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Partnerships for Children and Families Project

**Maori Perspectives on Collaboration and
Colonisation in Contemporary
Aotearoa/New Zealand Child and Family
Welfare Policies and Practices**

C. Love



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**Maori Perspectives on Collaboration and Colonisation in
Contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand Child and Family Welfare
Policies and Practices**

Dr Catherine Love



Ko Taranaki toku maunga

Ko Tokomaru toku waka

Ko Te Atiawa toku iwi

Ko Ngati Te Whiti toku hapu

Ko Te Whiti O Rongomai raua ko Tohu Kakahi nga poropiti

Ko Te Tatau O Te Po toku whare

To expand on the meanings beneath the pepeha that begins this narrative.

“Ko Taranaki toku Maunga; My mountain is Taranaki”;

Indicates that I descend from the shared ancestors of Ranginui and Papatuanuku, the sky father and earth mother. You would know that I am a living face of the ancestors whose lived and died around Mount Taranaki, and who are buried within the richly prized and fertile lands of Taranaki province.

“Ko Tokomaru toku waka; My canoe is Tokomaru”.

These words tell you that my mettle is that of the people who traveled the Pacific Ocean on the canoe called Tokomaru, and whose crew populated a number of areas in the land of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

“Ko Te Atiawa toku iwi; My tribe is Te Atiawa”.

These words speak of my mortal and immortal line of descent from Tamarau and Rongoueroa. They communicate that I am of the Northern Taranaki tribe, Te Atiawa, where the first shots in the wars between Taranaki Maori and the New Zealand Crown were fired.

“Ko Ngati Te Whiti toku hapu; My sub-tribe is Ngati Te Whiti”.

My people are descendants of Te Whiti O Rongomai, whose ancestors lived in the area known as Nga Motu, and who kept the fires burning at Te Whanganui A Tara (Wellington harbour).

“Ko Te Whiti O Rongomai rau ko Tohu Kakahi nga poropiti; Te Whiti O Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi are the prophets”

We are followers of Te Whiti O Rongomai and his uncle Tohu Kakahi, who led our people in active and peaceful resistance to European colonization 50 years before Mahatma Ghandi led his own people on a similar path. It was these ancestors who created the self-sufficient, prosperous and progressive village of Parihaka, known as the “Village of Peace”, in the midst of war and devastation. Hence we are survivors of the so-called “never-ending war” between Taranaki Maori and the Crown/New Zealand Government. This is a war that involved 40 years of armed conflict, a war that saw prolonged “scorched earth” policies followed by concerted “bush-scouring” by colonial troops, and payment provided for the heads of Taranaki Maori; men, women, or children. You will know that I am involved in some way in a war in which “the weapons have changed from the musket and taiaha, to pen and paper.” (Waitangi Tribunal, 1996).

This history provides a context that includes our history as some of many whose lands were confiscated, in their entirety, by the Government; whose villages, homes and cultivations were burnt; who were pushed off their lands in order to provide town and country sections and farms for eager settlers; whose surviving men were deported to the cold southern region of the country, many to be imprisoned indefinitely without trial, many to be used as slave labour to build the sea walls, roads and gardens desired by the European settlers; and whose women were systematically raped leaving many of us with the imprint of these events carried permanently in our genes.

“Ko Te Tatau O Te Po toku where. Te Tatau O Te Po is my house”.

The name of my ancestral house, Te Tatau O Te Po, signifies we are some of the many who were never able to return to our ancestral lands, and who settled in the region known as Te Upoko O Te Ika A Maui (the head of the fish of Maui), or Wellington, the capital city of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This is where the national Parliament was built on top of our own homes and cultivations. You will recognise that this Parliament sits directly atop the brains of Te Ika A Maui (the fish of Maui; the Maori name for the North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand); a graphic representation of the ambitions of successive governments to control the mind and movement of the people of this land.

**Maori Perspectives on Collaboration and Colonization in Contemporary
Aotearoa/New Zealand: Child and Family Welfare Policies and Practices**

Catherine Love

The above words of introduction (pepeha) carry within them the stories of my history and identity, and that of my whanau (family), hapu (sub-tribe), and iwi (tribe). When shared with other Maori,¹ the effect of the pepeha or introduction is to supply a wealth of information about the speaker, and to make visible a network of relationships and intersecting histories that pre-date the existence and determine the relational positions of both speaker and listener. The relationships and histories carried within our pepeha provide a context which extends beyond the present situation, and often beyond the lives of both speaker and listener.

This paper examines discourses around partnership, collaboration and appropriation between colonized and colonizing peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand, with particular reference to discourses around the child and family welfare, care and protection arenas. Of primary concern are discourses around relationships between indigenous Maori and statutory systems of child and family welfare and protection in our country. It is argued here that Aotearoa/New Zealand statutory welfare authorities and policy makers have engaged in lip-service to the notions of “well-being” and “family focus”, which have been promoted and which are preferred by indigenous Maori communities, while in fact continuing to operate according to deeply embedded notions of “risk identification” and “individualism”. The two positions represent fundamentally different ways of viewing societies and the people within them. It is proposed here that the “child protection” focus in Aotearoa/New Zealand is supported by entrenched colonial and

racist mentalities which provide largely unexamined barriers to real movement towards meaningful ideological and systemic change. In order to subject these dual discourses to examination, the meaning systems and contexts that underpin the respective positions of colonized and colonizer must be made visible.

In Maori discourse, the process of examining context can be understood in terms of whakapapa. Whakapapa is often translated as genealogy, however its meaning also extends to broader understandings. Whakapapa encompasses the layer upon layer that has been built upon to bring us to our present position. Tracking through the layers of Maori whakapapa will eventually connect us to our spiritual origins and to Papatuanuku.² In this context however, it is the whakapapa of child and family welfare, care and protection services in relation to the indigenous Maori of Aotearoa/New Zealand that will be traced.

Honouring whakapapa; the sacredness of our stories

For Maori, meeting each other, coming together and discussing issues, whakapapa is the first thing that is shared. Whakapapa provides the context through which connections are made and from which future relationships and directions develop. This is consistent with Maori beliefs that we understand by looking behind, beneath and around the issue at hand, rather than directly at the current situation. We believe that in order to orient ourselves to our present and future, we need to firstly examine that which is “behind”. Only then will we be able to see clearly where we presently stand and where our future directions may lie.

In discussing systems of child and family welfare, whakapapa and manifested meanings are clearly important. Welfare policies and practices develop within, and are reflective of historical, political, social, cultural and economic contexts and relationships, which have evolved over time through the ongoing colonial enterprise. A key thesis of this paper is that the layers of development of child welfare, care and protection systems in Aotearoa/New Zealand correspond with the layers of colonialism on which the nation has been built. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, the contexts and relationships facing Maori include genocidal³ and assimilationist strands, in which “child welfare” policies and practices have figured significantly.

A Historical Narrative

Early visitors to Aotearoa/New Zealand came, predominantly, from a Victorian English environment that featured a gender-based division of responsibilities for child care, and an emphasis upon private rather than public spheres influencing dress codes, asset ownership and leadership roles. Alongside these was a particular perspective on the nature of childhood, including a common, and legislatively supported belief in the correctness of physical discipline for children and of the appropriate place of children in society⁴ and the correct way for children to behave.⁵ From this perspective, early settlers to this country had some difficulty understanding and appreciating the communal living and working arrangements of Maori, the obvious affection with which children were regarded, the relatively relaxed mode of childrearing, the inclusion of children in all aspects of Maori life, the communal responsibility for child care, the comparative freedom (including sexual freedom) of Maori women, and the central involvement of men in caring for children.⁶

The first concerted wave of colonization was brought by missionaries who worked hard from the mid-19th century particularly to save the souls of Maori, educate them and turn them from their heathen ways. Missionary efforts, conducted with the noblest of intentions and certainly with the best interests of the people at heart, can be characterized as attempts to gain (appropriate), transform and thus colonize the minds and spirits of Maori. (Walker, 1987; Walker, 1996). Images of 19th century Maori indicate that the missionaries were at least superficially successful in their endeavors. Maori children attended mission schools, and with their families donned the more decorous European clothing of the times, attended Christian services and developed their literacy skills through regular reading of the Bible. However, while Maori had adopted a number of superficial aspects of British society, their fundamental social systems and structures remained largely intact. It may be argued that Maori appropriated some of what was offered, and added these to their pre-existing values and beliefs.

