

Governance is commonly understood by those informed by an Industrial orientation as the authority to control an entity, guiding it toward maximum productive output and therefore profit. An Indigenous perspective views governance as a responsibility to guard and nurture the resources available to an entity, ensuring that the resources and the environment in which they are found flourish. Everyone profits when a wholistic approach to production is core to the ethos of an entity. Informed by the principles of the Tiriti o Waitangi and Indigenous knowledge systems, Jay Matenga argues that the highest priority for governors of an entity should be to actively partner with all connected with creative business production, protect all resources and the ecosystems they are a part of, and participate in the process of community wellbeing as a priority outcome for the business.

Tihei mauri ora! It is the breath of life. In this paper, the breath of life comes to us from in the form of this *whakataukī* (proverb)... **Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamua.** (Care for the land, care for the people, move forward).

Introduction

My identification as a Māori by virtue of my whakapapa, unbroken through my paternal line, positions me as an Indigenous person. While on my mother's side I have English, Welsh and Aboriginal Australian roots, my father is half-caste Māori and I can identify my genetic Māori heritage through him back at least 6 generations.

I was formed and educated in the world of my mother, which I will call the Industrial world because it has now infected more than just the Western hemisphere. Yet, my deepest understandings of reality are informed by the genetic influence of my father, the Indigenous world of the Māori.

In this article, I am going to take you on a journey with me into a deeper understanding of governance from my experience of an Indigenous perspective. We will spend some time diving into the subconscious thinking of Māori and Indigenous people to help you understand the very foundations of our reality. Then we will emerge to see how that reality manifests in our workaday lives.

First, I will introduce you to the concept of **indigeneity** — looking at the definitions, values and some of the implicit realities of Indigenous-oriented people.

Then, I will contrast perspectives of **governance** between Indigenous and Industrial thinkers in contexts of increasing complexity. We'll see some limitations of deliberateness and advantages of dynamism. We'll look at governance using a navigational metaphor and then provide a more concrete definition of governance.

I will show how **priorities** differ when it comes to how we Indigenous people view resources. Specifically, around issues of ownership, sustainability and connections.

In order to understand the rationale for the Indigenous perspective I want to take us deep into the mind of Māori and consider the implications of a concept like **manaakitanga** for how it helps us understand Indigenous Māori attitudes to governance.

The **Tiriti o Waitangi** holds an important place in the bicultural relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand as it attempts to bring together the Indigenous (Māori) and the Industrial (Pākehā). I will briefly introduce the Articles of the Tiriti and conclude by highlighting the three **governance principles** that are commonly drawn from the Tiriti for application in today's world—in communities, politics, healthcare, education, conservation, and corporations.



Indigeneity

Definitions

First, we will delve into the Indigenous world by exploring some definitions. In the broadest, dictionary, sense of the word, to be indigenous simply means “native or original to a particular geography”.

In light of historic migration and current globalization, we could spend days exploring how long, or how many generations it takes before you could be considered a “native” of any place, but that’s the stuff of social psychology—of identity issues—and this is more of a commercial-world article, so I will not explore the question further.

Thankfully, the United Nations has provided us with a baseline understanding of what it means to be indigenous in today’s post-colonial reality.

Indigenous people are those who:

1. Self- identify as an indigenous person at the individual level and are accepted by the indigenous community as their member (for example, via whakapapa for Māori).
2. Have historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies.
3. Maintain strong links to territories and surrounding natural resources.
4. Manifest distinct (tribal) social, economic or political systems.
5. Promote a distinct language, culture and beliefs.
6. Form non-dominant groups of society.
7. Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

Here’s what the UN has published concerning Indigenous people,

Indigenous peoples are the holders of unique languages, knowledge systems and beliefs and possess invaluable knowledge of practices for the sustainable management of natural resources. They have a special relation to and use of their traditional land. Their ancestral land has a fundamental importance for their collective physical and cultural survival as peoples. Indigenous peoples hold their own diverse

concepts of development, based on their traditional values, visions, needs and priorities.¹

The United Nations estimates there are 370 million Indigenous people in the world, which make up about 5 percent of the world’s population.²

Values

Indigenous people share many common value-systems quite distinct from the Industrialized world. Māori have a strongly wholistic perspective that makes it impossible to separate one set of values from another, but values that (ought to) guide Māori leaders have been identified, which include...

