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# Across the Colonial Divide: Conversations About Evaluation in Indigenous Contexts

**Hayley Marama Cavino**[1,2]

## Abstract

This essay engages questions of evaluator role and indigenous peoples participation in evaluation within colonial and decolonization contexts. Specifically, I critique the Western emphasis on cultural competence and contrast the utility of 'mainstream' evaluation approaches alongside three indigenous inquiry models (Te Kotahitanga, Whakawhanaungatanga, and He Taniko) as utilized by/with indigenous Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Using practical examples of evaluation projects conducted with and by Maori, the article highlights the very different 'evaluation conversations' happening amongst 'mainstream' practitioners—where the focus is on difference, competency, and issues of access—relative to those occurring amongst indigenous evaluators and communities—where evaluation praxis is framed within broader struggles for sovereignty and self-determination. By placing these paradigms in conversation with each other, I highlight the ways in which evaluation approaches that engage indigenous people and places are always representative of particular standpoints. This is because evaluation is unavoidably and simultaneous in dialog with the prevailing contexts of colonization and decolonization vis-a-vis the location and moment in which it occurs. The essay foregrounds the ways in which 'mainstream' evaluation's preoccupation with issues of cultural competency fails to fully address the needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples. In contrast, the realization of Maori capacity to meet our evaluation needs as *Maori*, and as represented in the ongoing development and use of our own approaches and models, not only facilitates a more culturally meaningful evaluation process but also concurrently constitutes an expression of our sovereignty and agency.

## Keywords

Kaupapa Maori research, indigenous evaluation, cultural competency, evaluator praxis

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## Introduction

This essay emerged from a period of reflection on my practice as a program evaluator in two different contexts: *Aotearoa*/New Zealand and New York. Specifically, my recent work in the United States with marginalized populations (especially with native, immigrant, and African American groups) and the complexities encountered due to my location "outside" the groups I interacted with, as well as my recollections of practice as an "inside" evaluator in Aotearoa/New Zealand (and the mistakes I frequently made in both locales), have prompted me to consider the conditions under which it is possible (or not) for "differently located others" to work ethically across cultural borders. In particular, I am interested in the questions of who might best conduct evaluations with indigenous peoples and under what conditions. In addition, how do particular orientations to evaluation reflect historical and contemporary redeployments and/or resistances to colonial incursions into and on indigenous sovereign spaces, and how do these orientations relate to inquiry grounded in indigenous ways of knowing and doing?

These questions will be examined with reference to the practice of evaluation with indigenous (primarily *Maori*[1]) participants in Aotearoa/New Zealand by focusing on two issues: (1) access to *Te Ao Maori* (to include engagement of/with indigenous participants) and (2) utilization by Maori of evaluative models organic and particular to indigenous worlds. Both issues have ramifications for evaluator practice, especially with regard to evaluator role, ownership of knowledge produced/intellectual property, and the unavoidable possibility (I believe) that some borders are or should be impermeable.

This essay attempts to respond to the relative dearth of information regarding the practice of evaluation in culturally diverse contexts. Rather than dealing with specific methods, it will examine some of the underlying principles through which "Maori evaluation" has been framed in Aotearoa/New Zealand, as well as briefly reviewing examples of Maori models of inquiry that have been used in research and evaluative projects. Though mainstream discussion is often framed in ways that prioritize responsible access to indigene/indigenous settings, I believe this discourse is undergirded by questions about who can or cannot work across borders. As such, the first question posed concerns who can appropriately do evaluation with indigenous peoples (McClean, Berg, & Roche, 1997) and what information is available that might guide their practice. Here, I pay attention to concerns illuminated by indigenous audiences when the question of "outsider" access to indigenous communities is the focus. Of central importance are questions about the degree to which evaluation practice might be regarded as a form of colonization when not done appropriately (McClean et al., 1997; Porsanger, 2004; Smith, 1999) and the subsequent use of this assertion to argue that most forms of "outsider" evaluation are not appropriate (Kawakami, Aton, Cram, Lai, & Porima, 2008; Smith, 1999). The "elephant in the room" is that indigenous peoples might be positioned to adopt a posture of prohibition with regard to nonindigenous evaluation paradigms and evaluator work in indigenous contexts. When the conversation is engaged from an indigenous perspective, evaluator competency is not the primary focus; rather, it is evaluation being reframed as a performance of power within which lies the potential for the realization of indigenous sovereignty.

## Evaluation in Context: Mapping Difference in Aotearoa/New Zealand

This article addresses evaluation as it relates to Maori in schools within Aotearoa/New Zealand. Specifically, Maori students have historically been educated primarily in *Pakeha* settings, especially prior to the development of parallel Maori-medium systems in the 1980s. Even now, most Maori youth are educated in public, mainstream systems, with these systems representing a "civilizing" apparatus of the colonial nation-state (Johnson, 1998; Jones & Jenkins, 2008; Simon and Smith, 2001; Smith, 1999).

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Educational evaluations in Aotearoa/New Zealand must, as a matter of course, consider the implications of programming, approaches, and projects for Maori. Not only is this a practical concern given the high degree of integration vis-à-vis Maori students in public schools, it is a legislative mandate as per the Treaty of *Waitangi*. The ongoing colonial context within which educational programs occur is also a matter of considerable weight for evaluators in terms of their role as "ethnic subjects," their choice of method and praxis, and the analysis they bring to the work. Against this background, it is important to consider the responses developed to address cultural difference within the profession of evaluation, the nation-state of Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Te Ao Maori. This exploration begins with the problem of access in culturally "different" communities and concludes with an analysis of the limitations of focusing on access and appropriateness.