As colonization gained momentum, imperatives to assert its systems, structures and understandings became more pressing. Maori patterns of communal living, ownership, gender roles and child-rearing practices, which clearly challenged and obstructed these imperatives, came to be viewed with open negativity.

The Treaty of Waitangi opened the floodgates for (primarily British) settlers. Over 500 Maori rangatira (chiefs) signed the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. At the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the Maori population was estimated to be around 100,000-200,000, with the non-Maori population estimated to be around 2,000 (Jackson, 1992). Maori systems and structures were dominant in Aotearoa/New Zealand at this

stage. Maori were also numerically, economically and politically strong and well-armed (Jackson, 1992).

In the decades following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, Maori vitality declined drastically. In a scenario familiar to many colonized peoples, Maori were subject to a combination of genocidal policies and practices by the colonial administration and settler population. Maori came alienated from their lands at an alarming rate through a combination of shady deals and “sales”, official confiscations, and government policies designed to drive Maori from their land. The loss of land meant loss of papakainga⁷ that provided the foundations for Maori whanau, hapu, and iwi cohesiveness, economic facility, and ultimately health and wholeness. Maori populations were decimated by diseases introduced by Europeans,⁸ and in some areas “scorched earth” policies and “bush-scouring” were accompanied by payment for Maori heads and the large scale imprisonment without trial and deportation of Maori.⁹

By 1896, the Maori population had declined to an estimated 42,000, while Pakeha numbers continued to grow (Pool, 1991). By the early 1900s, the impending extinction of Maori was officially acknowledged.¹⁰ Contrary to popular expectations, however, Maori survived, making a remarkable recovery (Hirini, 1997).

Policies which included attempts to eradicate Maori language¹¹ and colonial strategies designed to keep Maori in the “menial” or servant class¹² continued to impact on Maori in the early decades of the 20th Century. In the post World War II era, Maori were encouraged and coerced to move from their largely rural settlements to the towns and cities, in order to provide a pool of unskilled and semi-skilled labour for the growing urban industries. During the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, Maori became very rapidly

urbanized. Assimilationist policies co-existed with genocidal influences at this time. Maori housing was “pepper-potted” amongst Pakeha¹³ suburbs, and statistical definitions of Maori were designed to ensure that, with intermarriage, Maori would become statistically insignificant, and be subsumed within the European ethnic category.¹⁴ Prior to urbanization, Maori representation in negative social indices, such as prisons and psychiatric institutions, was negligible. Within the first generation of urbanization, however, the picture changed radically, with Maori beginning to feature at ever-increasing rates in negative statistics from the mid-1970s to the present day. It was at this time that Maori began their destructive relationships with state welfare authorities.

Maori ethnic group members now comprise over fifteen per cent of the population.¹⁵ This proportion is growing, and the Maori are expected to make up 22 per cent of the population within the next 50 years. Maori are also a young population, with 37 per cent under the age of 15 years.¹⁶ However, Maori are grossly over-represented in indicators of deprivation. Compared to non-Maori, Maori die earlier, are much more likely to be admitted to psychiatric hospitals, to be imprisoned, to die by suicide or accident, to be unemployed, to have children at a young age, to have large families, to live in overcrowded situations and to live on low incomes.¹⁷

Colonial responses to the Treaty of Waitangi: Collaboration or Appropriation?

The Treaty¹⁸ signed in 1840 has been consistently viewed by Maori as a sacred and seminal covenant. Under the terms of the Treaty, Maori agreed to British settlement, and to the establishment by British Crown representatives of their own systems of governance over their own people.¹⁹ British Crown representatives in turn affirmed and

guaranteed rangatira²⁰ and hapu the continued exercise of tino rangatiratanga (absolute authority/chieftainship/sovereignty), and the undisturbed possession of all estates (lands, forests, fisheries), and other taonga (things treasured) including customs, beliefs and values. However, for around a century, the Treaty of Waitangi was regarded by successive New Zealand governments as a “nullity”.²¹ The Treaty and provisions contained within it were invisible within mainstream colonial discourse, although they were consistently referred to in Maori narratives.

The Treaty of Waitangi is now acknowledged by the Crown and much of the population as the “founding document” of the New Zealand nation. However, this acknowledgement did not come easily. For some time in the mid-1970’s, Aotearoa experienced civil unrest from Maori groups on a scale not seen since the land wars of the previous century. Maori demanded recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and highlighted unresolved grievances through a variety of protest actions and occupations. To a non-Maori New Zealand population, who had oft proclaimed that the racial harmony in their nation constituted the “best race relations in the world” (Walker, 1996), the stridency of Maori voices proclaiming something very different came as a shock.

In the mid-1970’s, the New Zealand government initiated “Waitangi Day” celebrations as a national holiday and day of celebration. The focus of the official celebrations was on the Treaty as the foundation of New Zealand nationhood, the coming together of two peoples as one and a source of legitimacy for the New Zealand Government. These national celebrations have consistently provided an illustration of the dual discourses operating in relation to the Treaty and to the conflicting understandings of the relationships between Maori and non-Maori which were laid out in the Treaty. The

celebrations have provided a forum for mainly Pakeha politicians to affirm the authority of the government of the day throughout the nation and to seek to move from a “one people” narrative theme to one emphasizing “two peoples under one Government”. Simultaneously, Maori protests have focused on the failure of successive Governments to acknowledge the Maori provisions of the Treaty and to implement these. The provision for tino rangatiratanga of hapu and iwi is viewed as particularly pivotal (absolute authority, chieftainship, sovereignty).

From the perspective of Maori protestors, the national celebrations, while ostensibly honouring the Treaty of Waitangi, actually served to undermine the hapu and iwi tino rangatiratanga guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi. The emphasis on unity between peoples (races) within one nation meant that hapu and iwi rangatiratanga became invisible, while a focus on “the Maori people/race/ culture” or “Maoritanga” was promoted. In Maori eyes this constitutes another act of cultural imperialism verging, once again, on being genocidal. In the words of John Rangihau, “Maoritanga is a term coined by the Pakeha to bring the tribes together. Because if you cannot divide and rule, then for tribal people all you can do is unite them and rule. Because then they lose everything by losing their own tribal histories and traditions that give them their identity” (Rangihau, in King, M. Ed, 1992, pp.189-190).

In recent years, the guarantees of tino rangatiratanga and the right to maintain our own values, beliefs, practices and systems guaranteed in the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi have been further re-defined by Government. The Treaty of Waitangi has been re-written by the Crown as a series of “Treaty principles”. Central amongst these are principles of:

- Partnership: referring to a partnership between Maori and the Crown;
- Participation: referring to the right of Maori to participate in processes and structures affecting them; and,
- Protection: referring to the active protection of Maori values, culture, rights and aspirations.

Many Maori consider the redefinition of the Treaty of Waitangi into a set of “principles”, to be a mechanism designed to dilute the effect of the Treaty of Waitangi through the appropriation, assimilation and transformation of Maori Treaty narratives into a Pakeha discursive framework. For instance, the partnership principle does not specify the nature of the partnership, allowing power imbalances to continue unfettered. The participation principle allows for Maori participation in systems and processes, but does not confer any decision-making power or authority.²² The protection principle implies continued control by the dominant group, in the nature of a paternalistic Crown-driven power relationship.