Spirituality — Wairuatanga/mana/mauri/ora.

- Transcendence, Giftedness, Life-Force, Animation.

Identity — Whakapapa/turangawaewae.

- Origins, heritage, and standing place.

Relationships — Whānau/whanaunga/whangai.

- Family, group identity, foster/adoption.

Affection — Aroha/awhi/tautoko.

- Loving kindness, embrace, support.

Honour — Manaaki.

- Lift up or esteeming others.

Presence — Kanohi kitea.

- Face to face, understanding, “I see you”, in the moment.

Wisdom — Mohio, matauranga, māramatanga, ngakau.

- Knowledge, understanding, enlightenment, faith.

We’ll return to a couple of these concepts as we proceed.

Reality

These values emerge out of the world that indigenous people live in—their reality. Indigenous people worldwide have a deep sense of connectedness to creation and those with whom they share a relationship. The Industrial world does not fully comprehend this. It is informed by the Western world’s deeply ingrained Greek view of the reality, which compartmentalizes and separates. Greek philosophy separated the world we can perceive with our five senses, the material world,



from the world beyond our perception, the world of the spirit/s. For indigenous people, the spiritual world is not the stuff of fantasy, it is the core of reality.

This reality is described in many ways, like Qi (Chinese), Ki (Japanese), Prāna (Hindu), Vijnāna (Buddhist), Ruach/Spirit (Judeo-Christian), Barakah (Islam), Ntu (Bantu), Manitou (Algonquian), Ni (Lakota), Nilch'I (Navajo), Bio-Plasmic Energy (Euro-Russian), Mana (Melanesian), or for New Zealand Māori, we call it Mauri Ora.

It is the life animating force that connects everything and it is core to understanding the motivation behind indigenous attitudes toward governance.

Canadian filmmaker, James Cameron, captured a sense of this hyper-connected reality in the 2009 fantasy movie Avatar. In that movie, the forest paradise of the Indigenous inhabitants was shown to be thoroughly interconnected, represented by reactive luminescence, controlled by a single source (a Mother tree). Although the movie was CGI generated fantasy, for most Indigenous people in real life this would be an accurate representation of the way they unconsciously understand how the world works. The god-personalities of the unseen realm differ according to local beliefs (religion) but the 'technology' perceived in the connectedness of all creation is remarkably similar (but markedly different to the Western-influenced Industrials).

Governance

Having established something of the different nature of the Indigenous from the Industrial, let us see how this affects the issues of governance. The Industrial world has long worked according to well-planned strategies and highly systematized processes. These worked well in simpler times when one view of the world (the European empirical perspective) dominated commerce. However, since World War II that scene has changed radically and increasing globalization is creating exponential complexity. New forms of governance and leadership are being developed, most sourced from Indigenous values and practices (although the sources are rarely acknowledged).

The Industrial world has only really started (post-1990) to realise that deliberate, fixed and linear planned strategies are inadequate for our increasingly complex, globalized and multi-cultural business realities.

Deliberateness

To illustrate the limitations of a deliberate strategy, a story is told of the sailing ship Orpheus entering the Manukau Harbour in Auckland on February 7th 1863...

The captain of the Orpheus had access to two charts to guide the journey; one from 1856, which was ratified but out-of-date, and the other, a revised pilotage guide from 1861, which showed that a middle sandbar had moved and grown considerably.

As the Orpheus entered Manukau Harbour on that clear and sunny day in 1863, she needed to navigate the series of dangerous sand bars.

