of 1862 and its successor acts in effect extinguished "native" title and replaced it with a title issued by the Crown. It allowed direct purchases by colonists from the designated "tenants in common". Resistance was suppressed by force and large areas of land were confiscated (though some was returned). Divisions, jealousies and enmities among and within iwi and hapu aided the alienation. The result was that Maori lost most of their economic base and did not have access to the capital and know-how to make as much of what land they had left as colonists did.

A sound economic base is an important element of a culture. Without that base, other elements of the culture are likely also to be eroded.

Article 3 of the Treaty of Waitangi, which made Maori "subjects" of the British Crown, was interpreted as their living subject to British law. Iwi and hapu law was called "lore", subsidiary to law. Until 1867 only British sat in the Parliament which made new statute law and after 1867 Maori had only four seats, a fraction of the number population proportionality would merited. (McLean argued for eight.)

Article 2, which in words protected iwi/hapu control of iwi/hapu affairs, resources and taonga, was also held to be subject to article 1 which New Zealand British interpreted as ceding sovereignty to Britain. Prendergast in an 1877 case declared the Treaty's cession of sovereignty a "simple nullity" since, he said, there was no civilised Maori government in 1840 competent to sign an enforceable treaty. (The British Colonial Office had insisted on voluntary cession by treaty, which clearly implied iwi/hapu were sovereign.) Article 2 became in effect a dead letter in law. On this reasoning Maori were, in effect, British subjects by annexation (conquest and occupation).

## ***2c. Marginalisation***

The imposition of British law and rule consigned traditional Maori culture to the marae and mostly small parts of original iwi/hapu rohe, that is, to the margins.

Te reo Maori was suppressed in schools. Maori were British and thus must speak English. Maori religious belief and knowledge and tohunga were suppressed and replaced with Christianity and European science and thought.

Without land or with only limited land, Maori had no choice but to join the British-majority economy on British terms. Many had in the 1840s and 1850s joined that economy, seeing, and seizing, opportunity in engagement with the outside world and in the farming, transport, weapons and other technology. Some argued this was a prime motivation to sign the Treaty of Waitangi. Many iwi were by 1840 under stress from competition for resources.

Maori joined the British-New Zealand economy mostly at the bottom, with less or no access to capital than British-New Zealanders had. After 1945, as the Maori population grew, many emigrated to the towns and cities to secure work. Most became de-cultured – divorced from marae tradition. Many deliberately chose to become brown-British, discouraging their children from speaking or learning te reo. Most were in low-skilled or unskilled occupations, with little or no status in iwi/hapu or the broader society. When the economy was deregulated in the 1980s many were made unemployed or ended up in low-paying jobs. Many of their children and grandchildren became displaced, alienated from Maori culture and a socioeconomic underclass in general society.

Those who wanted to succeed economically and socially, and still be Maori, had to "walk in both worlds", to be fully a part of the general culture but also fully engaged in iwi/hapu affairs and fluent in te reo Maori. (Very few British New Zealanders have walked in both worlds.)

The Treaty became in fact a "simple nullity". If breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi were acknowledged, as in the 1926-27 Royal Commission of Inquiry on Confiscated Lands (one of many commissions through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century), iwi/hapu were short-changed.

Rangatira and kaumatua never lost sight of the Treaty and the need to remedy injustices, both for honour and to be able to move on, but had to play a long game and play it on British New Zealand rules. They did not give up the long game: Sir James Henare, even though active in the National party, told me in 1980 he agreed with the ambitions of the Mana Motuhake political party and movement formed by Matiu Rata after he left the Labour party when demoted in 1979. Rata was Minister of Maori Affairs in 1972-75 when the first Treaty of Waitangi Act, providing a mechanism for redress of Treaty breaches after 1975, was passed.

#### ***2d. What was left***

Traditional Maori culture was preserved on the marae, in karakia tawhito, te reo, arts and crafts and connectedness with natural features (the animist spirit). Traditional social and political hierarchy was also preserved.

Wider British New Zealand paternalistically, even dismissively valued Maori as good sports and singers, tokens for tourism and suppliers of trinkets and art and of a haka for the All Blacks. Placenames endured (but not their meaning). Maori were in effect an interesting anthropological adjunct (a 1950s primary school text pictured life in the pa) and cultural add-on, not a cultural equal or partner. In parts of New Zealand up till the 1960s one could grow up without knowingly meeting a Maori.

There was also a widespread belief among British New Zealanders that race relations were exemplary, that Maori had been successfully integrated and that Maori were an important ingredient in New Zealand's uniqueness. (The exclusion of Chinese from citizenship was overlooked in this self-congratulation.)

#### ***2e. Recovery and regeneration***

Assimilation did not amount to disappearance. A residual respect for Maori, at least in some quarters, inspired mainstream movements from 1960 onwards to stop rugby being played with South Africa for as long as South Africa refused to accept Maori in the All Blacks in South Africa. These movements contributed to the cancellation of a

South African tour of New Zealand in 1973 and the ending of official tours in the mid-1980s.

Assimilation was also incomplete. Maori students at Auckland University began from the late 1960s to assert Maori tradition and distinctiveness and to reassert Treaty of Waitangi article 2 tino rangatiratanga rights as tangata whenua with inalienable indigenous rights. Nga Tamatoa (Young Warriors) formed in 1970. As more asserted Treaty rights there were militant land occupations and protests, notably to reclaim land at Raglan and Bastion Point in Auckland. In 1975 Whina Cooper led a hiko from Te Hapua to Wellington to insist that land alienation must stop. While land was the most visible and controversial element, the protests were set in a wider context of the centrality and role of land in traditional Maori culture, which the activists also sought to re-establish as equal with majority British culture.