In its *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (2004) and the more recent *Public Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation* (2011), the American Evaluation Association (AEA) establishes guidelines for competent practice, including the following:

> Cultural competence would be reflected in evaluators seeking awareness of their own culturally-based assumptions, their understanding of the worldviews of culturally-different participants and stakeholders in the evaluation, and the use of appropriate evaluation strategies and skills in working with culturally different groups. Diversity may be in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economics or other factors pertinent to the evaluation context. (AEA, 2004, p. 2)

This statement aligns closely with guidelines for cultural safety[2] generated by a number of professional organizations within Aotearoa/New Zealand. Many (though by no means all) current evaluators practicing in Aotearoa/New Zealand came to the profession through education in psychology. As such, the cultural safety standards developed through the New Zealand Psychologists Board have been particularly instructive. The New Zealand Psychologists Board notes: "Competence is variously defined, and in this context, it involves the possession and demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the level of performance" (2006, p. 3). Taking direction from the earlier work of the New Zealand Nursing Council (Ramsden, 1992), the Board defined cultural safety as "Effective education and practice as applied to a person, family or group from another culture, and as determined by that person, family or group" (2005, p. 6). It included ethnic origin in its definition of culture. In both the United States and Aotearoa/New Zealand, competency/safety guidelines seem to focus on access to indigenous participant subjects, programs, and/or knowledge systems (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998; New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2005, 2006; Smith, 1990; Weaver, Nikora, & Moeke-Pickering, 1999).

Indigenous evaluators have noted that evaluation research must first and foremost be accountable to indigenous communities (Kahakalau, 2004; Kawakami et al., 2008; Smith, 1999; Te Awekotuku, 1999) and work within indigenous research frameworks that deploy indigenous methodologies and initiate social action for the benefit of indigenous peoples (Cram, Pihama, Jenkins, & Karehana, 2001; Forster, 2007; Gray-Sharp, 2007; Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998; Kahakalau, 2004; Smith, 1999). The evaluation research *process* is privileged over the *product* in these contexts (Gready, 2008).

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, Maori have also developed their own frameworks of competency and safety, namely, in the application of the concept *kawa whakaruruhau* to helping, investigative, research, and evaluative contexts involving Maori. Kawa whakaruruhau emerged from the pioneering work of Irihapeti Ramsden and the New Zealand Nursing Organization in the late 1980s (Jungersen, 2002). Kawa whakarurhau extends beyond cultural safety and refers to a more encompassing, "sheltering" process that includes evaluator responsibility for spiritual nurturing (Walker, 1996) and protection of Maori (Jungersen, 2002). Whakaruruhau is specific to Maori norms and values and requires that analysis of programming be historically, socially, economically, and politically contextualized; that outcomes

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are optimal when partnership with Maori occurs and projects are developed collaboratively; and that the professions have a role in enhancing the delivery of services to Maori (New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2005).

This framework developed out of a recognition that the relative scarcity of qualified Maori nurses meant that more needed to be done to support Pakeha nurses to practice in culturally responsive ways (Cunningham & Finlay, 2008; Jungersen, 2002). In this regard, it might be said that the model was (at least in part) designed utilizing a "by Maori, for Pakeha" perspective (the obvious potential benefits to Maori patients notwithstanding) because it was developed by Maori practitioners to guide Pakeha practice. Kawa whakaruruhau became visible and animated within specific evaluative contexts in Aotearoa/New Zealand at a time when there were relatively few Maori in the professions. As a model, it was most specifically deployed (though by no means exclusively) to assist Pakeha in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to serve Maori. Perhaps unsurprisingly, as more Maori became qualified at the post-high school level in the 1990s and into the 2000s, the focus shifted toward ensuring that Maori were positioned to work with other Maori (Jungersen, 2002). This change had implications for Pakeha practitioners in any number of disciplines including the helping professions (e.g., nursing, see Cunningham & Finlay, 2008) and the academy, where Pakeha researchers were cited as being thrown into a "Pakeha paralysis" over perceived prohibitions on engaging Maori subjects. In this latter case, cultural safety training was cited as a potential remedy, as if competence were the primary "problem" to be overcome (see Tolich, 2002). The Aotearoa/New Zealand experience illuminates how cultural safety frameworks (including kawa whakaruruhau) often exist in a somewhat parasitic relationship with prevailing political and cultural climates indicative of colonial pasts and contemporary disproportionalities and deprivations. The need to consider cultural safety becomes most pertinent in neocolonial states (Ramsden, 1993) when indigenous people are rendered unable to meet their own research and other needs and are reliant on differently located, relatively privileged others for assistance.

To be sure, kawa whakaruruhau also spoke specifically to mandates that continue to guide research involving Maori—the Treaty of Waitangi and *Kaupapa Maori* approaches being but two examples. With regard to the state, research (including evaluation) is often actualized with reference to the Treaty of Waitangi[3] (particularly, though not exclusively, by researchers positioned as Pakeha), while within Maori contexts the umbrella framework of Kaupapa Maori research frequently guides inquiry. These processes are also in dialog with each other and should not be regarded as mutually exclusive (Bishop, 1999; Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998; Smith, 1999).

Kaupapa Maori approaches include the development and implementation of a distinctly Maori epistemology that includes theoretical, philosophical, and methodological components generating a cohesive and diverse range of models and pedagogies (Bishop, 1999; Gray-Sharp, 2007; Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998; Smith, 1999).

> [Kaupapa Maori] is the discursive practice ... that positions researchers in such a way as to operationalise self-determination (agentic positioning and behaviour) for research participants. This is because the cultural aspirations, understandings and practices of Maori people implement and organise the research process. Further, in the research issues of power, initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation, and accountability are addressed and understood in practice by practitioners of Kaupapa Maori research through the development of a participatory mode of consciousness. (Bishop, 1999)

In undertaking Kaupapa Maori approaches, the role of the evaluator is pushed beyond the collaboration and personal investment inherent in most constructions of cultural competence/safety. Kaupapa Maori research is a "ground up" process (Forster, 2007) whereby the concepts of *utu* and *aroha* (Bishop, 1999; Jones, Crengle, & McCreanor, 2006; McClean et al., 1997; Smith, 1999) or reciprocity/mutuality and caring/love guide practice.