The Waitangi Tribunal²³ was formed at a time when the pressure of racial conflict, stemming from demands for realization of the Treaty of Waitangi, and demands for social justice for Maori, were reaching their 20th century peak. The Tribunal provided an outlet for the heat generated by the race debate. In effect it was one of a number of vehicles designed to allow Maori to “let off steam”. While the Tribunal was sanctioned to hear Maori accounts, identify breaches relating to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, and make recommendations pertaining to these, unlike other judicial bodies, its powers stopped there. Tribunal recommendations were not binding; the

Government was under no obligation to take heed of recommendations and frequently did not do so.²⁴

In the ongoing debates around the interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi, three things are clear:

1. Maori see the guarantee of tino rangatiratanga as a key provision of the Treaty. This implies absolute sovereign authority and, in effect, the status of independent nation states for hapu and iwi groups. This is consistent with Maori custom and tradition. Within such traditions, hapu and iwi were responsible and accountable for their own members; they co-existed and worked alongside each other; and, one iwi, in the ordinary course of events, would not presume authority over another.
2. The Crown and non-Maori public tend to take the view that the Treaty of Waitangi effected a ceding of sovereignty by Maori to the Crown. The Crown is particularly averse to acknowledging more than one source of sovereignty in the land. The principle of a single source of sovereignty, that being the sovereignty of the Crown, as represented by the New Zealand government, is fundamental to the ongoing colonial endeavor.
3. Maori and non-Maori often agree that the Treaty of Waitangi provides a framework for partnership between peoples. It is the nature of the partnership, and the implementation of it that is in dispute.

Current statutory interpretations of the Treaty inherently ignore Maori understandings of rangatiratanga. Maori expectations and aspirations from 1840 until the present have been that the rights guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi will be

recognized and implemented. This includes the recognition of hapu and iwi as possessing sovereign authority over themselves and their taonga. Chief amongst the taonga (treasures) that many Maori wish to reclaim is the capacity and autonomy to care for, educate, and protect our tamariki²⁵ and whanau.

Colonization in Social Welfare Discourses

Ethnic statistics relating to Maori children in state care and Maori families who have been subjected to interventions through welfare authorities have been poorly recorded in the past.²⁶ The result has been that researchers have faced obstacles to gaining a clear statistical picture of the extent and nature of interactions between Maori families and state welfare authorities. This, in turn, has operated first to prevent meaningful academic analysis and dialogue around the historical relationships and interactions between Maori and welfare authorities in Aotearoa/New Zealand and, second, to exclude the lived realities of Maori from official (statistical) discourse.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that large numbers of Maori children were removed from their families by well-meaning social workers, particularly in the post World War II era, when there was a massive migration of Maori from rural to urban areas. From the 1960's, through the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's, many Maori whanau had been affected by the taking of children and this was reflected in a common injunction to Maori children to "watch out" lest the Welfare get you²⁷. The removal of Maori children from their families, and the concomitant vilification of these families, was done, of course, "in the best interests of the child". It became something of a paternalistic fashion at this time also, for middle class Pakeha²⁸ to foster or adopt Maori children, with a view to providing

them with opportunities that their own whanau and communities were seen as unable to provide.

During the mid-1980's, in response to continuing demonstrations of Maori unrest, spaces (vents) were created in a variety of forums for Maori to give voice to their frustrations, their aspirations, and to provide new perspectives based on a Maori world-view. These spaces were created within the very systems identified by Maori as the prime instruments of colonial oppression. For many Maori leaders at the time, this represented an opportunity that was eagerly grasped. Some of our finest minds and senior leaders contributed to provide an extensive vision of social welfare, social policy and justice systems that would work for and with, rather than against, Maori whanau and communities. The report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare, known as "Puaoteata-tu" (Ministerial Advisory Committee), was released in 1986, followed by the report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988), and the report on Maori and the Criminal Justice System (Jackson, 1988). These reports reflected the generous sharing by Maori of many facets of Maoritanga²⁹ and provided the Government, officials, policy-makers and practitioners with a more extensive vision of Maori society, values, beliefs and aspirations than most would have been privy to previously. Maori hopes during these processes were that the new openness to Maori aspirations and considerations signaled an unprecedented era of co-operation and collaboration between Maori and State agencies. Many Maori saw this as a chance to challenge, modify or re-cast the function of social welfare systems from being part of the appropriation, fragmentation and colonization of Maori to ultimately providing possibilities for Maori cultural forms, systems and institutions to co-exist, on

an equal footing, alongside Western cultural forms, systems, and institutions.³⁰

Alternatively and more optimistically, there was a hope that a social justice, inclusive and family focused Maori model of welfare might be adopted for all.

In hindsight, the apparent new openness to Maori views signaled a discursive shift from a deficit model, which had positioned Maori and Maori perspectives as unworthy of serious consideration, to an additive discourse which provided for parts of Maori cultural narratives to be added to the existing philosophical framework. Maori people and Maori realities were added to the margins and were still defined as “other” measured against a centrally positioned Pakeha “norm”.

Conceptions of self in colonization processes.

The most fundamental Pakeha “norm”, one which underpinned the systems, structures and understandings that the colonial administration sought to impose, was a particular, deeply rooted and largely unconscious understanding of what constituted a normal, healthy and correct self-hood. Conceptions of self are culturally based and so pervasive within cultural systems, and ingrained within individual psyches, that they are usually invisible to those that subscribe to them. However, as Landrine (1992) has noted:

“What we assume a self is, by and large predicts our assumptions about how a self relates to others, takes control, develops, “ought to” behave, think and feel, and “goes wrong”. Thus culturally determined assumptions about the self are beneath all Western cultural, clinical concepts and understandings of normalcy”. (Landrine, 1992, p.402)

The conception of self underpinning ongoing colonial processes in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been described by Sampson (1993) as “self-contained individualism”. It features key tenets, these being:

“(1) That the body is a container that houses the individual; thus the “essence” of a person, the physiological and psychological qualities, will, motivation, emotion and soul are housed in the body;

(2) That all that is contained in the self is separate and distinct from that contained in other selves and other entities. Definitions of healthy selfhood, according to this conception of self, are those that have firm boundaries and function as self-contained units” (Love, 2000; p 22).

In discussing essentially the same individuocentric conception of self, Landrine (1992) considered that the self:

“...can be described without reference to others...It can be thought about, analyzed, and discussed in isolation...Within this conception of self and other, self is seen as primary, with relationships being derivative (that is the self is seen as pre-existing relationships) and relationships may be rejected if they do not meet the needs of self” (pp. 403-404).

Further, maintaining boundaries between that which is seen as intrinsic or “self” and that which is seen as extrinsic or “other” becomes vital to normal and healthy development. This supports assumptions of an internal locus of control and responsibility and hence of individual accountability that underpins Westminster-style systems of justice, and British models of education as well as as child care and protection.

I have identified elsewhere four of the many implications of the self-contained model of self which impinge directly on Western welfare and justice systems. These are:

“that parents possess rights of ownership over their children; these ownership rights are limited by the authority of the state over its citizens; that the state is comprised of individual citizens who function as self-contained units of production; that responsibility and accountability are located within individuals; that culture (and I would add “character”) is a

product of human learning and is contained within individual selves”
(Love, 2000, p.22-23).

It is this conception of self, with a multitude of attendant implications, that underpins the laws, policies, practices and institutions set in place by the colonial administration of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is this conception of self which makes the notion of “child protection” as divorced from whanau (family) well-being **seem** rational; which can conceptualize a **separation** of “the best interests of the child” from those of family; which makes the removal of children from their family systems **appear** to provide them with opportunities for health and wholeness; and, which **makes sense** of the notions of ownership reflected in Aotearoa/New Zealand models of adoption and child and family legislation (Love, 2000). It is this individualistic ideology which:

“...makes the individual the basic unit of social analysis. It supports a politically conservative predisposition to bracket off questions about the structure of a society, about the distribution of wealth and power for example, and to concentrate instead on questions about the behaviour of individuals within that (apparently fixed) social structure” (Tesh, 1988, p.161, as cited in Roguski, 2002, p.1).

This is the ideology which underpins historical and current child and family policy in Aotearoa/new Zealand.

In contrast to this self-contained individualism (Sampson, 1988; 1993a; 1993b), Maori conceptions of self may be described as “ensembled” (Sampson, 1988; 1993a; 1993b). Key features of ensembled conceptions of self include: a fluid self-other boundary (maintaining distinctions between self and other is not vital to identity), an inclusive definition of self (the region defined as self may include a number of people, living and dead, and elements of the environment), and a field control orientation (power

and control are located in a field of influences that may include but are not confined to self). Sampson (1988) described an ensembled self in the following way:

“Who I am is defined in and through my relations with others: I am completed through those relations and do not exist apart from them. In working for them I am working for myself” (1988, p.20).