Growing numbers of non-Maori, particularly of younger generations, actively or passively supported Maori claims and activists.

That cultural reassertion and support for it by a rising younger generation of general New Zealanders gave rise to the 1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act and then to its extension in 1985 to all breaches of the Treaty after the signing in 1840.

This younger "baby-boom" generation of general New Zealanders was in effect becoming fully independent from Britain, in mentality and expression in arts, crafts and re-examination of colonial history. Maori and Maori culture were logically integral to that coming-of-independence. By 2008 even the National party's proportion of MPs with whakapapa matched the national average, even if some were Maori only in descent, not activity.

## ***2e. Truth and reconciliation***

The addressing of Treaty of Waitangi breaches developed from the 1980s in effect into a truth and reconciliation process, re-addressing past wrongs and reassessing the modern relationship.

Settlements of historical grievances have recognised injustices and breaches of contract and established them as integral to the nation's history (even if historians quibbled with the methodologies). Formal government apologies, token cash compensation and other arrangements and gestures have "settled" the wrongs.

One result has been stronger iwi finances to invest in economic development and contribute to educational and support services for iwi members. A growing number of iwi now have significant commercial weight in their rohe, increasingly recognised by local authorities, banks and other companies and the general communities. This is becoming an element of national identity: one attraction to Chinese corporations of New Zealand as a supplier and investment destination is a similar "long-term hold" approach to managing assets. Maori members of trade and other delegations to China report a warm welcome.

Contemporary Treaty claims – relating to taonga, including flora and fauna (WAI262) or to use of the "commons", such as water (notably in connection with the 49% sale of state electricity corporations, geothermal resources, minerals and the telecommunications spectrum) – have generated in relevant corporations and more widely a measure of recognition of iwi/hapu interests and a measure of respect.

Semi-formal recognition of the Treaty in a variety of ways in the power structure has

given Maori more voice. Examples: legislative requirements to have regard to the principles of the Treaty; Maori units in government agencies; continuation of separate Maori seats in Parliament and expansion of the number to match Maori choice of electoral roll, despite a push from the National, New Zealand First and ACT parties for their abolition; introduction of separate Maori wards or seats or official consultative bodies in a handful of local authorities; a requirement in some legislation, especially that governing resource planning, for consultation with relevant iwi/hapu; consultation at prime ministerial and senior minister level with the iwi leaders forum, which has been influential, for example, in freshwater policy; and recognition of the Treaty in court decisions and more broadly in jurisprudence.

There has been some support to regenerate te reo Maori through schooling – the kohanga reo and kura kaupapa (started by activists) – and through Maori radio and television channels, part-funded or wholly funded by the state. The whanau ora programme and other Maori/iwi-run social assistance and development programmes are another dimension of Treaty-inspired devolution.

Overall, the result has been more truth and some reconciliation.

### ***2f. Going (to some extent, in some ways) bicultural***

For the first 150 years after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi the cultural transplanting was overwhelmingly one way, from the dominant British culture (way of life) into Maori culture (way of life), for example, English-language, Christian rituals, clothing, guitars to accompany waiata, farming techniques and working for wages. Since the 1980s there has been some flow the other way and greater recognition that traditional Maori beliefs, ways of thinking and protocols have a place in general society and in the national culture and identity.

This represents a degree of recognition of the tangata whenua – indigenous – status of Maori. Colonial history has been re-examined, starting in the late 1980s with Claudia Orange's history of the Treaty of Waitangi and James Belich's history of the 1860 wars. The spirit of the Treaty was revived, even if it still did – does – not have formal legal status or superior constitutional status.

This flow developed, through the 1990s and into the 2000s, a sense that our society is "bicultural" – globally unique in that it joins a dominant ex-colonial culture with an indigenous culture.

It falls far short of giving full effect to article 2 of the Treaty and far short of full cultural equality and of full citizenship in the article 3 sense of genuine equal opportunity, a limitation widely criticised by some Maori commentators (for example Dominic Sullivan<sup>1</sup>). But it has been built into the power structure, as noted in *section 2e* above. And settlements have: accepted that Tuhoe will co-manage (eventually manage) Te Urewera National Park in its territory; set up a joint Crown-iwi authority to oversee management of the Waikato river; accepted that the Whanganui awa is a legal person as part of that settlement; and much else – all, again, near-inconceivable 30 years ago.

Some Maori culture has also slowly seeped a little into general culture. Maori words are used to a small but growing extent for some activities and greetings. Significant meetings, conferences and formal events are usually opened with a powhiri in te reo by local hapu dignitaries (though, ironically, usually also incorporating a Christian hymn and/or prayer, at odds with the otherwise secular nature of such gatherings and

events – non-believers bow their heads, thinking they are thereby respecting Maori kawa). The national anthem is sung first in te reo and increasingly non-Maori know the words. For younger non-Maori, Maori words, song and simple protocols are part of their way of life, starting in their schools. Even the whitest schools by the early 2000s had kapa haka groups. There has been some acknowledgement and adoption of Maori methods of conservation of natural resources – kaitiakitanga.