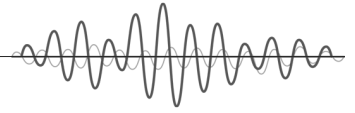
Young Edward Wing, the 21-year-old signalman who was based on shore and guiding ships into the harbour that day, signalled to the vessel to keep to northward. But the captain insisted that the ratified but outdated chart be used.

Meanwhile, former quartermaster Frederick Butler, who had previously been to Manukau Harbour and saw the impending danger unfolding before them, tried to alert senior officers about their plight but his warning was ignored.

The vessel hit the sandbar and swung around to expose the port side to treacherous surf. The HMS Orpheus sank, and was the worst maritime disaster in New Zealand waters. Of the 259 crew, 189 of them, mostly young teenagers died.³

Dynamism

That is a tragic illustration of dysfunctional governance, or leadership from a very Western, Industrial perspective. Unfortunately, too many businesses today still operate by fixed three to five year strategic plans and their shareholders get surprised when they suddenly discover that they're riding a pending shipwreck.



We no longer live in an Industrial era. We live in a globally connected and increasingly digital age requiring new metaphors to help govern organisations through ever-changing stormy waters. The business world seems to finally be looking to indigenous models to help them navigate their way forward in complexity.

For example, complexity theorist David J. Snowden has developed a method of decision making for leaders facing overwhelming complexity that resonates very strongly with Indigenous principles. He called it the Cynefin Framework, which helps leaders understand the complexity in their external environment (past, connections, and current context) so they can more effectively determine how best to approach challenges. Drawn from a Welsh-Celtic perspective, his concept resonates very strongly with the Māori understanding of *turangawaewae*—your standing place, or place of authority or belonging, derived from your *whakapapa* (heritage). You could say, it is that place where you feel Indigenous.⁴

Navigation

A more useful Indigenous metaphor, however, would be that of voyaging or journeying from one place to another. The idea of life as a journey provides the framework for a lot of Indigenous thinking. In order to handle the journey well you need to become a competent navigator—not one dependent on fixed cartographic maps, but one able to discern the signs and know how to appropriately respond. Being comfortable with fluid uncertainty is essential to governing well in complex environments.

In contrast to the deliberate plans of Industrials, for eons past, the Indigenous have relied on dynamic, fluid, intuitive, iterative strategies that move with the data as it comes pouring in along the journey.

In Māori terms, governance is best understood as navigating the *waka* (canoe). It is a leadership responsibility, where the *waka* is the organisation or group you are leading.

In the book, “Wayfinding Leadership”, Chellie Spiller notes that,

Successful wayfinding (indigenous navigation) is the art of being able to figure enough things out—to have the intelligence to put all the information together to know where you are supposed to be. It’s about knowing when something is not working and being willing to explore what other information is needed to make it work.⁵

“Wayfinding Leadership” would be my first recommendation for an academic source regarding leadership development that draws on and readily acknowledges indigenous metaphors such as navigating a *waka*.

If you have seen Disney’s 2016 animated film *Moana*, you’ll have some idea of how the art required of the Wayfinder navigators of the Pacific. There is a humorous scene where the heroine asks the demi-god Maui to teach her how to sail. Maui briefly explains the role of a Wayfinder, one who determines where they are going by knowing where they have come from. The scene does a good job at introducing the concept that Spiller et al develop in “Wayfinding Leadership”.

The image of a *waka* navigator is as close an example of indigenous governance as you are likely to find—and it aligns well with the Greek and Latin concepts from which we get the English term “governance”.

Definitions

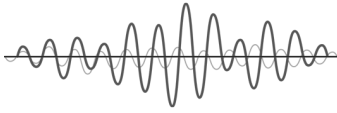
The root of the English term “governance” is found in the Latin, *Gubernare*, drawn from the Greek, *Kybernan*—which means, to pilot a ship.

To govern, then, is to:

- steer, direct, rule, or guide. To take control of something.
- decide the priorities and constrain the direction of an entity.