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The research itself is driven by the participants in terms of setting the research questions, the design of the work, the undertaking of the work that had to be done, the distribution of rewards, the access to research findings, accountability, and the control over the distribution of the knowledge (Bishop, 1998, p. 205).

The terms of the exchange are delineated and controlled by the participants and reflect their aspirations. It is their *tino rangatiratanga*/self-determining agency that is privileged (Bishop, 1998, 1999; Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998; Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002).

On a practical level, the following considerations can be said to guide evaluators practicing within Kaupapa Maori frameworks: Maori should be significant participants; Maori should make up all of the research team; Maori analysis undertaken should produce Maori and mainstream knowledge; knowledge produced should meet expectations and quality standards set by Maori; and Maori should have control of the evaluation process (Te Awekotuku, 1999; Te Puni Kokiri, 1999). Self-determining and participant-driven control of the evaluation process represents a mode of critical inquiry that begins with the concerns and aspirations of indigenous peoples (Bishop, 1998; Cram et al., 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998; Pihama et al., 2002; Te Awekotuku, 1999; Te Puni Kokiri, 1999). Ownership and control are critical for Maori, in particular because of their responsibility for protecting knowledge or *taonga tuku iho* (Bishop, 1998, 2008; Cram et al., 2001; Matthew & Jenkins, 1999; Porsanger, 2004). *Whanau* (extended family/kinship groups) are collectively responsible for this knowledge and as such research procedures are unlikely to move forward without collective approval and consent (Bishop, 1999, 2008; Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 1999).

> Respect entails the recognition of indigenous groups as sovereign entities and respect for their cultural knowledge and traditions. Control affirms indigenous control over involvement of indigenous groups in research processes and relates to the ability of indigenous groups to control the extent of their participation in research processes and negotiate what is acceptable. Reciprocity involves ensuring there are mutual benefits and that they are realised within indigenous groups in an equitable manner. (p. 62)

However, it is named, the assertion of intellectual property rights and ownership by stakeholders demands a response from the evaluator—this amounts to a reconceptualization of the meaning of expertise and the role of the evaluator within the evaluation profession.

Treaties also operate as pedagogical guides for evaluators working with indigenous peoples (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Hudson & Russell, 2009; New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2006; Smith, 1999; Te Puni Kokiri, 1999). Currently engaged in developing competency standards specific to Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (2011) specifically references the principles and obligations of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. The Treaty of Waitangi sets out the parameters of engagement between Maori and Pakeha and thus grounds research and evaluation practice, especially that sponsored by the nation-state. The following principles are embedded in the document and are extrapolated here with regard to their significance for evaluation: *Participation*/Tino rangatiratanga enables Maori self-determination and recognizes the right of Maori to manage their owns interests, affirms the right to development, and supports equitable access to and control of the evaluation process at all levels (as constituents, evaluators, and funders); *Partnership* involves working together with Maori as partners with the mutual aim of improving outcomes for Maori via respect for knowledge and traditions including collective rights, data, culture, practices, and language; and *Protection* involves recognition that knowledge is a *taonga* (something treasured or prized) and that there is a responsibility to protect it (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998; Hudson & Russell, 2009; New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2005).

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## *Mainstream Evaluation Conversations: Responding to Culture as "A Difference That Counts"*

There are a number of mainstream approaches to evaluation that lend themselves to a praxis that is cognizant of both cultural and colonial contexts, including utilization-focused evaluation (Patton, 1997), the empowerment evaluation model (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005), and Greene's (1997) assertion that evaluation is a process of advocacy. These models draw attention to the purpose of the evaluation, make visible who controls it, and are conscious of who the evaluator is relative to stakeholders (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005). They also advocate the need to privilege community involvement in the process (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005), ensure the usefulness of the work to the community (Patton, 1997), and prioritize the work's validity to stakeholders who are culturally different (Kirkhart, 1995). Indeed, evaluators have noted that there is much that remains to be done in this domain.

There is an obvious need for more available reports and literature on examples of culturally competent evaluation theory and practice. Again, both the association and the practitioners should take part in this together. In highlighting exemplary practices, literature reviews, and ethical dilemmas, one should see how the issues of cultural competence are addressed as an explicit criterion rather than an unspoken expectation (SenGupta, Hopson, & Thompson-Robinson, 2004).

The recent AEA Public Statement on Cultural Competence (2011) notes the need to match evaluation models and theory to cultural context, though the focus is still on issues of evaluator competence oriented to facilitating access to indigenous people, places, and knowledges (see also Grenier, 1998 for examples of this approach). Similar to guidelines for inquiry based on the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, most mainstream professional organizations do not address utilization of evaluative models located "outside" the Western academy beyond intimating that nonindigenous researchers need to be familiar with them if they are to practice successfully. How might further attention to these latter models constitute a move to decolonize Western science and the academy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Smith, 1999)? And how might use of these models depend on the particular cultural location of the evaluator? The AEA Statement notes "An evaluator who is well prepared to work with a particular community is not necessarily competent in another" (2011, p. 1), but what can "preparation" really mean in complex colonial contexts and how might this be linked to the "who and how" of evaluation in indigenous spaces?