"Bicultural" does not amount to "equal culture". It is a partial modification of the general culture. A diminishing proportion of the total population speaks te reo. New Zealand is not yet Aotearoa-New Zealand. The "walking in both worlds" is usually still a one-way walk, though there is some evidence of growing interest in doing that among otherwise conservative non-Maori.<sup>2</sup>

And this partial and still evolving "bicultural" society faces a challenge. Between 1991 and 2013 the proportion of the population reporting Asian ethnicity rose from 3% to 12%, making the demographic mix more multicultural and less bicultural.

### ***2g. The Pacific reconnection***

There is another dimension, the Pacific. Maori came from the Pacific, from Polynesia. They are ethnic Polynesians.

The colonial government established a small empire in below-the-equator Polynesia. From the 1950s and especially from the 1970s, as has happened elsewhere in other empires, the inhabitants of the empire turned up as immigrants. There was at first rivalry between Maori and the new arrivals. But over time this new wave of Polynesian immigration has in a sense re-Polynesianised Maori, reconnected them with their long-severed roots.

And this has, along with other influences, situated New Zealand more firmly in the Pacific, so that it can be said New Zealand – Aotearoa/New Zealand – is *of* the Pacific, not just *in* the Pacific.

## **3. What to revitalise? Where are we now? What is the starting point?**

The Maori culture in 2016 is not the Maori culture of 1816 or even 1866, 1916 or 1966. Some tradition has endured on the marae. But the culture has evolved, not only under the pressure of marginalisation and assimilation but in response to many past and modern influences – as the general culture has. So, what is to be revitalised?

A starting point in addressing that question is to recognise that undoing the modernising changes in the culture would not be an issue if Maori had not been colonised. That can be illustrated by asking...

### ***3a. What if...***

...the British had come as traders only and not settled? How would Maori culture have evolved? This is unknowable. But some reasonable guesses can be made.

Maori willingly reacted with the visitors and would-be settlers in the pre-colonial decades. This included travelling to Australia and Britain, adopting agricultural and military technology, engaging in the nascent pre-colonial and colonial British-imported economy as producers, entrepreneurs and traders and sexually partnering with the British (and other European adventurers). Maori saw and seized opportunity.

That indicates that if the British had not settled and colonised, it is highly likely many, arguably most, iwi/hapu would have actively engaged in the globalising economy of the time and this would have had profound effects on the way the domestic economy, and so daily lives, evolved. Land cultivation would likely have become more intensive, with implications over time for land tenure and "ownership" and border demarcations of rohe. If trade intensified, as the initial enthusiasm of Maori for trade in the early years of contact suggests it would have, there would have needed to be some specialisation by individual Maori and/or iwi/hapu and changes in land use, including for ports and trading settlements. This would have had implications over time for land tenure, including tenure by some outsiders.

Second, interaction with outsiders usually leads to adoption by some (eventually most or all?) insiders of some of the outsiders' culture and ways of seeing the world, including religious and general belief systems, arts, foods, implements and technologies – in short, ways of living. British New Zealanders, for example, were much influenced by United States culture in the second and third quarters of the twentieth century. Miscegenation would have enhanced that cultural adoption.

Third, iwi/hapu-based governing arrangements would likely have confederated (as some did in 1835) or federated or nationalised to deal with external matters (the Maori King movement of the 1860s is a partial pointer down this track). The resultant growing sense of being, or at least needing to be, a coherent "nation", coupled with easier mobility as a modern infrastructure was built and modern transport modes were adopted would likely have had a similar nationalising effect on te reo Maori (as, it is argued, a standardised te reo has been used for teaching over the past decade or so) and on other cultural differences.

Fourth, te reo Maori would have had to expand and adjust to fit a modern world – as all languages have. Multitudes of new or adopted words would have joined the lexicon (as they have in actual history). Grammar and pronunciation would have morphed and iwi or regional variations would probably have been blurred.

Fifth, Maori would very likely have rebuilt the bridge to their Polynesian origins, both in travel and person-to-person (though this would likely have been mostly outward). Might that have refreshed, widened and/or otherwise challenged Maori origin-myths?

Sixth, a combination of interaction with outsiders, evolution and modernising would have challenged and modified protocols, rituals, ceremonies and practices, except for highly formal occasions. Cannibalism would have disappeared and slavery would almost certainly have been abolished. The class and political hierarchies would likely have been adjusted, especially if modern schooling had been introduced, as would have been highly likely, and if that had produced from the ranks an upwardly mobile middle class. Along with that, the place of women may have changed and women may have been accepted into the front rank. (The radical change in the place of women in British-New Zealand society from subordination in 1890 to near equality in 1990 is instructive.)

In short, while the changes can only be guessed at or inferred, it is certain Maori culture would have evolved significantly and in some respects substantially.

A *similar transition*, though different in detail, would have occurred if the British had remained a small minority, as in African and Asian colonies, and decolonisation had returned full political and control to Maori in some "national" form.

So if iwi/hapu had retained sovereign control or if Maori, as the majority, had



regained sovereign control in the 1960s as Britain decolonised an Aotearoa in which the British were a small minority, the culture now being energised and developed would be very different from that of 1840.

So the starting point for revitalisation is where the culture – and the people – are now.

### ***3b. In fact the culture has evolved***

A "what-if" inquiry tells us that not all changes in the past 180 years in the Maori ways of life, livelihood, beliefs and fictions, practices and rituals and expression in the arts are due only to the impact of majority British (more lately, ex-British) rule and cultural dominance.