Māori leaders in the colonial era created a term to express the English concept of governance as they understood it to be. They called it *kāwanatanga*, derived from the English word “governor”.

This foreign understanding of governance is a bit clumsy because Māori were traditionally more inclined toward a concept of *kaitiakitanga*, or guardianship, rather than governance. The root



concept in the word is ‘tiaki’, which means to guard—keep, preserve, conserve, foster, protect, shelter; to keep watch over something that is not necessarily yours to own or control.

Māori tohunga and Anglican priest, Māori Marsden said that guardianship (kaitiakitanga) and leadership (rangatiratanga) “are intimately linked.”⁶ So a leader is by default a guardian. The Wayfinder’s primary concern ought to be the people and other resources who are with him/her on the journey. The destination or outcome are secondary issues.

For Indigenous people, there is a relationship between everything, it is all connected. Furthermore, it is connected by relationships that are intimately spiritual. So, for a guardian/leader, maintaining relational harmony or balance becomes an overriding priority because harmony is integral to the wellbeing of, well, everything.

You might recognise a harmonious or balanced orientation to life as similar to the concept of yin/yang. It is. For the Indigenous, these ways of knowing rule all of life, but Industrials conveniently ignore it—to their peril.

This understanding of reality actually lends itself well to corporate governance which, for the wellbeing of the company, should require the strategic fostering of harmony in the complex relationships between company management, it’s board/governors, shareholders, stakeholders, suppliers, customers, communities and government policy compliance—all for mutual benefit, while monitoring accountability to ensure the processes remain healthy.

Priorities

This leads us to look at how the Indigenous typically order their governance priorities. Balanced harmonious relationships taking top priority. If a strategy is likely to negatively affect a group’s relationships with the community or their environment, the onus is on Indigenous leaders to make every effort to avoid that cost.

This stands in stark contrast to the Industrial priority which puts profit before people and places.

With profit as the highest priority decisions are made on the basis of efficiency and expedience — regardless of the damage or disharmony that is caused in the process.

Ownership?

Another fundamental difference between Indigenous governance and Industrial governance lies with the concept of ownership.

Māori traditionally did not have a concept of ownership—everything belonged to everyone; at least, everyone with collective authority to dwell within their tribal boundaries. Exceptions to this general rule were a few personal items reserved for private use (e.g. garments, weapons, combs).

Again, from Rev. Māori Marsden, “The resources of the earth did not belong to humans but rather, humans belonged to the earth. Humans merely had ‘user-rights’”.⁷

The capitalistic mode of production seizes and commodifies the land, its resources and people according to a value established in the marketplace. So, economics becomes the highest governing priority for Industrials—and therefore profit tends to override spiritual, humanitarian and community wellbeing considerations, unless the entity has a commitment to multiple bottom lines.

Moving on from the Industrial obsession with profit, these days socially responsible companies will develop three, if not four, bottom lines. A cynic could argue that profit remains the primary bottom line, or driving force, because it is the nature of the beast we call commerce, but the commonly espoused other bottom line priorities include: people, places (or planet), and more recently purpose (a spiritual ethical, or culture enhancing commitment).

These hybrid commitments are drawn directly out of Indigenous values systems and are increasingly resonant with the purchasing populations of the world today—which makes it profitable to focus on.

Sustainability?

The traditional Industrial view of prioritizing consumption for profit is diametrically opposed to



an Indigenous perspective which prioritizes sustainability—elevating wholistic wellbeing over capitalistic wealth. For the Indigenous, sustainability is not a self-centred concern. You may read definitions of sustainability that say something like,

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs.⁸

This is self-centred. It's all about us—about maintaining our lifestyle and ensuring similar comfort for generations to come. Indigenous governance, on the other hand, is focused on a type of sustainability that is more concerned with nurturing, caring for the whole with a certain reverence, a deep respect for the life in everything. Because it is all connected and related.