## *Indigenous Evaluation Conversations: Talking (and Taking) Back*

Maori researchers and evaluators have been quick to critique the development of cultural competency standards, especially because of the implications for access to protected knowledge, grievances with regard to ownership of knowledge (Smith, 1999; Te Awekotuku, 1999; Walker, 1996), and ongoing targeting of evaluation projects and participants as subjects available for "improvement" or "change" (Smith, 1990). The use of nonindigenous models in indigenous contexts has also been explicitly criticized:

> Shared histories of "discovery" and colonization have made us wary and weary of evaluation practices that disregard indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, which we absolutely know are valid. Even though we have been marginalized within our lands, we remain sovereign and insist on the right to develop our own evaluation methodology ... evaluations of projects in indigenous communities must (a) be viewed and implemented in the context of a specific place, time, community, and history; (b) promote and practice an indigenous worldview; and (c) facilitate collaborations that embrace both cultural and academic perspectives. (Kawakami et al., 2008, p. 319)

Most of the mainstream models and guidelines that I have discussed acknowledge cultural difference as an important matter relative not only with respect to the perceived validity of an evaluation but

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also to evaluator work. Indeed, they note that nonindigenous or Pakeha researchers need to bring particular expertise to their work with differently located "others." Although this approach may be useful or at least preferable to silence and a lack of visibility surrounding engagements across difference, it represents a "one-way" approach to inquiry that neglects vital and appropriate models currently used within indigenous worlds.

In colonized spaces, a focus on evaluation as practiced from "within" indigenous communities represents both a "talking back" to the professions and a challenge to the hegemony that has dominated the questions of who gets to practice evaluation (and who does not), and who gets to access indigenous peoples and knowledge. Accordingly, what follows is an exploration of three examples of "flax-roots" inquiry models, all of which are organically located within Te Ao Maori and used by indigenous researchers in Maori contexts.

The three models are *Te Kotahitanga*, *Whakawhanaungatanga*, and *He Taniko*. The description of each model is followed by a vignette that ties the approach to a specific evaluation, illustrating how these models provide advantages over more mainstream approaches when used in Maori contexts. They are creative and artistic approaches to evaluation that can enhance the validity of evaluation in indigenous contexts (Orlandi, 1992), and in exploring them I seek to push beyond the prevailing discourse toward engagement with models sourced *within* indigenous worlds. While aspects of these models (and in some cases the model in its entirety) have been "recovered" and used by Maori evaluators since at least the early 1990s, they have not yet been deployed consistently in evaluations conducted by/with/for Maori. The reasons are numerous and include a lack of knowledge of the models by some Maori evaluators (most likely a result of assimilatory education systems) and, at times, the constraints placed upon us by state funding and accountability agencies. That said, the promotion of their use is not only a matter of practical utility (i.e., conducting evaluation in a culturally appropriate way) but is also one of expressing Maori sovereignty.

The Maori concepts of *whakapapa* and *tikanga* are relevant to the discussion of these models. Whakapapa, or genealogy, is central, both in terms of the evaluator's familial and cultural position—"Where do they come from? Who are they? Do we have any connections to them? Can we trust them with this knowledge?" (Matthew & Jenkins, 1999, p. 339)—and the methodological choices made. Whakapapa is actualized through recitation of one's genealogy (Maaka, 2004) and essentially governs the issue of access to Maori communities from a Maori perspective (Forster, 2007).

Tikanga, the Maori way or method, also guides appropriate practice (Barnes, 2009; Jones et al., 2006). Evaluation is only authoritative when the appropriate kawa (cultural protocols) have been followed at all stages, to include evaluation design, data collection, reporting, and utilization (Bishop, 1998; Cram et al., 2001; Walker, 1996). The presence of appropriate leadership, specifically the process of rangatiratanga through the support and active engagement of *kaumatua*/elders, is considered an integral part of tikanga as it facilitates access and the forward momentum of evaluative projects (Forster, 1997; Moeke-Pickering et al., 2006). Importantly, a tikanga approach to evaluation research is an inherently Maori approach, based on Maori philosophy. It is not an approach that maintains its validity when appropriated into Western research paradigms (Jones et al., 2006).

The first indigenous model examined is Te Kotahitanga. Kotahitanga refers to a common vision, goal, or outcome collaboratively shared. Bishop (2008) summarizes the following core principles of Te Kotahitanga as actualized within education:

*Manaakitanga:* building and nurturing a supportive and loving environment (see also Cram et al., 2001; Jones et al., 2006; McClean et al., 1997).

*Mana motuhake:* development of personal or group identity (see Jones et al., 2006).

*Whakapiringatanga:* delineation of roles and responsibilities in order to achieve individual and group outcomes.

*Wananga:* forums with dynamic sharing of knowledge.

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*Ako:* culturally preferred reciprocal interactions and pedagogy (see Cram et al., 2001; Pihama et al., 2002).

Te Kotahitanga, when utilized as a model for evaluation, requires more of the evaluator than might typically be expected in mainstream settings. Here, the tasks are not necessarily confined to inquiry about a specific program—its processes and outcomes—but may extend into "new territory." I interpret Te Kotahitanga as having the following possible implications, which are by no means exhaustive: the inclusion of significant preparatory work and prolonged and ongoing experience in the setting (manaakitanga), explicit membership in stakeholder groups and the promotion of self-determining processes for groups for whom this has been a struggle (mana motuhake), task-sharing and egalitarian management of and compensation for evaluation work (whakapiringatanga), positionalities that place Maori stakeholders in the role of expert while concurrently locating the evaluator as learner (wananga), and fluency in language and tikanga as part of the educative and evaluative process (ako). In mainstream evaluation circles, the breadth and scope of this work and its extension beyond the inner workings of the program under study might be referred to (either despairingly or disparagingly) as scope creep—but in Te Ao Maori, it represents a commitment to honoring Maori knowledges and processes.