One evolutionary change is the emergence of non-iwi/hapu-based organisations of Maori or serving Maori which challenge, complement or supplement traditional organisational arrangements. Examples include: the Tuaropaki agglomeration of individualised farm titles north-east of Taupo, which crosses iwi boundaries; the Waipareira Trust delivering services to west Auckland urban Maori; urban marae; marae-based administration of justice for rangatahi offenders; and the Maori Women's Welfare League. Some leaders and principal actors of some these sorts of organisations are from the lower ranks of Maori society, not the traditional iwi/hapu "aristocracy" or "upper middle class" of rangatira, kaumatua and prominent whanau.

These alternative leaders illustrate a significant change: an emerging new middle class. Education is a factor, enabling opportunity and mobility. These people bring a range of alternative perspectives. Some see rigidity in traditional hierarchical organisation as a barrier to progress and development and either seek to modify it or turn away from it into life in the general culture here or go abroad – "walking in one world". Quote from a smart woman lawyer: "I am not Maori but I am on the (Ngai Tahu) roll", meaning she has Maori whakapapa but in her career conducts herself as those in the general culture do. Some are executives in corporations, entrepreneurs or small business operators, lawyers or accountants, including as partners, consultants, academics and the like – successful in the general culture. If they choose to "walk in two worlds", their skills are valuable to iwi/hapu modern-world activities such as investment holding companies or corporations and social support services. Quote from a rangatira: "They come down from Auckland in their black cars and tell us what to do."

An active middle class is potentially – though not inevitably – a democratising influence, if the evolution of liberal democracies since the industrial revolution is a guide. Those who choose to engage with iwi/hapu could over time have an influence, for example, on marae protocol, on the place of women, on rank versus capability and on management of assets, including land, on social support programmes (as Tuhoe are doing) and on management organisation. This could be particularly the case now that Treaty of Waitangi historical settlements are nearly concluded and those in their 20s and 30s can focus elsewhere. The risk, if iwi/hapu cannot or do not respond to them with more flexibility in structure and governance is that the other matters to which they turn their minds and energy will not include iwi/hapu matters.

There are also external influences, including shared experience with other indigenous peoples, the United Nations context, comparative studies (for example, of indigenous experience of health, education and criminality) and international trends in the arts, fashion and lifestyles. For example, by the late 1970s a young generation of Maori artists, writers and musicians were incorporating European, American and other

motifs, concepts and technologies. Think of Robyn Kahukiwa and Witi Ihimaera. In the 1990s hip-hop was imported from United States black culture by young alienated urban Maori.

Life abroad is an increasing factor in a mobile age. Some Maori are dual citizens of other cultures, including non-British ones. The growing Maori diaspora and intermarriage with peoples in other countries could inject other cultural influences to the extent that those in the diaspora keep contact – which is likely, given some the programmes some iwi have to reach out to the diaspora.

And the instantaneity and ubiquity of access the internet enables and encourages – requires? – is infecting all cultures.

So revitalisation must accommodate these many changes, innovations and external influences.

### ***3c. Those with Maori whakapapa connect (or not) in many ways with the culture***

To be Maori is not to be homogenised, with a single perspective and a single heritage. Maori whakapapa does not automatically make a person "Maori" in some idealised or traditional sense. There are many different connections, or not, with Maori culture.

Mason Durie distinguished three categories: enculturated – understand core cultural concepts, speak at least some te reo and know their whakapapa; bicultural – identify positively as Maori but also are competent in mainstream (ex-British) culture; marginalised – fit neither in the Maori nor mainstream culture. Joe Williams added a fourth group – indistinguishable from mainstream, having chosen not to be Maori.

Carla Houkama distinguished three groups: traditional essentialists (or enculturated/protected) – raised with traditional Maori values in traditional Maori roles, speaking te reo, in rural areas and with limited contact with outsiders, protected from negative stereotypes; detached/bicultural – urban, detached from Maori identities; renaissance – came of age during the Maori renaissance (from the 1970s) and were proud to identify as Maori.

In later research with two others, Houkama analysed six categories: – traditional essentialists – a high level of identification with all aspects of Maoridom with a restrictive view of who is Maori, tending to be older; traditional inclusives – had a broader notion of what it means to be Maori; high moderates – moderately enculturated; low moderates – less enculturated and identified also as mainstream but still value Maori culture and identity; spiritually oriented – less enculturated but with a high identification with Maori spirituality; and disassociated – tended to be younger, least deprived and dual-identified as mainstream. The high and low moderates represented half the Maori population.<sup>3</sup>

These categories are more an illustration than a fixed way of classifying the relationship of Maori with Maori culture, as future research refinement may demonstrate. But the research referred to above suggests there is no singular Maori culture but a range of cultural variances and thus different Maori would have different ideas of what to revitalise and who should do it.

The Italian renaissance generated many new forms of art, writing, thought and business. Likewise the Maori renaissance, as some call the post-1960s resurgence.

#### 4. The starting point is here and now

To an outsider, some activists of the 1970s-80s seemed to be striving to restore an idealised version of the culture as it was in 1840 before assimilation. A common term among outsiders in the 1980s for such activists was "super-Maori". The culture they asserted seemed to an outsider to be less a culture that was innate to them, from birth and upbringing, than a culture acquired in the course of recovering, reviving and reinforcing their lost, blanked-out or stolen heritage. It looked, in a sense, akin to the recovery of land alienated by confiscation, theft and deception.