This position accommodates perspectives based on notions of shared (group) responsibility and accountability, and the indivisibility of self from whanau, hapu, and iwi³¹ that characterizes Maori views, systems and processes.

Te Wheke: a model of Maori well-being

Rangimarie Rose Pere (1988; 1991) has proposed a model of whanau health based in a Maori worldview, which provides a useful illustration of an ensembled perspective of self. Pere’s “Te Wheke: te oranga o te whanau”³² model utilizes the octopus as a symbol of whanau health and well-being. Within this model, the octopus symbolizes the whanau or extended family unit. Each tentacle of the octopus represents a dimension which requires sustenance if the whanau is to experience health and well-being. The many suckers on each tentacle represent the multitude of facets within each dimension. The tentacles of the octopus are intertwined, representing the inter-connectedness of the dimensions. In common with families, the octopus has mechanisms which it can use to protect itself from external threats. If feeling threatened, the octopus may hide behind a black ink veil of its own making, and seek to avoid or flee from the threatening situation. Like families, the octopus is not totally benign and should be approached with care. If injudiciously handled, it can inflict a painful bite with the beak hidden on its underside.

The dimensions proposed by Pere (1988; 1991) are:

Wairuatanga: The spiritual dimension which encompasses all aspects of life is carried with us through our whakapapa and is significant in all actions, processes and destinations. Maori see this dimension as primary.

Mauri: The life force, essence or ethos that binds together the wairua (spirit) and tinana (physical) and thus provides the conditions for life. All people and all elements of the natural world (for example; rocks, trees, rivers, birds, spiders) have their own unique mauri.

Whanaungatanga: “Family-ness”, whanau, hapu and iwi relationships and social dynamics. This dimension incorporates notions of interdependence, complementarity of roles, whanau-based identities and group affiliation, commitment and effort.

Tinana: This dimension refers to physical needs and that which provides sustenance and safety for the body.

Hinengaro: This dimension encompasses the mind, cognitive processes, thoughts and intuition. It alludes to the hidden female element and implies a need to respect the sacredness of our private thoughts.

Whatumanawa: This dimension refers to the seat of deepest emotions and visions. Sustenance for this dimension requires conditions through which to fully experience and express our deepest emotions.³³

Ha a koro ma a kui ma: The “ha” is the breath. Kui(a) and koro(ua) are the senior elders and ancestors who have passed the breath of life to the generations following them. This dimension emphasizes the indivisibility of the generations and the unity of whanau, hapu and iwi identity symbolized in the sharing of the ongoing breath of life. Knowledge

of heritage and history, use of native language, songs and traditions and whakapapa are important sources of sustenance for this dimension.

Mana ake: Often translated as “prestige, standing, authority”, this dimension refers to the standing of groups of whanau, hapu, iwi within communities. Mana ultimately comes from the gods and is reflected in the spiritual power and protection accorded by them. It is recognized and affirmed by people and is maintained through contributions to the whole and through service and hospitality to others. The mana of whanau, hapu, iwi is indivisible from the mana of individuals.

While described briefly here, it should be noted that each of these dimensions can take a lifetime to fully appreciate and develop. If Pere’s “Te Wheke” model is seen as an example of an ensembled (Sampson, 1988; 1993a; 1993b) conception of self, it would imply that any actions or decisions relating to the well-being of Maori whanau should take into account and operate in ways consistent with the complex webs of meanings, relationships and needs alluded to above.

Disparate conceptions of self and other underpin the competing realities and dual discourses that have characterized relationships between colonizer and colonized in the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand. While colonial authorities have possessed dominance in terms of power and access to resources for much of the relationships, Maori have maintained discourses of resistance over a number of forums. British colonizers brought with them ingrained cultural assumptions privileging self-contained individualism and reconstructed systems and institutions based on this privilege throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand. Prior to colonization, Maori had long had their own systems and institutions

based around ensembled individualism.³⁴ These systems and institutions still function well in healthy Maori families and communities today.

Key principles of Maori child and family policy include: a view of children as products of significant whakapapa lines and hence as full spiritual beings with their own mana, shared (extended family and community) responsibility for the care of children,³⁵ the primacy of tikanga in all decisions about appropriate courses of action, and the significance of utu in all interactions. The latter two points perhaps require further elaboration.

Tikanga is based in the concept of tika, which may be translated as “right, true, correct and just”. The concept of tika, and tikanga as the enactment of this is based in considerations of justice, according to that which is right, true and correct. These considerations incorporate a variety of aspects including all those outlined by Pere (1988; 1991), with wairua being a vital core. Utu refers to the principle and processes of reciprocity. Utu provides a mechanism through which to practice and maintain tikanga or that which is tika. This principle demands that balance be kept in all relationships, and that respect and hospitality be reciprocated in order to maintain balance in relationships. Utu is also the foundation for Maori systems to ensure redress and rebalancing of relationships in cases of wrongdoing. Together these principles and processes provide mechanisms for the management of virtually all situations. Together, these principles and mechanisms account for the importance of justice to Maori people. Maori, even as children, tend to have a very strong sense of justice and injustice. Where there is perceived injustice or imbalance, significant efforts are made to secure justice and balance, utilizing notions and practices associated with tikanga and utu. This is the basis

of traditional and contemporary systems of reconciliation and restorative justice as practiced in Maori forums.³⁶

Maori principles and practices, based on beliefs such as those outlined above, were marginalized and demonized in the past, and have been appropriated, redefined and “grafted on” to individualistic and eurocentric systems in the present. When considered in light of the totality of colonization experiences, it is not surprising that Maori, along with other colonized peoples, tend to come to any discussion of systems of child and family welfare with a keen awareness of these contexts and often with a profound distrust of such systems.

Ongoing discourses of colonization and resistance

“New analyses and a new language mark, and mask, the “something” that is no longer called imperialism. For indigenous peoples, one term that has signaled the striking shift in discourse is “post-colonial”. Naming the world as “post-colonial” is, from indigenous perspectives, to name colonialism as finished business” (Smith, 1999, p.98).

The primary agenda of successive governments has been to maintain the sovereign control which is fundamental to ongoing colonization of indigenous peoples. When the hold of government on power and control over Maori was seen to be under serious challenge, Maori were encouraged to participate in governance systems to an extent. The limit of that extent has been to provide the dominant group with resources, including the cultural knowledge and language, which could be appropriated to further solidify the ongoing colonization of Maori. In relation to child and family welfare, care and protection, there are several facets to this process.

Firstly, Maori co-opted to Government agencies were required, in order to be intelligible to policy makers, to speak in “a register” not their own (Sampson, 1993).³⁷

Churchill (1996, p.279) highlighted the “intellectual imperialism” which creates and maintains the “compartmentalization” and “departmentalization” of knowledge³⁸ and “the delineation of...discrete organizational spheres”³⁹ (Churchill, 1996, pp. 279-280), both processes that mitigate strongly against the possibility of contextual and holistic communications.⁴⁰

Secondly, Waitere-Ang and Johnson (1999) have noted that:

“inclusion and how we as Maori are identified as being included, continues to be a problematic process. Inclusion appears to be based primarily on rules that we have no control over and the result is actually one of exclusion...the focus appears to be one of physically including us, yet remaining ideologically absent” (p. 2-3).

In effect, invitations to Maori to participate in social policy discussions provided a forum for the expression of Maori frustrations and aspirations, the opportunity to be heard at the level of policy within the institutions and systems that had enormous influence on the lives of Maori whanau, but simultaneously required Maori to present Maori views in a way that was comprehensible and palatable to Pakeha policymakers. The opportunity came at a price. Aspects of Maori language and culture were pulled out of their holistic contexts and presented in a necessarily compartmentalized manner. Lankshear (1994) argued that “the struggle for symbolic power through words, their meaning and ideological capture, often results in the loss of the conceptual validity of much that is embodied within language” (as cited in Waitere-Ang & Johnston, 1999, p.10). Through separation from their whakapapa or contextual base, Maori language and culture become lifeless and empty. The result is a loss of mauri or life force and strength within the words and concepts.