A Native American, Larry Mercurieff illustrates this,

When we go out and pick berries, we don't pick berries from a single location, and we don't take all the berries that are there. We don't use these scoopers that people use today. I've watched picking, scraping berries off bushes and destroying bushes in the process. When we pick flowers even, when we use the flowers for dyes, we pick every seventh flower so we're not picking them all from one place. And of course we do it with a presence of mind, being present at the moment, but being aware of having an underlying sense of *reverence* for what we're doing and understanding the implications of what we're doing with this single plant, turns the entire ecology which the plant comes from.⁹

For the Indigenous, the whole of creation is intimately interconnected and interactive. Indigenous knowledge systems do not just think this, they embody it. It is not a mental thing, it is a deep profound connection, "whereby," Mercurieff says, "the human body is in alignment and in harmony with the environment which we're in."¹⁰

Reverend Māori Marsden would add,

Until we relearn the lesson that (humanity) is an integral part of the natural order and that (we have) obligations not only to society but also to

(our) environment, so long will (we) abuse the earth. To realise that (we are children) of the Earth will help (us work) to restore and maintain the harmony and balance which successive generations of humankind have arrogantly disrupted.¹¹

So, sustainability is more about the process of caring for life in the rhythms of life than it is about achieving a specific goal so you can take your ease once it's accomplished.

Similarly, governance is never accomplished. For the Indigenous leader, it is a lifestyle. Actually, more than that—it is one's life purpose.

Connectedness

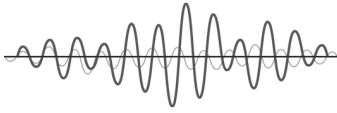
This clash of worlds, between what I have called the Industrial and Indigenous, can be seen in disputes arising from different understandings of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840), which I will explore in more detail below.

Before I do that though, in order to understand the principles embedded in the Tiriti, and how they relate to the effective governance of resources, we must dive a bit deeper into the thought-world of Māori. So, in typical Indigenous fashion, I will loop back over some territory we've already touched on and uncover a deeper understanding of resource governance from an Indigenous Māori perspective.

As I have shown, Indigenous people see all things connected via a vital life-force. There really is no distinction between the spiritual and the material world. Life-force permeates all, and it needs to be carefully and respectfully handled.

Because of an ancient Greek philosophical influence, Industrials separate things from their being, material from spiritual, which allows them to manipulate the material world with a much clearer conscience than the Indigenous would be comfortable with. And as an Indigenous person, I would attribute that clear conscience to ignorance and, as they say, ignorance is bliss—but it doesn't make it right.

Unfortunately, this is not the place to discuss issues of justice. Justice does permeate the whole of this article when you take the time to consider it, because



of the inequalities implied by the continuing oppressive dominance of Industrial concepts.

Manaaki

Mana

To better understand Indigenous governance principles, we need to take a deeper peek inside Indigenous knowledge systems — what does their world look like? Let me take one concept and unpack it a bit more for you.

If you look up the word “mana” in anthropological texts you will read something like this:

Mana is a supernatural force.... It is similar to life-force in many ways, but broader in scope. It is like a supernatural electricity that influences events in this world. It follows certain laws and those who know them can control it for their own benefit. Like electricity, mana can be dangerous to those who do not know how to handle it. A rock or tree full of mana can kill those who touch it. Consequently, where it is found, there are taboos that protect ordinary people by warning them of danger. On the other hand, religious practitioners such as magicians, witches, and shamans know how to control powerful forces without destroying themselves.¹²

While somewhat sympathetic, this is an Industrial interpretation. Life-force concepts are usually interpreted by Industrial/secularists as the stuff of infantile fantasy or immature and primitive thinking, but that is an imposed Graeco-Eurocentric paradigm, and post-19th Century Industrials have adopted this prejudicial interpretation without question. It is at the heart of all evolutionary theory.