Vignette 1: Process Evaluation of a Public Health Issue

This evaluation was facilitated through a Maori research unit at a large urban university. The work aimed to engage the issue of drug and alcohol use among Maori youth by bringing together Maori service providers from around the country to share strategies, network, and engage in collaborative planning. The process evaluation documented and supported these efforts—reporting on progress, facilitating sharing processes, and providing logistical support. The approach taken was representative of a Te Kotahitanga model of evaluation, for example: The participants unified in pursuit of a particular kaupapa (in this case to address the issue of youth drug and alcohol use in Maori communities), the evaluator role "blurred" to include significant facilitation of and participation in the project, and the participants operated as experts in project interactions—sharing their knowledge with a university-based evaluation team whose primary role became to support the facilitation of the knowledge production process (e.g., through convening wananga at local urban marae and through hosting a project website) and the reporting on the same. The integration of the university team into a cohort of community-based providers and the ongoing enactment of the shared and common kaupapa emerging from the group would not have been possible had the evaluators adopted a posture of detachment and/or a role primarily oriented to judgment and decision making, as is typical in many mainstream evaluation processes.

Helen Wihongi (n.d.) delineates and expands on a whakapapa-based approach in her work on Whakawhanaungatanga, the second inquiry model, as the basis for Kaupapa Maori research:

> Within the context of my research, whanaungatanga referred to the whanau-like relationships that existed between my research whanau, the research participants and myself based on a common kaupapa (my research topic) and the kinship connections to people through a common ancestor. In both these cases the relationships that existed facilitated the research process and addressed issues of self-determination. (p. 2/3)

Though not specifically an evaluation model, the relational and discursive processes outlined here clearly position whakawhanaungatanga as an approach that has utility in Maori evaluation contexts. During the data collection phase of the evaluation, whakapapa/genealogical connections are made between participants (to include evaluators) and all behave in ways reflective of the protocol of the specific *iwi*/tribes represented (with particular deference to those whose geographic spaces are the site of the work). During analysis, *runanga* or *whanau hui* are called to clarify and discuss the

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developing findings, and at the dissemination stage, the whanau/runanga participants make decisions on what information will be shared and how.

Thus, the whakawhanaungatanga model reflects a clear shift (and perhaps challenge) to mainstream evaluation practice, especially with regard to eliciting information and establishing rapport with stakeholders. *Whakawhanangatanga* requires time and space for relationships to develop (Jones et al., 2006), which also challenges predetermined funder and accountability frameworks that may be imposed by "outside" stakeholders. In addition, the relationship-building process represented by whakawhanaungatanga may or may not bar nonindigenous evaluators from participation (McClean et al., 1997; Porsanger, 2004).

Vignette 2: Process/Summative Evaluation With Iwi Health Provider

This evaluation was funded by a government department and was conducted by the sole Maori evaluator in a private evaluation research company located in a large urban center. As part of the evaluation, the Maori evaluator engaged Maori health providers, including marae-based health providers in the Far North region of Aotearoa. The process of whakawhanaungatanga began with a welcome to the marae space in accordance with the kawa/processes of the local people. During the evaluation, I also lived with and among the various whanau engaged in providing services on a 24/7 basis. Their ability to host me depended, in part, on my ability to articulate who I was—to include who my people are, where I come from, and my tribal connections. Throughout my time with them our relationship developed so that I was integrated into the day-to-day processes of the program and the whanau in accordance with the degree to which the whanau adjudicated me as someone "known" to them. The tangata whenua (i.e., the host participants) set the agenda for our interactions but also made space to ensure that I was able to consider and reflect on program processes. Whakawhanaungatanga took on a particular significance in this context because I primarily affiliate with tribes in the Central North Island region so, although I am Maori, I am still considered a "visitor" in contexts where I cannot link to local people through a common ancestor.[4] Whakawhanaungatanga became a critical tool that enabled the participating whanau to make judgments about the degree to which they could safely participate with me in the evaluation. Because I became "known" to them, I also became accountable in a deeper way—insofar as I represented my own whanau and my people. The quality and richness of the data gained through this evaluative experience may not have been available to a practitioner not prepared to do the work involved in engaging with the whanau in culturally specific ways (it is also possible that an evaluator from the participating whanau may have had access to protected whanau-specific knowledge and outcomes that may have been significant to the evaluation).

He Taniko, the third and final model discussed here, is a distinctly female framework based in the world of weaving—a craft distinguished as the province of Maori women (Gray-Sharp, 2007). He Taniko utilizes a weaving technique, bringing into conversation multiple strands. Figuratively, He Taniko invokes not only a weaving together of ideas and information but also a process of "bordering" that might be likened to drawing conclusions (Te Awekotuku, 1999). It is a creative process, unique to the Maori world, and has particular applications as an analytical tool for research and evaluation. The model is also relevant to evaluation because it seeks to elevate the voices of Maori women.

> [Taniko] explains and manifests in a very elegant way the metaphor of knowledge, the metaphor of gathering strands, the metaphor of creating and lending and ultimately, producing something of beauty, of colour, of impact. (Te Awekotuku, 1999, p. 7)

In practice, He Taniko is described as "a deductive public participation evaluation tool" (Gray-Sharp, 2007, p. 40). The inquiry process is managed via organized peer groups that engage in

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problem definition, consultation, decision, and implementation. Attention is paid to context through the invocation of *Te Ao Tawhito* (the historical realm), such that work is conducted with reference to the social structures of whanau and *marae*. *Te Ao Hou* (the contemporary realm) recognizes the impact of colonization and its importance in analysis of processes and outcomes. There is a recognition of the issue of silence and voice and the question of who has a mandate to speak as part of inquiry processes. Another thread is *Te Ao Marama*, which addresses barriers to development and aspirations of the people, particularly (in the context of He Taniko) Maori women and children. This strand is emancipatory insofar as it acknowledges the need for the positionalities and experiences of Maori women to be foregrounded (*Mana Wahine Maori*) (Gray-Sharp, 2007).