But at the same time, the activists exhibited (to an outsider) no desire to uproot late-twentieth-century prosperity, with its material comforts, conveniences and opportunities, though there were valid, and widely shared, criticisms about how (in)equitably that prosperity was distributed and debate about ways it could be improved or adjusted. Modern consumer society was built into their way of life. They "walked in two worlds".

They also exhibited (to an outsider) no desire to uproot from their lives the arts, writing and music derived from Europe, the United States and other international contemporary and historical sources. In that, too, they "walked in two worlds".

Moreover, that was before the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process. Today's "super-Maori" must rub along with pragmatic realists and modernists. One prominent Maori puts it this way: "Before settlement there was a need to reinforce tradition. Post-settlement, the challenge is to *fit the culture into contemporary settings*." That includes creating new communities and agencies.

So the starting point for any revitalisation is now, the culture as it has become and how it fits into and contributes to an evolving nation in which the general, British-derived, culture is still dominant.

That in turn points to another characteristic of any revitalisation: that the culture is *outward-looking*. Maori culture is, as noted above, outward-looking in the sense that it has been influenced *from* outside since at least 1814 and arguably since Captain Cook's interactions. Over the past three decades, Maori culture has also become an influence *on* outsiders. It is a "partner-culture" in a "bicultural" nation. It is an indelible element in *national identity*.

One outward influence, touched on in *section 3* above, is matauranga Maori, Maori knowledge of the natural environment, harvesting and conservation techniques, the nutritional and medicinal properties of plants and some Maori law. Not all this knowledge is scientifically verifiable but the elements that are have value to the general community.

The question that follows from that is how widely it is, and becomes, an integral element in *personal identity*. How many non-Maori "walk in two worlds"? How many will 10 or 20 years from now? How many of those with Maori whakapapa who are now alienated from Maori culture will "walk in two worlds" in 10 or 20 years? Revitalising the culture for the few is not to truly revitalise.

And that raises the question of how to protect the base and what to protect of the base. Beyond that there are issues of connecting alienated Maori to the culture, developing te reo Maori and arts and crafts, drawing in those with no whakapapa – and living with the impacts on te reo and the culture of greater involvement of non-Maori.

#### ***4a. Adjustments to tradition***

A culture rests on tradition. Tradition can be both reinforced and modified. Both have their place in revitalising a culture.

The guardians of Maori cultural tradition, kawa and tikanga are those who are pre-eminent on the marae. How tradition is reinforced or modified is in their hands. But, as seen from the outside, and listening to some who are on the inside, this is not open-and-shut.

Some complain that guardians are not up to the task, do not have the skills or knowledge to perform ceremonials and rituals as they should be, for example tawhito karakia, or the skills and breadth of knowledge to deliver a full whaikorero.

Some say they encounter an unthinking rigidity that maintains practices that are outdated or no longer necessary or no longer appropriate, for example, practices that once were to keep people safe but are no longer needed. Some say Christian prayers are not true Maori culture and to say them in powhiri and on other formal occasions is inappropriate.

Some say traditional ways of teaching tradition – "sitting at the feet of elders" – is outdated, that in modern times there are better teachers and better ways of learning.

Some have revived traditional techniques such as for fishing, sailing and conservation which guardians had allowed to fall into disuse.

Also, large numbers trace whakapapa to multiple iwi/hapu and for them there is not a single, correct tradition.

None of this is for an outsider to comment on. But if Maori culture is to become at some point a full bicultural equal with the British-descended general culture – that is, to be a stronger element of national identity – tradition will need clarity and widespread confidence among Maori, including those who newly connect with their heritage, which will require both reinforcement and modification.

That, it seems from the outside, is an important element of revitalisation.

#### ***4b. For some, connecting them to heritage is revitalising the culture***

One way of revitalising the culture is to extend it to those who do not know it – to outsiders, both with and without whakapapa. In this section the focus is on those with whakapapa.

The "super-Maori" activists of the "renaissance" pointed us to the importance of ***heritage to personal identity*** and, as a result, to self-confidence. Heritage is knowing where you come from and feeling your heritage as part of you. If alienated Maori are connected with the Maori dimension of their cultural heritage, through te reo Maori, Maori and iwi history and taonga and modern Maori writing, song, etc, that in effect revitalises – injects new energy into – the culture by extending its reach.

For large numbers of Maori, especially young, alienated, urban Maori, the heritage is truncated: the experience of life near or at the bottom of the general socioeconomic order inherited from parents and parents' parents who were disconnected from Maori culture and the experience, as visibly brown, of being, or feeling, devalued within what amounts to a foreign general culture. The result is a range of negative impacts in education, including teachers' unconscious bias, the job market and law and order, an experience shared with United States blacks (by contrast with the connection

traditional culture has with American first-nation peoples (Indians)). These young urban Maori may have had a poor cognitive, emotional and nutritional start in life. Where they live gangs – defensive-aggressive, separated from general society, potentially constructive but also destructive – may have substituted for iwi/hapu/whanau and/or authority.

One value of injecting a sense of cultural heritage into young alienated Maori is a greater likelihood they will develop higher aspirations, achieve more and live fuller, more constructive lives – and thus contribute more to society and its, subset, the economy. This value is implicitly recognised in the range of remedial initiatives over the past three decades or so in the education and justice systems.

That suggests one way of revitalising the culture would be to go beyond remediation to **proactive intervention**, focused on the very early years (through whanau ora programmes?). The kohanga reo and kura kaupapa programme could be expanded. So could general early childhood, primary and secondary education about Maori culture (including te reo, as in *section 4c* below), along with intensive re-education of teachers.