A further layer within this process involves the claiming and appropriation of Maori resources, in the form of cultural knowledge and language, and the use of these to further assert control over the indigenous population. This is, of course, a primary feature of ongoing colonial operations. In an analysis of intellectual and cultural property rights, Aroha Mead (1996) argued that:

“Colonial powers are still in the infancy stages of looking back at the first wave of colonization and acknowledging that their violent acts of seizing foreign lands and territories in order to develop settlements and secure resources...were calculated acts of genocide...Some regard cultural and intellectual property rights as the second wave of colonization because the principles...are seen as a continuation of the ideologies of foreign conquest and domination.” (p.23)

In utilizing Maori terms and appropriating Maori processes in Child and Family welfare and in care and protection legislation, policies and procedures, state officials and workers assume, as previously noted, an authority to define, describe and prescribe the nature and form of Maori terms and processes. Further, the information provided by Maori informants has been used to develop “culturally sensitive” strategies and programmes which seek to be palatable to Maori, while maintaining the fundamentally oppressive premises and power dynamics intact. In relation to child and family welfare policies, this means that a veneer of extended family involvement, consensus decision-making and collective, social justice has been added to a centralized, individualistic, authoritarian and punitive frame.

During the time when Maori voices were not heard anywhere within the developing child and family welfare, care and protection discourses, genocidal child and family social work was able to proceed, in the main, without challenge. As ventilation spaces were created for Maori to present their views and aspirations they were provided

with Maori narratives and presented with a variety of Maori language terms, concepts and ideas. Dominant system representatives often appropriated the knowledge provided to them, presuming the right re-use, re-define and ultimately marginalize Maori narratives.

This brings us back to a consideration of the nature of cultural narratives, and in particular, the issue of sub-texts. For all of their fullness and clarity to Maori, the narratives presented in the various reports could only ever present a partial picture to those who operated outside of the discursive frameworks from within which the cultural narratives emanated. This is because, without the culturally constituted “webs of meaning” (Waldegrave, Tamasese, & Campbell, 1990) that are needed to generate whole (holistic) meanings in the spaces between the words, non-Maori could access only the overt narratives, and would normally never know the sub-textual narratives on which the overt narratives were predicated. Hence, attempts to include Maori perspectives without a serious examination of existing sub-textual dominant paradigms could not be truly successful.

Structural and systemic impediments to the development of positive indigenous systems

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (1989) was hailed by many as signaling a new direction in co-operation and collaboration between Maori and Crown welfare and youth justice agencies. It drew on the reports mentioned above and sought to address some key issues that had been identified by Maori. These included an apparent recognition of the importance of whanau, hapu and iwi, a reconstruction of the whanau hui process through the system of family group conferencing, the option to provide (cultural) lay advocates to represent Maori perspectives, and provisions for the

development of Iwi Social Services⁴¹ which would theoretically allow Maori the authority to provide care and protection for their own people.

Impediments to the realization of positive systems of child and family practice are both structural and systemic and relate, in part, to institutional and personal racism. In the years since the passing of the Act, Maori have been expressing concern at a number of aspects of the legislation and its implementation. In a review of a range of policies and Acts of Parliament relating to family law in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Metge and Durie-Hall (1992) concluded that the basic assumptions underpinning most family law and policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand were in conflict with Maori understandings and practices regarding family/whanau. The effect of these conflicting assumptions is that Maori social forms and practices have been largely ignored and, making no substantive accommodation for these forms and practices, can be seen as constituting an “attack” (Metge & Durie-Hall, 1992, p.50) on Maori beliefs, forms and practices regarding family/whanau.

While Metge and Durie-Hall (1992) would advocate for the accommodation of Maori perspectives within family related legislation, such accommodations do not address, and may well act to disguise the fundamental differences between Maori conceptions of self and the Western conceptions of self that govern family law, child and family welfare policy and psychological practices in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Accommodation as currently practiced also fails to provide for the Treaty guarantee of tino rangatiratanga. In 1996, an authoritative voice on family law in Aotearoa/New Zealand noted that:

“Article 2 of the Treaty guarantees tino rangatiratanga (autonomy) to Maori. This is not compatible with the statutory responsibility that is

vested in the NZCYP Service by the CYP&F Act 1989.” (Trapski’s Family Law, 1/8/1996, A-25).

Love (2000) was also critical of the operation of the much heralded family group conferences on a number of grounds. These included the fact that a Maori process had been appropriated and transformed, thereby removing the very elements that were pivotal to its successful operation, including whanau rangatiratanga.⁴² She also noted that there was no devolution of power and authority within the system, resulting in a situation where whanau, hapu and iwi were being asked to resolve problems within whanau, hapu and iwi, but were not receiving the resources required to do so. Also, rather than moving towards the (Maori) goal of tino rangatiratanga, family group conferences could represent a further insidious encroachment into Maori whanau life and domains of authority.

Moana Jackson (1995) commented that:

“justice for Maori does not mean the grafting of Maori processes onto a system that retains the authority to determine the extent, applicability and validity of those processes” (p.34).

A number of specific instances may be cited to illustrate the inter-play of structural and systemic forces, based in colonialism and institutional and personal racism, which lead to the “grafting” process alluded to by Jackson (1995):

- “Care and Protection Panels” include Maori community representation but decision-making authority rests with state sponsored care and protection coordinators.
- There is provision for the use of lay advocates to represent child and family cultural perspectives within the Family court system, but decisions about using lay advocates depends on the discretion. This is an example of an “add-on”

approach which is dependent upon the goodwill of dominant system representatives.⁴³

- The development of a variety of “culturally sensitized” Anglo-American training and assessment instruments which feature decorative Maori border designs and footnotes.
- In relation to provisions for the establishment of Iwi Social Services, which many Maori saw as a potential pathway to actualization of tino rangatiratanga aspirations, Bradley (1995a, pp.30-31) noted that:

“By 1992 DSW⁴⁴ was receiving considerable criticism from iwi for its lack of progress in determining standards for IA⁴⁵ (Mason, 1992). Evidence mounted to show that Maori were gaining less information from businesses within DSW; that Maori organizations were monitored more harshly; that they were given fewer resources to cover a larger target group; and that they were discriminated against by care and protection coordinators who were failing to include or were actively excluding whanau members from Family Group Conferences”.

Although the Act apparently provided a legislative mandate and provided for resources to be allocated toward the establishment of Iwi Social Services, departmental staff prejudice and discrimination had not changed greatly from a decade previously (Rangihau, 1992, Bradley, 1994; 1995a; 1995b;1995c).

- Structural impediments to the development of positive iwi systems are apparent when the notions of “Iwi Authority”/“Iwi Social Services” contained in the legislation is examined. Under the terms of the Act, an “Iwi Social Service” is a body approved by the Director-General in accordance with the terms of the Act. The rangatiratanga or authority of iwi is thus subsumed beneath the authority of the Director-General of Social Welfare, an arm of the state.

- Further, it is officials working within the Department of the Director-General of Social Welfare who determine the criteria that iwi groups must fulfill in order to be approved, and at what level, by the Director-General. The regulations that officials have produced meant that Maori tribal entities must conform to a variety of processes, procedures and regulations modeled on the very Pakeha institutions from which they are seeking to remove themselves. Some Maori authorities have declined to participate in this process as it is seen as in conflict with the tino rangatiratanga provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi. The processes and structures required of tribal groups seeking to be recognized under the terms of the Act may be described as replacing white bureaucracies with brown bureaucracies (Walker, 2002).
- In the mid-1990's, CYPS initiated a public information campaign which targeted Moari radio and print media. The campaign depicted the service as having a family support orientation and encouraged families who were experiencing difficulties caring for their children to contact the service for help and support. When some Maori parents sought help, their contact with the service was recorded as an official "notification".⁴⁶ Some parents and children were subject to intrusive processes by social workers and children were sometimes forcibly removed as a result. By the turn of the century, the service had reverted to a "dob in a neighbour" campaign, where communities were encouraged to protect children thought to be at risk, by reporting suspicious families to the service.