Vignette 3: Needs Assessment Engaging Young Urban Maori Women

This evaluation was facilitated through the local council in a moderate sized city with a large Maori population. The author was contracted as part of a team to conduct a series of focus groups with young, predominantly Maori women. The inquiry was initiated in consultation with Maori—and there was considerable space for the women involved to set the parameters of the research engagement with regard to discussing their needs, challenges, and aspirations. The needs assessment incorporated aspects of a He Taniko design, particularly due to the depth and breadth of issues engaged and synthesized as part of the collaborative analysis. The young women discussed, among other issues, the development of recreation and well-being services to meet their needs, personal safety, teenage pregnancy, privacy and supervision, employment, alcohol/tobacco/drug issues, and lack of opportunities. For many of these women, it was the first time someone had acknowledged their expertise regarding issues concerning and impacting them. The evaluation team conducted discussions with the women that also elicited their analysis of the causes and meanings they made of these issues—allowing them to reflect on their quality of life in the contemporary moment (Te Ao Hou) in ways that also referenced structures of family, culture, and community support (Te Ao Tawhito). The women also actively participated in the development of services to serve their needs (Te Ao Marama). Through the weaving of the *purakau* (stories) shared by the participating wahine, we focused on highlighting their needs in our representation of their analysis and recommendations. He Taniko has particular utility for organizations and groups who have the autonomy to commission their own evaluation research, because it is able to accommodate "framing from within" the community and embrace a variety of issues simultaneously.

## *Across the Colonial Divide: Evaluation Paradigms in Conversation*

Common to the Maori models described above, and indeed to any number of indigenous models, is an understanding of the socio-historical-cultural context in which evaluation occurs. Each of the models is aligned with the broader principles of Kaupapa Maori, and to whakapapa- and tikanga-based approaches to inquiry. The core considerations include control and ownership, meeting indigenous needs and aspirations, carrying out inquiry within indigenous worldviews, and the prerogative to make a positive difference. These considerations are likely to position indigenous approaches in opposition to dominant cultural norms and practices, and further, when applied specifically to evaluation—raise serious questions concerning work across borders (Barnes, 2009). In particular, evaluators utilizing indigenous models do so within broader social, cultural, economic, and political systems that are still predominantly colonial (Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 1999). Thus, it is unsurprising that critiques have emerged regarding the practice of evaluation in indigenous contexts. Some of these critiques are more generally focused, while others have specific implications for the choice of evaluative model and evaluator.

The first issue concerns the primacy of particular types of data (especially quantitative data) in Western research traditions and the perception that indigenous methodologies tend toward "less

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valid" qualitative data collection such as storytelling and oral history (Maaka, 2004). Maaka (2004) reported "whoever controls research methodology, controls knowledge" (p. 5).

> The persistent disconnect between "acceptable" methodologies and the cultural aspects of evaluation remains strong. This is evidenced by various governmental funding opportunities for demonstrating program effectiveness. An example is the recently declared U.S. Department of Education evaluation standards for the No Child Left Behind initiative (U.S. Department of Education, 2003), in which it is stated that "proposed evaluation strategies that use neither experimental designs with random assignment nor quasi-experimental designs using a matched comparison group nor regression discontinuity designs will not be considered responsive to the priority when sufficient numbers of participants are available to support these designs." ... In multisite study situations, a vitally important aspect of culturally competent evaluation—that of responsiveness to the context—becomes difficult to accomplish. (SenGupta et al., 2004, p. 14/15)

This critique speaks to the tensions inherent in honoring the experiences of participants and meeting the criteria imposed by external (i.e., Western and Pakeha) funders, legislators, and/or professional organizations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Orlandi, 1992; SenGupta et al., 2004). Many indigenous researchers insist that conducting evaluations grounded in indigenous methodologies is not an oppositional process and does not represent an "either/or" choice relative to "mainstream" models (Pihama et al., 2002; Porsanger, 2004). Others disagree and explicitly advocate the use of only indigenous models in indigenous settings regardless of the methodological priorities of funders and/or the state (see Kawakami et al., 2008; SenGupta et al., 2004; Smith, 1990).

A second critique concerns objectivity. Here it is argued that indigenous models of evaluation, implemented by indigenous people for indigenous people, cannot possibly be fair, balanced, and analytically sound. Greene reminds us that "To evaluate is, according to tradition, to judge fairly the quality, merit and worth of a program based on impartial, scientifically gathered information" (1997, p. 26). One response, of course, is to point out that evaluators cannot even *begin* to appropriately (i.e., objectively and scientifically) analyze data collected in indigenous contexts without the requisite cultural knowledge, whanau connections, and indigenous models that ease their access and functioning in such contexts (Te Awekotuku, 1999). To be sure, this response reifies the notion that access to the indigene is the fundamental challenge to evaluators crossing borders—the very position I have critiqued here. Ultimately, we must recognize that all knowledge is partial. All approaches reflect the particular roles, positioning, and priorities of the actors present in any given evaluative context (Greene, 1997; Heshusius, 1994; Kirkhart, 1995). All evaluation is value based and representative of particular value commitments. "Appropriateness," then, must take account of the social, cultural, and political context of the location where evaluative work occurs, as well as the social location of the evaluator.

Greene argues that evaluators have an obligation, and cannot avoid, using evaluation to advocate for some change or decision.

> Advocacy is an inevitable part of evaluative inquiry, and indeed of all social inquiry today. The important question then becomes not, should we or should we not advocate in our role as evaluators, but rather what and whom should we advocate for. (Greene, 1997, p. 26)

The advocacy approach to evaluation has been particularly compelling for Maori, insofar as Maori participate in indigenous programs within a colonial context. Underlying Greene's approach is an assumption that choices need to be made regarding which approaches are worthy of advocacy, and that the evaluator plays a pivotal role in the making of such choices. Even so, I would argue that the competitiveness that seems to accompany Greene's description of evaluation contexts, as alluded to in the opening sentence of her 1997 article "Evaluation as Advocacy"—"In their work today, social program evaluators are inevitably on somebody's side and not on somebody else's side"

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(p. 25)—is not necessarily a feature of Maori contexts. The colonial context is adversarial in the way Greene describes in her work, yet indigenous program contexts and evaluation approaches tend toward collaboration, community building, and mutuality, reflecting cultural processes that favor consensus for the collective good over the promotion of individual agendas or "sides."