In addition, programmes centred on urban marae and trusts and iwi agencies (as, for example, Tuhoe is developing) could both reduce social disadvantage, as in the Te Puea marae's intervention to help the homeless. Urban marae could be vehicles for transmission of culture and heritage and a bridge to the connection to the ancestral marae and tradition and a deeper dimension of heritage.

Such initiatives are obviously a matter of personal identity, as noted. But, as Te Puea marae's help for the homeless illustrates, they are also a matter of **national identity**. Persistent and wide inequalities in income and wealth, health, education and crime are now part of our national identity. A large, colour- or race-identified underclass is not a good look from the outside or feel from the inside. Turning that underclass into a confident, anchored, economically successfully and socially connected cohort would reduce the inequalities, change the look and feel for the better and adjust the national identity accordingly. A personal identity strengthened with cultural heritage is an obvious ingredient.

To repeat, the culture is revitalised if those alienated from it are connected to it.

Easily said. Making the connection requires **multi-generational investment** by many different agencies, iwi, urban Maori and general, including the state. For the state, as guardian of the Crown's responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi, it is an article 3 matter, enabling some who are not full citizens to become full citizens.

For traditional Maori it may cause some discomfort because young urban Maori are likely to (and some already do) bring their own **modifications or adjuncts** to the culture, from their different ways of seeing and thinking, the natural inclination of the young to bend rules and their connections to modern global youth culture. Sport and music and the stars of sport and music are powerful attractions and there is something of a heritage in Maori prowess in both. Could it be said to be part of the culture?

#### **4c. Te reo Maori as a national language**

Revitalising te reo Maori is an inescapable element in any revitalisation of the culture.

Language is at the core of any culture – and so at the core of both traditional and evolving Maori culture. It is also at the core of national identity. So the revitalising

challenge is to make te reo Maori a *national language*, not just formally but actually.

One way to do this would be to integrate te reo fully into the curriculum and learning for all children at all levels of schooling, from pre-school to high school.

One objection to this is that te reo is spoken only by Maori so would not advance our international and trade interests as, for example, mandarin would. But it is well established that learning te reo from an early age makes learning another language later much easier so not only are the two not in conflict but one leads to the other.

Moreover, learning a second language from a very young age improves overall cognitive development. One former politician who argued this point was Tim Groser.

It has to be acknowledged, however, that these gains apply to learning any language. The argument for te reo as *the* parallel language in schooling is that it is an element in national identity, an inescapable element of being genuinely bicultural.

A second objection is that there are not the teachers available to teach te reo. Second-rate teaching would risk devaluing, and so undermining, the project. Also, few other teachers speak te reo so it would be ghettoed which would also devalue it. That doesn't invalidate universal teaching of te reo as an ambition. It just makes the point that a concerted effort would be needed over a long period to train teachers. (Note in passing the support of the New Zealand Educational Institute/Te Riu Roa, the primary school teachers union, for wider teaching of te reo, though not compulsorily.<sup>4</sup>)

In any case, this would be a multi-generational project. That would require political commitment, across political parties and across the community. That would in turn need a long buildup. But that buildup won't self-generate and would need leadership, principally from non-Maori.

There is a model. In Switzerland citizens must be fluent in at least two of that small country's four languages. Multilingual capability is one of the binding forces of that improbable, but highly successful, nation. If introduced over time, to ease fears and angers and allow generational evolution to work, it would be a binding force in New Zealand.

Along with teaching te reo in general schools, support for kohanga reo and kura kaupapa could be expanded. And logically they would teach English as well as te reo.

A second element in becoming a bilingual national culture is for more adults to learn at least some te reo and even become fluent. One option for promoting that could be to create a domestic equivalent to the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute or the Confucius Institute. This "Ngata Institute" could conduct high-quality night or weekend courses, as those foreign institutes do.

And, as Radio New Zealand seems to have taken on board, news and current affairs presenters and reporters, could use more Maori in their everyday reports, including how they name themselves, days, placenames and events. The more the language rings in people's ears, the more of it they are likely to subconsciously pick up even if they remain essentially monolingual.

Linguistic, lexicographical, etymological, semantic and syntactical academic and research support would also be critical if te reo is to be taken seriously domestically – and internationally.

A complicating factor would be the growing influx of immigrants from other cultures, particularly, Chinese, Indian, Korean and Filipino who might push back and/or

demand that their children learn their languages instead of te reo. Given that it would be a multi-generational project and that, on the current trajectory, Asian-ethnic New Zealand residents and citizens could be a quarter of the population by 2030 or 2040 and outnumber Maori, this factor could become significant.

And there is a warning for guardians of tradition and for "super-Maori": the more non-Maori use te reo, the more it would become a second vernacular and the more non-Maori speakers would influence its structure, vocabulary and content and the more they would import into vernacular English, and distort, Maori words and phrases. It might be a case of "be careful what you wish for".

- I note the passing of Te Pire mō Te Reo Māori/Māori Language Act 2016 providing for the establishment of Te Matawai, with oversight over Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori and Te Mangai Paho, to provide leadership on behalf of Maori and iwi in relation to te reo Maori and for development by the Minister of Maori Affairs of a strategy for revitalising the language.

#### ***4d. Arts and crafts***

As with te reo, it follows logically that if the nation were to become fully bicultural, Maori traditional and modern arts and crafts would be taught to all children in all schools as part of general arts and crafts teaching.