In the conclusion of this section, I wish to discuss another aspect of the ongoing colonization of Aotearoa/New Zealand within the child and family welfare, care and

protection arena. This aspect concerns the co-option of Maori within the State welfare system. There are two avenues that have been tried in this respect. The first is the recruitment of more Maori into social work and social policy training programmes, resulting in a larger pool of academically qualified Maori social workers. The second avenue involves the employment of iwi social workers (those who have worked voluntarily or under various schemes for their iwi or local communities in capacities outside of statutory systems). Both of these avenues have strengths and weaknesses. Positive outcomes include an increase in the numbers of Maori who know and understand how the system operates, an increase in the number of Maori who perhaps can work with whanau in culturally appropriate ways, and an increase in the numbers of Maori who are reaching senior positions and who may be able to effect positive changes within existing systems, structures and processes.

The primary problem with this approach is that statutory systems, based on assumptions of self-contained individualism and with a strong punitive focus (the police and CYPFA⁴⁷ have a primary collegial relationship in child abuse reporting protocols),⁴⁸ are not designed to allow Maori (or other ensembled self) perspectives and ways of working to flourish.⁴⁹ As a result, Maori workers are employed for their Maori knowledge and standing, but pressured into conforming to institutional mores that are in conflict with tikanga Maori⁵⁰. This is particularly problematic for workers who have come from iwi or Maori community practice, where the trust of their communities and their own standing among these people are pivotal to their successful work. One of the side effects of the co-option of Maori into the current statutory regime has been that many of the social activists of the 1970's and 1980's have become the social service

providers of the new millennium. Battling a system from within is a role that consumes enormous energy and can limit vision. This position also leaves Maori workers exposed to being individually demonized and labeled by institutional representatives as incompetent or unprofessional, if we do not conform to institutional mores. On the other hand, Maori workers perceived as conforming to the norms within statutory welfare systems may be viewed by their whanau, hapu, iwi and communities as brown faces doing the dirty work that was previously done by white social workers. It is an unenviable position.

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (1989) provided some potential for new and positive systems of child and family welfare and protection to develop in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, meeting this potential is largely dependent on the understanding and goodwill of mainly non-Maori officials and practitioners. As I have argued elsewhere (Love, 2000), while:

“the Aotearoa/New Zealand legislation...features some elements of a complex system of Maori cultural values, beliefs and practices...the danger...is that the apparent state commitment to a culturally appropriate process is clearly limited. It may, in fact, serve only to provide a brown veneer for a white system that has historically contributed to state run programmes of cultural genocide and whanau dis-memberment. It may also serve to undermine Maori systems and institutions and to co-opt Maori people and cultural forms as agents in our own oppression” (p. 29).

Developing Conceptual Frameworks

In order to effectively recognize and analyze the processes discussed in this paper, it is helpful to have a conceptual framework. In relation to relationships between research and the Maori, Waitere-Ang and Johnston (1999) identify “four theoretically different...frontiers that have impacted, and continue to impact on Maori” (p.14). These four frontiers are:

1. The un-named frontier – characterized by a universalistic narrative and assumptions of objective truth based in dominant group realities and excluding of indigenous voices.
2. The colonial frontier – where culturally different “others” may be “physically present but (are) ideologically absent” (Waitere-Ang and Johnston, 1999, p.4)
3. The indigenized frontier – characterized by an apparently “Maori friendly” “cultural additive” approach, within which “ethnic additives become the adornment of unchanging structures and processes...[and which erroneously assumes] that the inclusion of Maori equates to empowerment” (Waitere-Ang & Johnston, 1999, pp.4-5, p.10).
4. The indigenous frontier – which provides a Maori-centered cultural, ideological, and structural framework, where the focus is on “structures, decision-making and identifying how Maori are excluded...a Maori centred/Kaupapa Maori approach places Maori at the centre” (Waitere-Ang and Johnston, 1999, p.14).

Elements of all four frontiers exist in Aotearoa/New Zealand today. The colonial and indigenized frontiers are dominant within statutory systems, while Maori are pushing to extend the fourth indigenous frontier.

Whakapapa moves on: Towards new partnerships

I wish now to outline some of the positive initiatives that are happening in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and to identify key features of these. In my observation, these positive systems are pushing the “indigenous frontiers” (Waitere-Ang and Johnston, 1999). They are largely operating outside of the statutory systems of child and family welfare, care and protection.

Maori social service providers working under the auspices of health, educational, church and justice authorities frequently develop services that are consistent with Maori holistic philosophy. This means that, as well as attending to the immunization of babies, for instance, Maori health workers (often informally or from their positions of authority as members of the whanau or community) will advocate for the housing needs of a teenage mother, facilitate her access to personal health services and benefit entitlements, provide personal counsel, link her with extended whanau and community groups who can provide social contact and support, encourage her participation in cultural activities, and teach her about the sacredness of her own whakapapa and that of her child. Recalling the dimensions of Pere's (1988; 1991) "Te Wheke" model, these workers are effectively providing sustenance for tinana, whanaungatanga, mana ake, mauri, wairuatanga, hinengaro, whatumanawa, and ha a kui ma a koro ma. This type of informal arrangement operates through the goodwill of workers, outside of official job descriptions. Maori in mainstream organizations, who are working in the connected, holistic and strength-based ways consistent with tikanga Maori, can run into conflict with management and colleagues as a result. Love (1999) discussed how Maori workers operating holistically within the mainstream individualistic organizations are identified as unprofessional, incompetent, having boundary issues and anger problems. However a number of Maori groups provide kaupapa Maori services, with management who utilize existing funding categories creatively to provide support for these ways of working.

Another site of the reclamation of rangatiratanga through use of tikanga Maori processes are the initiatives taken within Maori whanau, communities and marae,⁵¹ which rarely come to public attention, but which involve the utilization of Maori systems and

processes to address issues such as physical and sexual abuse within whanau. These processes often involve the use of whanau hui, and practical utilization of traditional concepts, such as those outlined in “Te Wheke” (Pere, 1988). They are typically initiated and led by whanau elders, often women, and they operate outside of State regulated systems. These processes involve whanau discussion and decision making and operate according to a tikanga framework. Its principal aims are to uphold the mana of whanau (which necessitates a focus on and building upon family strengths), and shame based rather than guilt based moderators of behaviour,⁵² which utilize powerful traditional processes based on wairua (spirit), whakapapa (connections) and utu (reciprocity) to promote balance, reconciliation and healing. Sometimes the consensus decision of the whanau is to approach statutory authorities. However, this decision is an outcome of the rangatiratanga or authority of the whanau and represents a mid-to-end-point rather than a beginning of the process. This model provides for whanau to enter into engagement with statutory bodies from a position derived from the authority of their own values, beliefs and decision making processes and which ensures whanau and hapu support is provided throughout the process.

Te Wero is a new kaupapa Maori programme targeting sex offenders in Maori communities. The programme aims to work with whanau and communities in a proactive manner, facilitating the institution of the above processes and providing access to appropriate therapeutic programmes for abusers and those who have been abused. The programme is currently negotiating the terms of its relationship with its mainstream sponsor. One of the issues to be addressed is that the requirements of the primary funding body for community based sex offender programmes (CYFs) are seen to

undermine the rangatiratanga principle and whanau empowerment philosophy of the kaupapa Maori programme. As a result, alternative sources of funding are being sought.

On a more formal level, the Lower Hutt Family Centre has developed a structure that incorporates three autonomous sections: Maori, Pakeha, and Pacific Peoples. The centre provides a working model of partnership within which culturally appropriate models of family therapy have developed, and protocols put in place, to protect the rights of each section to have an authoritative voice in relation to their own peoples.⁵³ The Family Centre has developed a therapeutic model known as “Just Therapy”. The model is based in tikanga (right, correct, appropriate and just process) and uses the three tenets of whakapapa (belonging), wairua and mana (sacredness), and rangatiratanga (liberation and authority).

The Lower Hutt Family Centre also has refused to be confined to the practice of family therapy. The Centre recognized that the process of family therapy, and its confidentiality, that applied kept stories of social disadvantage and oppression, locked within four walls. Under traditional Anglo-American family therapy models, all the workers could do was to alleviate the symptoms as much as possible and then send families out to the same conditions as before. The family Centre became involved in the active provision of community support, advocacy and political activity in an effort to address the issues external to families, which were creating and maintaining their problems.