The empowerment evaluation model privileges the decision-making power of the community and stakeholders involved in the program, and similarly centers on the need to "give voice to" (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005). However, the model cannot escape the dynamics of power inherent in a context of knowledge production where evaluator recommendations are likely to be heavily weighted in terms of significance and legitimacy. The need "to empower" itself speaks to issues of social justice and imbalance. Maori groups have traditionally organized and come to decisions utilizing collectivity, consensus, democratic participation, and attention to community knowledge (the latter two points being hallmarks of the empowerment evaluation approach described by Fetterman and Wandersman); yet, these processes have typically been managed internally, without the need for outside organizational structures, protocols, or spokespeople. In colonial contexts where cultural processes are threatened, the question is not whether it is necessary to make such imbalances visible, but whether true empowerment is possible without the expression of one's own agency.

Utilization-focused evaluation prioritizes the use of evaluation findings by the intended users (Patton, 1997). This approach reflects many of the priorities of Maori communities engaging with researchers (including evaluators). Often one of the first questions asked by Maori at the beginning of such endeavors is "What's in this for us?" or "How will this help us?" The core challenge posed by utilization-focused evaluation for Maori, then, is not its imperative to be useful, but rather who has the responsibility for providing the support necessary to ensure that the findings and knowledge produced can be used. Attention to the ongoing colonial context is needed, to include an accounting of processes of marginalization, structures of oppression, histories of struggle, and the contemporary and tangible impoverishments many indigenous communities face. These issues are paramount for communities faced with the daunting task of turning a report into something tangible "on the ground." Will an "outside" evaluator remain in the setting to facilitate use? Who will furnish resources for this effort? Is implementation included within the scope of work to be conducted with indigenous communities? And if not, to what extent does this reflect a disengagement from colonial histories and current realities? In light of these questions, it is unsurprising that many Maori prefer to work with indigenous evaluators who have ties to their specific tribes and communities, ensuring future accountability to evaluation processes and outcomes.

Issues of objectivity, the positioning of evaluator, and the ongoing marginalization of indigenous peoples vis-à-vis the production and utilization of knowledge highlight the continued salience and hegemony of Western knowledge and methodologies. In addition, the complexities of Maori evaluation as a process internal to Te Ao Maori but in conversation with *Te Ao Pakeha* result in dilemmas of voice and agency for those conducting evaluations involving Maori, leading to discussions within the academy, the profession, and Maori communities themselves.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, attention has also been given to the relationship between evaluative models and the ethnic/cultural identity of the evaluator (i.e., one's status as an "insider" or "outsider"). For example, how do "insider"-positioned Maori evaluators negotiate their obligations to conduct evaluations that are analytically sound as well as meeting the expectations of their "home" and "whanau" constituencies? (McClean et al., 1997). What is the relationship between what you can know and who you are? (Te Awekotuku, 1999). With regard to who should practice evaluation (i.e., who has the opportunity to implement the models discussed here), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) states that the problem is not one of evaluator identity so much as evaluator orientation to Te Ao Maori. For example, she believes that Maori researchers who are "anti-Kaupapa Maori" should not work with Maori. She also asserts that the answer for non-Maori who are committed to Kaupapa Maori research is more complex. In her view, nonindigenous evaluators may work across cultural

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borders "but not on their own" (p. 184). Others (see Kawakami et al., 2008) have argued that it is not enough to *act* proficiently in indigenous contexts, one must *be* indigenous in order to practice appropriately. My position is that entering into the "who" conversation privileges Pakeha competence in much the same way as discussing the objectivity of indigenous evaluators and models, and the validity of indigenous knowledge and data collection approaches, can inhibit development and utilization of Maori research paradigms. These conversations also hinder analysis of indigenous evaluation as a modality of sovereign expression.

In 'Pakeha "Paralysis:" Cultural Safety for Those Researching the General Population of Aotearoa', Martin Tolich (2002) conceptualizes the problem of "who" ought to conduct research "on *Maori*" by referring to the belief of some Pakeha that they are no longer permitted to work with Maori subjects. The claim is that this prohibition results in the exclusion of Maori from general population studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Tolich uses the Treaty of Waitangi in arguing that Maori have a right to be included in such research; yet, there is little discussion of Maori communities and individuals (not to mention researchers) as agentic subjects. I believe the question is not so much whether Pakeha have the right to practice in Maori contexts, but under what conditions Maori realize and demonstrate the right to set the terms of the engagement, including admittance of Pakeha research and evaluation projects and Maori–Pakeha inquiry partnerships.

If there are differences between current Western/mainstream and indigenous views of evaluation, then the issue is one of competing conversations and constituencies. The question for evaluators working within indigenous contexts thus becomes one of accountability (Barnes, 2009; Durie, 1999; McClean et al., 1997)—in whose name and for whose benefit is evaluation conducted? How do evaluators respond to pressure to situate their work within these mainstream and indigenous conversations? How do evaluators (regardless of cultural identity) respond to the problem of conducting evaluations in colonial contexts? In my view, cultural safety models have their greatest utility as a decolonizing vehicle for both Maori (or "non-kaupapa Maori" Maori, to reference Linda Tuhiwai Smith) and Pakeha evaluators. But cultural safety, regardless of the form it takes, cannot stand alone. As a guide to evaluators, it is just one component in an array of indigenous strategies, including the use of for/by/with approaches, Maori models of inquiry, and a commitment to the development of a qualified Maori evaluation workforce.