Story, song, dance, art and craft are practised and developed by amateurs and professionals. Professionals need either to earn enough on their own account or draw on outside support, such as Creative New Zealand. The detail of how that support could be better aligned to revitalise Maori culture is beyond the scope of this note. But a relevant question is whether the support is for the arts, performances etc, or for the artists, performers etc. And is that support just for those with Maori whakapapa or for all artists, performers etc, as would logically be expected in a truly bicultural nation?

#### ***4e. The economy***

As noted in *section 1* above, how people provide for their needs and desires – the "economy" – is an integral element in culture and that element of Maori culture was radically changed by colonisation and is changing some more as Treaty of Waitangi settlements expand iwi assets and, as a result, expand commercial influence and develop partnerships with foreign corporations, as new forms of farm-based collectives develop, as growing numbers go into business as executives or owners and as a professional middle class develops.

Revitalising the economy was an objective of early nineteenth-century trading with the British and other Europeans. It is an objective of iwi authorities. It is part of modernisation of the culture. A challenge, noted in *section 4a* above, is to bring alienated urban Maori along.

Thus, there is a role for economic development policy and programmes to play.

There is also a role for general business working with Maori to develop their "brands" as connected to the land and the culture and thereby appeal to well-off foreigners. As one who relatively recently come to recognise the value to his business – and to himself, when he came to feel himself "embodied" in land with strong Maori history which surrounded the business – puts it, this can work only if it is not contrived. There are opportunities, and responsibilities, for Maori in participating in and managing well this dimension of cultural outreach, and so revitalisation.

#### ***4f. Updating the polity***

As noted in *section 1* above, culture includes how power is allocated and managed – the "polity". In a number of ways, some noted above, this is changing. One way is the management of assets and commercial ventures, social service provision (through trusts, urban marae, iwi, health clinics and whanau ora), distributions to iwi members of commercial profits and management of iwi membership. Also, as noted above in *section 3b*, the growing professional middle class can be expected to loosen the traditional class structure, challenge traditional protocols where they inhibit opportunity and advancement and deny full equality, including of gender, and professionalise iwi/hapu management and governance and that of iwi/hapu organisations.

So the iwi/hapu polity is changing and will continue to change. This is likely to stimulate debate on whether those changes revitalise the culture or diminish or corrupt it.

There is a wider context to iwi/hapu polity and thus to the culture. Iwi are not independent, autonomous entities. They are subject to article 1 of the Treaty of Waitangi which Parliament and the courts say in effect transferred sovereignty to the Crown, in effect to Parliament. Nevertheless, under article 2 there is some devolved management to iwi/hapu of taonga (for example, kohanga reo and kura kaupapa), land and (above-ground) natural resources and social services, as in whanau ora. During the next decade or so the boundaries of what is included in article 2 will continue to be tested and the degree of iwi/hapu autonomy in governing those matters firmed. Sir Edward Durie drew a parallel with territorial councils' power to make bylaws: the bylaws are subject to the sanction of, and may be overridden by, Parliament but otherwise have the force of law. How far this goes will depend on subsidiarity – decision-making the level most appropriate to those affected – catching on, as the New Zealand Initiative and Local Government New Zealand argue.

So revitalising article 2 is integral to revitalising Maori culture. That revitalisation needs the Crown to cooperate. And in that context, as a 2011 working paper on "the post-settlement era" put it, "...the issues that will continue to arise in that [Crown-Maori] relationship are complex and often very difficult conceptually and politically. In relation to many of them there are strongly entrenched viewpoints and in some cases there will be major difficulties in finding any consensus."<sup>5</sup>

#### ***4g. Extending the culture to non-Maori – and how that might influence the culture***

Is Maori culture Maori property? Article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi seems to suggest it is. Te Pire mō Te Reo Māori/Māori Language Act 2016 seems also to suggest that.

But making te reo a true national language would encourage and enable non-Maori to see the world through Maori eyes, give an understanding of the wider culture and draw some or many towards or into the culture and to "walk in two worlds", thereby making "bicultural" more nearly bicultural. As with connecting alienated young urban Maori with their heritage, this would revitalise – inject energy into – the culture.

These immigrants into Maori culture would, as all immigrants do, inject into the culture some of what they bring to it from outside.

This raises a question: is someone with no Maori whakapapa writing in te reo or using, and altering, Maori motifs in carving or painting or introducing different body movements into kapa haka, expressing Maori culture. If so, whose property is it? Can



that person be an agent of revitalisation? Or can only Maori revitalise Maori culture? Logically, "bicultural" means influence runs both out of and into Maori culture. Those who "walk in two worlds" can stray.

This is in addition to the general influence on a culture of general and international trends. It is about, in a sense, non-Maori being Maori.

#### ***4h. A caveat: not all Maori want to be Maori***

Any programme of revitalisation of the culture will need to accommodate the preference of many Maori to live outside the culture or be visitors to it, not inhabitants of it. Most with Maori whakapapa have some other heritage besides Maori heritage. Some who have dual or multiple heritages may rank their non-Maori heritage as more defining of who they are than their Maori heritage or may choose to define themselves only by their non-Maori heritage.

Revitalising Maori culture is of the culture, not individuals (except as in *section 4b*).