The Family Centre recognized that community advocacy and political protest, while important, were not effectively getting the stories that families had to tell to the law and policy makers. The Centre created an independent social policy research unit,

involving all three sections. The social policy research unit engages in social policy research designed to highlight the effects of political and economic policies on families, and to provide strong research based arguments for social justice. Through the combined use of quantitative and qualitative research, the Centre has been instrumental in the introduction of a number of positive social policy changes.

Conclusion

Although there are some positive moves and individual success stories, the position of Maori as a group across a range of social indicators is uniformly negative. The place of Maori in negative social statistics is a direct result of the loss of resources⁵⁴ wrought through colonization.

Colonization, by definition, is an abusive process. It is a process designed to minimize the resources of the colonized group, stunting their ability to flourish, and to maximize the resources of the colonizing group. The preceding analysis of the whakapapa of statutory child and family services in Aotearoa/New Zealand tracked the colonization role of these services in the past and the present. However, statutory welfare services themselves exist within a wider colonial context which structures the power dynamics, ideologies and perceptions permeating social services. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, this broader context is influenced through consistently negative media portrayals of Maori, many of which depict Maori as incorrigibly savage or incompetent.⁵⁵ Such portrayals serve to reinforce racist stereotypes and undermine efforts by Maori to be seen as credible and capable thinkers, strategists and providers of services for our own people. The tragedy of this situation is that as statutory agencies and individuals try increasingly hard to save us from ourselves, Maori distrust and (justifiable) perceptions

of a punitive and controlling system grow. This, in turn, reinforces a “bunker” mentality that sees Maori whanau close ranks against the State welfare authorities. Consequently our people are seen as resistant to help and well-intentioned interventions. A second result is that we are increasingly identified as a problem group, and more resources are poured into helping to resolve “our problems”. Inevitably, these resources are used to maintain the dominance of existing systems, processes and the assumptions on which these are based, which is what the Maori are actively resisting.

Two possible solutions are apparent at this time. The first involves a true devolution of power and resources to Maori. This is based on the premise that, if Maori had control over resources, systems and structures, their resistance would be less, outcomes would be improved, and the enormous social, emotional and financial costs of propping up the existing system would be significantly reduced.

A second scenario would see a complete overhaul of existing child and family legislation, policies and practices. This would be a major shift in attitudes and perceptions among the creators and appliers of these mechanisms. This would entail large shifts in conceptions of relationships between the State and families.

In order to move towards truly positive and liberating models of child and family welfare services for Maori and/or all citizens, we need to clearly identify the pitfalls that have plagued their relationships thus far, as well as the gains that have been made. These include:

- The embedded assumptions of self-contained individualism that permeate our current legislation and policies need to be exposed and considered. We need to move from an exclusive focus on individuals, individual families and pathologies

to a focus on social conditions, social justice and family and community strengths.

Approaches based upon concepts ensembled selves provide possibilities for new attitudes, practices and processes.

- We need to explicitly acknowledge the ongoing impact of colonization, and the racism which supports it. Colonization and racism are often seen as historical issues. Yet they are very much alive in our country and elsewhere. In order to avoid collaborating in the modern forms of colonization and racism, we need to be able to recognize their evolving forms in contemporary contexts. We also need to work actively to remove the vestiges of colonial mentalities from our selves, our systems and our structures.
- In narrative family therapy practice, we recognize the value of insider knowledge, and the fact that families are experts on themselves; they are the ones who best know their own problems and can best identify their own solutions. Movement in this direction has been apparent in our current welfare system. However, recognition of family and community expertise must be accompanied by community empowerment manifested in the generation and ownership of solutions. This involves a big step away from the other key tenet of colonialism, the investment in the power of a single sovereignty.
- The tendency has been for State employees to be defined as State servants, whose role is to fulfill the functions prescribed by the state. An alternative is to **really** view children, families and communities as our customers. Maori currently represent a significant group of unhappy customers. As dissatisfied customers, the choice not to use the service (voluntarily at least) is often the first choice. If

the service was viewed as safe and supportive, rather than punitive and denigrating, the likelihood of Maori voluntarily accessing services at an early point would be significantly increased.

- A further issue is the need to understand the financial implications of continuing to operate welfare systems that consume large amounts of resources and frequently produce negative outcomes. The alternative of positive investment in communities would be more cost-effective. Considered the relatively youthful Maori population, such investments are particularly important. Our nation cannot afford to continue to incarcerate and marginalize Maori at the present rate.

Poroporoaki

Harakeke (the flax bush) is a key material in Maori society, providing the basis of many of our clothing, construction, artistic and medicinal materials. The centre shoot of the harakeke represents the mokopuna (child), the next pair of leaves embracing either side of the center shoot represents the parents and the outer leaves represents the grandparents and previous generations, who are there to nurture and protect the younger generations.

The centre shoot of the flax is the source of new growth and rejuvenation. It is the life source of the plant, which provides sustenance for the bell-bird that sings its song of welcome to each new day with joy and prosperity.



Hutia te rito o te harakeke

Kei hea ra te korimako e?

Ka ki mai koe

‘He aha te mea nui o te ao?’

Ka ki atu au

‘He tangata, He tangata, He tangata’



Pluck the centre of the flax

And where will the bell-bird be

You ask me,

‘What is the most important thing, in this world?’

I reply

‘It is people, It is life, It is everything’

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¹ While I use the terms “Maori” and “Maoritanga” throughout this paper, I acknowledge and support perspectives which see the use of an homogenizing framework, while convenient at times, as contradictory to iwi identities and tino rangatiratanga.

² Papatuanuku (Papa) refers to our Mother Earth

³ Genocide may be defined as “the systematic attempt to destroy a race or people” and ethnocide may be defined as “the systematic attempt to destroy completely the culture of a people” (Sluker, 1995). Both are characteristic of the cultural modification processes forced on tribal peoples by colonial governments around the world (Bodley, 1990). I have argued elsewhere that distinctions between genocide and ethnocide are moot, “as the destruction of a culture and ethnic characteristics effectively equate to the destruction of a people” (Love, 1999).

⁴ Consideration of the appropriate place of children in society was also based, of course, on class considerations.

⁵ A common colloquialism still heard sometimes today is that “children should be seen and not heard”.

⁶ See Mikaere, A. for a discussion on the consequences of settlers from a highly gender divided, patriarchal context interpreting and interacting with a non-patriarchal, communalistic Maori society.

⁷ Papakainga refers to home bases.

⁸ Several epidemics decimated Maori populations, with influenza and measles wreaking devastation.

⁹ The Waitangi Tribunal “Taranaki Report” (1996) details these events in the province of Taranaki.

¹⁰ The Superintendent of Wellington Province recorded that “The Maoris are dying out and nothing can save them. Our plain duty as good, compassionate colonists is to smooth their pillow. Then history will have nothing to reproach us with” (Buller, 1884, p.54, as cited in Pool, 1991, p.28).

¹¹ Maori were subject to compulsory state education, within which Maori language often banned and many, many Maori were strapped or beaten for speaking their mother tongue. See Edwards, M. (1990) for a personal account of this policy and the effects of it.

¹² Smith (1992, as cited in Waitere-Ang & Johnson, 1999) describes how “native schools” prepared Maori men and women for menial and physical labour.

¹³ Pakeha refers to white skinned New Zealanders.

¹⁴ The definition of Maori as used in census and other official statistics was a person of half or more Maori blood. As Maori “blood” became diluted, they would theoretically cease to exist as Maori. I have argued elsewhere that this and other “assimilationist” strategies are fundamentally genocidal in nature.

¹⁵ Statistics in this section are drawn from the New Zealand Department of Statistics website: www.statistics.govt.nz as at June, 2002.

¹⁶ This compares to 22.8 per cent of the total population.

¹⁷ For example, the fertility rate for Maori women at ages 15-19 is almost 4 times that of non-Maori and Maori women are almost twice as likely as non-Maori to have had five or more children. Fifty-three per cent of prison inmates were Maori in 2000, and Maori prison inmate numbers are forecast to grow by 59 per cent by 2013. Although some of the low incomes received by Maori may relate to over-representation amongst welfare beneficiaries and in low-paid occupations, Maori receive lower median incomes than non-Maori in similar occupations, and also have lower median incomes than non-Maori with similar levels of education. (Statistics New Zealand, 2002)

¹⁸ There were in fact at least two versions of the Treaty of Waitangi, one of which was in English language and which carried different meanings to the Maori language version. I concentrate here on the Maori language version as this version was signed by over 500 chiefs and is the version which should be recognized under the principle of *contra preferentum*.