Industrials pride themselves in being anti-superstitious. They consider themselves “secular” and, the inference is that “secular” means “superior”. But this is an illusion. Aotearoa New Zealand is reportedly one of the most secular nations in the world but the latest results from a longitudinal study of wellbeing in this country shows that a whopping 71% of our population believe in a life-force or spirit realm, with 48% believing in something they call God.¹³

Our human nature will not let the unseen realm be forgotten for long, the Industrial world has just forgotten how to understand it.

For Māori, *mana* is not some sort of supernatural electricity, but it is a part of the life-force system—the God-breathed aspect of all creation. To get a little more technical, *mauri* is the life-force essence of all things, *mauri ora* is the animation of things from the mauri life-force (to make alive), with *wairua* being the spiritual connection from the Creator with creation.

Mauri is part of the physical terrestrial world and our physical person, whereas *wairua* is eternal and remains connected to the unseen, spiritual realm, both the terrestrial and celestial aspects of it.

Mana manifests the evidence of all these things at work through all that a person is and does in relationship with others.

So, mana is the evidence of what you can see about a person’s mauri/ora and wairua, their life-force and spirit.

This would sound quite weird to atheistic and secular Industrials, but it is merely a different way of articulating what psychologists have discerned. For example, mauri would be the source of our personality preferences, strengths, natural talents and proclivities; wairua is the source of our ability to commune with the spiritual realm and it is the source of certain spiritual giftedness beyond what we would consider ‘natural’, like intuition, premonition, or a strong sense of vocation.

Mana is what you see when these things are activated and at work in a person’s life. It is what psychologists would call our charisma—which theologians would consider an individual’s divine grace. The Industrial world knows these things exist, but secular human sciences have no idea why or where they come from.

For Māori, and no doubt many other Indigenous, a person’s mana is recognised by their community and ascribed to the person by the community—you can’t claim it for yourself. You can do things that affect the community and lose mana and you can do



things for the community and gain mana. The more mana you are recognised for, the higher standing you have in the community.

This brief excursion beneath the surface of Māori culture is to emphasize how critically important the unseen realm is to Māori. It informs our attitude to life and our responsibility to look after (govern/guard) all that we have been given.

Although it is convenient for Industrial-influenced Pākehā to do so, simply translating mana merely as “honour” or “respect” does a disservice to the concept. For Maori, if a person is recognised as having great mana, it is because their life-force, talent and giftedness is apparent and endorsed by the community. Furthermore, the benefits of having mana make you want to defend your mana to ensure it is not unfairly tainted. Traditionally, your very life could depend on it.

Manaakitanga

From the root concept of mana we get the word *manaaki*. *Aki* means to encourage, exhort or lift up. So *manaaki* means to encourage the mana of another person—to esteem them as highly valued. *Manaaki-tanga* just means the concept of *manaaki*.

Manaaki envelopes concepts of loving kindness, mercy, honour, respect, hospitality, generosity, care and humility. It means holding other people and things in high regard, without expectation of reward, and helping them to feel like they belong and that their wellbeing is important.

I have personally experienced the principles of what I would call *manaaki* in China, Thailand, Central America, West and East Africa, Egypt, Turkey, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Porirua, Ruatoria, Gisborne, Foxton, Mangere... etc.

Manaaki is *aroha*, it is loving kindness in action. Mana is social currency, and the only way to earn mana is to give other people mana. This makes no sense to the Industrial world, which tends to be self-centred, but it is deeply intuitive to most of the rest of the world (very generally speaking). This is similar to Chinese *Guanxi*, Japanese *Wa*, or Korean *Inhwa* for example.

Te Tiriti

And so, we emerge out into the world of interpersonal and intercultural transactions. For the Industrial world, this is guided by contract—*quid pro quo*. “I will do this for you, you will do this for me and we will achieve mutually beneficial outcomes” (in an ideal world).

This is how Industrialists would interpret Te Tiriti o Waitangi. But the Tiriti is not a contract, it is a covenant. It is not an agreement to supply, but a commitment to enduring, harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship.