In conclusion, the practice of evaluation, when occurring within indigenous research frameworks, has the potential to promote indigenous identity as well as facilitate *maumahara* (remembrance, commemoration) within the context of the loss occurring within colonial spaces (Forster, 2007). This is particularly true of evaluation in educational contexts, where indigenous peoples have suffered the loss of language, cultural knowledge and pedagogies, and identity. There, evaluation can function as part of the larger project of liberation *if and when it moves beyond an emphasis on access to "things indigenous" and towards a more democratic and egalitarian focus on the development and utilization of indigenous models and practitioners* (Gray-Sharp, 2007; Pihama et al., 2002). Such a direction is addressed by Porsanger:

> Indigenous methodologies should be designed to ensure that the intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples will be observed; to protect indigenous knowledge from misinterpretation and misuse; to demystify knowledge about indigenous peoples; to tell indigenous peoples' stories in their voices; to give credit to the true owners of indigenous knowledge; to communicate the results of research back to the owners of this knowledge, in order to support them in their desire to be subjects rather than objects of research, to decide about their present and future, and to determine their place in the world. Following these methodological issues, indigenous research will strengthen indigenous peoples' identity, which will in turn support indigenous peoples' efforts to be independent: not only legally, politically or economically, but first and foremost intellectually. (Porsanger, 2004, p. 117)

Porsanger reminds us that the methodological issues inherent in the problems of evaluator access, indigenous participation and ownership, and the deployment of particular models of evaluation in

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educational contexts occur against the background of ongoing colonialism and the struggles of indigenous people for self-determination and freedom. The issue is not only that Maori models, understandings and procedures are different and therefore require particular competencies, but that evaluation as it relates to Maori takes place within an indigenous sovereign space subjected to colonial forces that are met by resistance and attempts to decolonize knowledge, theory, and praxis. Evaluation in Aotearoa is thus positioned with regard to how it reflects and falls along a continuum of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) and/or the perpetuation of coloniality. In short, evaluation reflects and represents landscapes of politics and power.

The issue of cultural competency cannot stand in a vacuum; it is connected to colonization, decolonization, and sovereignty. Evaluations "for Maori, with Maori, by Maori" can produce valid inquiry and knowledge within the context of Maori worldviews, *as well as* embody a critically important expression of tino rangatiratanga in neocolonial space. If Maori ever declare a moratorium on nonindigenous evaluation research in indigenous contexts, I believe it would not be because Pakeha *cannot* conduct appropriate evaluation, but rather that Maori *can*. The Maori intellectual community, and its Pakeha allies, have worked to develop and retain a core of skilled and competent Maori evaluation practitioners knowledgeable in both Maori inquiry models and approaches developed to guide Western evaluation practice. The realization of our capacity to meet our evaluation needs *as* Maori, using "for/with/by" approaches and the broad application of our own models, would constitute the ultimate expression of our sovereignty and agency.

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## Glossary of Maori Terms

*Ako* – Culturally preferred reciprocal interactions and pedagogy. Teaching and learning.
*Aotearoa* – Maori name for New Zealand.
*Aroha* – Caring, love.
*Hui* – Meetings.
*Kaumatua* – Elders.
*Kaupapa* – Principle, plan, theme.
*Kaupapa Maori* – The Maori way.
*Kotahitanga* – Common vision, goal, or outcome.
*Mana motuhake* – Self-rule. Independent power and authority.
*Manaakitanga* – Building and nurturing a supportive and loving environment.
*Maori* – Label used to refer to the collective of distinct iwi/tribes inhabiting Aotearoa.
*Marae* – Maori meeting spaces, to include a centralized group meeting house. Marae are ancestral home spaces.
*Maumahara* – Remembrance, commemoration.
*Pakeha* – Maori word for White settlers in Aotearoa.
*Purakau* – Maori narrative, stories.
*Runanga* – Tribal or public assembly, conference, council.
*Taonga* – Something treasured or prized.
*Taonga tuku iho* – Treasures passed down from the ancestors that represent cultural aspirations.
*Te Ao Hou* – The world of the new, the contemporary realm.
*Te Ao Maori* – The Maori world.
*Te Ao Marama* – The natural world.

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*Te Ao Pakeha* – The settler world.
*Tikanga* – Maori way of doing.
*Tino Rangatiratanga* – Self-determination.
*Utu* – Reciprocity, mutuality.
*Wananga* – Forums with dynamic sharing of knowledge.
*Whakapapa* – Genealogy, to include relationships to ancestors, gods and the natural world. Organization of knowledge.
*Whakawhanaungatanga* – Process of making connections between people.
*Whakapiringatanga* – Delineation of roles and responsibilities in order to achieve individual and group outcomes.
*Whanau* – Extended family or kinship groups.
*Whanaungatanga* – Kinship, connections between people.

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1. Translations for all Maori terms can be found in the Maori glossary above.
2. The term cultural safety is generally preferred over "cultural competency" in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
3. The relationship between indigenous Maori and Pakeha (White settlers) in Aotearoa/New Zealand formally began with the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) in 1840. The treaty was signed by agents for the British Crown, who had traveled to Aotearoa/New Zealand to recolonize the land on behalf of Queen Victoria. A number of chiefs (though not all) from various iwi (tribes) and hapu (subtribes) signed on behalf of their respective peoples. The treaty guaranteed Maori certain rights and privileges, including control over their land and other resources, in exchange for allowing the British Crown to exercise governance. The treaty also guaranteed Maori the protection afforded to Pakeha citizens and the right to exercise their tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty).
4. Some years later, I returned to the area having discovered a shared ancestor, at which time my status became one of "whanau" among those I now connect to genealogically—it is unclear whether the whanau I originally worked with were aware of this connection at the time.

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