#### ***4i. Another caveat: will only Maori be indigenous forever?***

The indigenous status of Maori has been broadly accepted over the past three decades and is underlined by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. But is indigeneity defined by first-arrival or by some other criterion? Is a family which has farmed some land for five generations less connected to that land than an alienated urban Maori? Is the child born in Australia of a Maori family living there indigenous? Some iwi are registering expatriates as members but will that be enough in a generation or two?

This is likely to become a pertinent question over the next two or three generations. It will have implications for Maori culture, especially if Maori culture is sequestered as something separate from the general culture and not "owned" by those from both of the "bicultural" cultures.

#### ***4j. Where does the Treaty of Waitangi fit?***

Revitalisation of the culture is a Treaty of Waitangi matter in two respects. One is the article 2 dimension, noted above in *section 4f*. The other is article 3.

Article 3 makes all Maori full citizens irrespective of iwi/hapu/whanau. The actual term is "subjects" which is equality before and under the law but the modern term, on passports and the like, even in the United Kingdom, is "citizens" and to be a full citizen one must have the capacity to take a full part in society, including the economy. That in turn implies that the society is active, including through the government, in ensuring every person has that capacity and is not disabled through accident, discrimination or upbringing – or deprivation of cultural heritage.

Article 3 should be seen therefore in modern times as a "social contract" that those with Maori whakapapa will be as much full citizens as citizens with other backgrounds, ethnicities or cultural confidence. So revitalising the culture is an article 3 matter in the sense that the Crown has some responsibility for ensuring the culture is strong and citizens are not disadvantaged by loss or derogation of cultural heritage.

#### ***4k. A global context***

The 2010s are a new, faster and deeper phase of globalisation some call

hyperglobalisation: of information, finance, production (and so jobs), distribution chains and networks, regulation and people (mass migration and refugees), accentuated and intensified by fast-developing and deepening digital technology. There is some pushback against globalisation of production and regulation, which shows up in the big rise in support for populist politicians and parties of all sorts including those of the far right and far left. This may undo some of the state-to-state globalisation but is likely to be outweighed by the globalising effect of technology and younger people's greater sense of themselves as global. In addition, there are global issues such as climate change, water and natural resources, disease and terrorism plus the increasing need for rules to govern cross-border or supra-border interaction, as in, for example, aviation and global corporations.

Aotearoa/New Zealand is not immune from this globalisation. The first phase in the nineteenth century deeply affected Maori culture. This phase will, too, and will also deeply affect the general culture.

#### ***41. The politics of revitalisation***

Politicians sometimes lead but mostly follow. The legislation and policy changes of the late 1980s were a period of leadership in addressing the inequality of the two cultures, followed by another period of leadership in the 1990s in advancing major Treaty of Waitangi settlements. Then followed a period of followership, with occasional flashes of leadership (as in the Whanganui and Tuhoe settlements and whanau ora, for example).

Culture is a highly sensitive issue. So politicians are likely to tread warily on major revitalisation of Maori culture where commitments of funds and full inclusion of te reo in schooling are concerned. There is likely to be periodic pushback by those who fear or are angered by, as they see it, having Maori culture thrust upon them or "special treatment" for Maori as in intense work with alienated young urban Maori.

That is why this is a multi-generational matter. But as generations turn over and younger people are increasingly exposed to, and join in, Maori culture there is likely to be more openness to initiatives to revitalise the culture (though note the caveats above). By then this place might be Aotearoa.

### **6. In short**

Maori culture has changed greatly since 1840, much of it exogenously-driven, some of it endogenously-generated.

Revitalising Maori culture will logically include: adjustments to and refinements of traditional culture; spreading the culture to the alienated (and to non-Maori); making te reo Maori a genuine national language; supporting arts and crafts and artists, craftspeople and performers; developing Maori as bigger economic players; updating iwi and hapu political structures.

Some of this is a Treaty of Waitangi matter. Some is for Maori alone, including societal organic change. Some is for everyone in the nation. Some is a matter of personal identity and some a matter of national identity. The logic is a genuinely bicultural nation.

*It will be obvious from the above that this is work – learning – in progress.  
Constructive comments welcome to ColinJames@synapsis.co.nz.*

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## References

<sup>1</sup> Dominic Sullivan, *Beyond Biculturalism. The Politics of an Indigenous Minority* (Huia, Wellington 2006).

<sup>2</sup> For example, the 2013-16 New Plymouth mayor Andrew Judd, who unsuccessfully attempted to create a Maori ward on the council and led a hikoi to Parihaka on 15-17 June 2016 (cf <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/regional/306428/new-plymouth-hikoi-'we-care-about-each-other'>), and Steve Smith, CEO of Cragg Range winery, in his presentation to the Red Meat Sector conference on 25 July 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Lara M. Greaves, Carla Houkamau, and Chris G. Sibley, "Maori Identity Signatures: A Latent Profile Analysis of the Types of Maori Identity", *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* (American Psychological Association), 2015, Vol. 21, No. 4, 541–549.

<sup>4</sup> Radio New Zealand, Morning Report, 4 August 2016 and [http://www.nzei.org.nz/NZEI/About-Us/Aboutus.aspx?&About\\_Us=4](http://www.nzei.org.nz/NZEI/About-Us/Aboutus.aspx?&About_Us=4).

<sup>5</sup> "A changing population, changing identities: The Crown-Maori relationship in 50 years time", Institute of Policy Studies working paper for the State Services Commission project anticipating the post-Treaty-settlement era ([www.PostTreatySettlements.org.nz](http://www.PostTreatySettlements.org.nz)).