¹⁹ This is consistent with Maori custom within which each iwi (tribe) has their own rangatiratanga (chieftainship, authority and responsibility) for their own people and resources. It was seen as proper that te iwi Pakeha (the white-skinned tribe), through their rangatira (or chief, in this case the Queen of England) should have authority over and take responsibility for their own.

²⁰ Rangatira here refers to chiefs.

²¹ This view of the Treaty of Waitangi emerged from an 1888 High Court decision by Prendergast, J. in which the Treaty was characterized as “a simple nullity”.

²² This principle can be interpreted in terms of participation through representation and consultation. This often means that a Maori person or perspective is included along with 10 or more non-Maori in consultation processes, with little weight given to the Maori voice. The notion of inclusion (participation) without power is examined further at a later point.

²³ The Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 and is composed of Maori and non-Maori members. It is charged with conducting hearings into, reporting on and making recommendations in regard to, alleged breaches of the **principles** of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Tribunal is empowered to accept claims made by any Maori person on an alleged Treaty breach either historical (from 1840) or contemporary.

²⁴ In 1996, the Waitangi Tribunal issued the first report into events in Taranaki, those pertaining to my own history, as described above. The Tribunal reviewed the events of 1840 to the present, including the scorched earth and bush scouring activities, destruction and burning of homes and villages, and human devastation. In its report, the Waitangi Tribunal described some of the actions taken by colonial forces and governments against Taranaki Maori as constituting “a holocaust”. The use of this term created a furore amongst politicians, the media and a non-Maori public eager to deny that any such thing could have taken place. Numbers of non-Maori and the media expressed scorn for the notion that anything that could have happened to Maori in this country could possibly be seen to constitute a “holocaust”. Media reported that Maori members of Parliament were “banned” from using the “H” word, defenders of the use of the word in relation to Maori were vilified, and the use of the term was effectively excluded from public discourse. This despite the fact that the events referred to by the Tribunal undeniably met dictionary definitions of a holocaust.

²⁵ Tamariki is a term for children

²⁶ This may relate to the policies referred to previously which were designed to render ethnicity invisible and replace it with a “one people” philosophy, a philosophy related in turn to expectations that Maori were facing extinction and to mechanisms that were designed to eliminate Maori from statistical existence See Love (1999) for an elaboration on the transformation of expectations of extinction to mechanisms designed to statistically eliminate Maori presence.

²⁷ The injunction to “watch out” is used to remind us to listen, to behave well and to be careful.

²⁸ Pakeha is the term used to refer to white skinned New Zealanders

²⁹ Maori culture, worldview, way of being. However I refer to the previously cited comments of Rangihau (1992), and to footnote 1.

³⁰ The extremely negative reaction of Pakeha politicians to Moana Jackson’s “Report on Maori and the Criminal Justice System” (which openly proposed recognition and support for a separate Maori justice system) mitigated against this latter hope (see Love, 1999).

³¹ As a reminder; “whanau” refers to extended family; “hapu” to sub-tribal groups of extended families who share common genealogy; and “iwi” refers to tribes composed of hapu groups with an eponymous ancestor.

³² Literally translated as “The Octopus: the well-being of the family”.

³³ The expression of emotion referred to here is not necessarily, or even primarily, verbal expression. Western practitioners often require people to “describe” their emotions in words, or to “talk about what they are feeling”. This can serve to negate the whatumanawa by reducing that which may be more profound than words can express, to the level of cognitively mediated sentence structures.

³⁴ I have discussed the nature of “tikanga” as a basis of Maori law and decision-making processes in more detail elsewhere (Love, 2000).

³⁵ This includes shared responsibilities across genders and age groups. Older siblings participate in care of younger children, and senior family members (rather than parents) had/have primary decision-making rights and responsibilities, for younger whanau members.

³⁶ It is important to distinguish between Maori forums, in which tikanga, utu and related systems and meanings can have full expression; and those forums that are cloaked in aspects of Maori culture and form, but cannot be classified as kaupapa Maori, or Maori centred.

³⁷ According to Sampson, in order to be heard, “serviceable others...must use the approved forms of the dominant groups...merely having a voice is not sufficient if that voice must speak in a register that is alien to its own specificity, and in doing so loses its own desires and interest. While having a voice is preferable to being held silent, in so far as that voice is not reflecting one’s own interests, desires and experiences, then one may speak, but only to further the dominant groups’ agenda” (Sampson, 1993, p.10-11).

³⁸ Churchill (1996, p.279) lists the domains of “sociology, theology, psychology,...archaeology, geography, astronomy” and so on, as illustrating the compartmentalization of knowledge. I would add the departmentalization of social welfare, justice, education, health as examples of the departmentalization of social systemic spheres.

³⁹ Churchill (1996, p.280) lists the organizational spheres of “church, state, business, education, art” as examples of these delineations.

⁴⁰ Churchill further proposes that “the system of Eurosupremacist domination depends for its continued maintenance and expansion, even its survival, upon the reproduction of its own intellectual paradigm –its approved way of thinking, seeing, understanding, being – to the exclusion of all others” (ibid, p.281).

⁴¹ Tribally based social services.

⁴² Whanau rangatiratanga here refers to the authority and decision making powers of extended family groups.

⁴³ Judges have been variable in their attitudes to the appointment of “lay advocates” on cultural grounds, some rarely if ever consider them to be necessary, some appoint lay advocates but may not give due weight to their submissions (possibly because of limited understandings of the cultural meanings that they provide), and the fact that the appointment of such advocates is additional to the core process in Family Courts means that they represent an “added extra cost”, rather than an integral component.

⁴⁴ DSW is the Department of Social Welfare, which has undergone several transformations and is now known as “Child, Youth and Family” service (CYFs). The service is still colloquially known as “the Welfare” or “DSW” in some Maori circles.

⁴⁵ IA refers here to Iwi Authorities. This article was written before amendments to the Act which resulted in a renaming and re-definition of Iwi Authority Social Services (IA’s) to “Iwi Social Services”.

⁴⁶ That is a notification of a risk or occurrence of abuse, neglect or risk.

⁴⁷ The statutory agency responsible for child care and protection in Aotearoa/New Zealand has undergone several nominal changes, the most recent being a change in name from Children and Young Persons Service (CYPS) to Children, Young Persons and their Families Agency (CYPFA), and then Child, Youth and Family Service (CYFS).

⁴⁸ For instance the National protocol between the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand School Trustees Association and the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service (1996) requires school principals to ensure notification to NZCYPS or the police if abuse of a child or young person is disclosed or suspected.

⁴⁹ By way of example, state social workers (including Maori) are required to have professional supervision. Maori workers may have cultural supervision in addition. Cultural supervision is viewed as an adjunct, an extra support for Maori workers, as opposed to a fully integrated alternative. The “professional supervision” remains central.

⁵⁰ Tikanga Maori here refers to right, correct, appropriate and just ways of acting as defined within a Maori cultural framework.

⁵¹ Marae are the bastions of rangatiratanga. They are usually comprised of land and a building or buildings and provide communal centres which operate in the main according to tikanga Maori.

⁵² There are no words in Maori language that equate to the English language expressions, “sorry” or “thank you”. Rather it is practical demonstrations of reciprocity, rebalancing and processes of restoration across a number of dimensions that rule Maori processes.

⁵³ In the case of culturally mixed families, negotiation takes place; but if the relationships are between Pakeha and Maori participants, Maori voices have authority in recognition of the principles of social justice and rangatiratanga.

⁵⁴ The resources referred to here include physical, spiritual, emotional and community or people resources as outlined, for example in model, Te Wheke (Pere, 1988; 1991).

⁵⁵ The arena that is currently exempt from these depictions is the sporting arena, where Maori are allowed to be “heroes”.

SOCIAL WORK



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