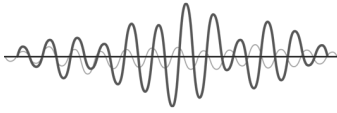
Established in 1840 between most Māori tribes and the British Crown, the Tiriti sought to bring law and order to New Zealand—primarily to keep the British subjects in check. Away from any restraining force, the Europeans coming to New Zealand were atrociously behaved. Russell, up in the Bay of Islands, was known as the “Hell-Hole of the Pacific” for its debauchery. Think up the worst drunken sex scene in the context of the Pirates of the Caribbean movie and you have pretty much imagined Russell in the 1830s.

To halt this excess and protect Māori from the damage this imported lawlessness was causing, the British authorities and certain Māori leaders, supported by English missionaries, developed the Tiriti to give the Crown some authority, but it was never intended to be a complete take over.

Articles

Just briefly, the Tiriti consists of three Articles.

1. The first article gives the Crown (21-year-old Queen Victoria) the right to “govern” the land. But remember what I noted above about how Māori think of governance, as protective guardianship not controlling rulership. The English version of the Treaty speaks of “sovereignty”, which might imply total control, but the Māori version does not.
2. The second article protects Māori “possession” of their lands, estates, forests, fisheries and other property. But remember, Māori had little concept of ownership. What Māori understood



from this second article is that their Indigenous rights would be protected. If they wished to sell some of their land they were free to do so, but as it transpired, they were either pressured to do so (and some did so without proper authorisation from their tribe), or in some cases it was confiscated by the government.

3. The third article assures Māori of all the rights as full citizens of the British Empire. Again, protection/guardianship (kaitiaki) of Māori culture and environment by an authorised leader (rangatahi) and established laws of protection would have been understood here.¹⁴

Covenant

It is a simple covenantal agreement. Three vows around which the marriage of two peoples: Māori and non-Māori, was established. There was an expectation of peace-making law and order and of harmonious development, but it all started to break down almost immediately after colonial settlement had begun.

The colonial settlers and their government did not merely break a contract when they forced Māori from their lands, they ripped reality apart. No amount of financial reparation can heal relationships that are so deeply damaged. The Tiriti was a marriage commitment and within a 30-year period following the signing the relationship experienced a bitter divorce.

It took around 120 years before mediation began in earnest in the 1970s & 80s, and we are only just starting to see the relationship intended by the Tiriti restored, but it is still in a fragile state because we are essentially trying to reconcile a cross-cultural marriage between an Industrial husband and an Indigenous wife (so to speak).

Bi-cultural

Part of the healing process is to recognise Aotearoa New Zealand as a bi-cultural nation, which are Indigenous Māori on one side and all other people who settle here under the grace of the New Zealand Government appointed by the Crown on the other. So, if you abide in New Zealand a non-Māori you do

so as part of the Pākehā side of the Treaty of Waitangi, under the authority of the British Crown's appointed Government. Although I am a hybrid, I can claim the sovereignty that Māori reserved as their part of the Tiriti—not by virtue of my upbringing or language, but because of my whakapapa (genealogical heritage).

Since the 1980s, the bicultural philosophy enshrined in the Tiriti has permeated our society—our politics, civil service, education, science and research, and commercial interests. Implied in this article is the belief that Aotearoa New Zealand is at the forefront of the world in being able to present new ways of leading organisations in the face of increasing complexity because of the indigenous perspectives that come with our bicultural commitments.

Experts who have analysed the essence of the Tiriti of Waitangi has discerned three core principles in the Tiriti that inform the way we should organise and nurture corporate entities. These are governance principles of: Partnership (Article 1), Protection (Article 2), and Participation (Article 3).

Governance Principles

Each of those words, Partnership, Protection and Participation, are easily interpreted through an Industrial lens, but they may mean something quite distinct through the eyes of Māori.

Partnership

As I have indicated, Industrials tend to think of relationships in contractual terms. So, for Industrials, partnership by default is an agreement between autonomous bodies/entities in order to achieve some common aim or objective. The assumption is, when the objective ends so the partnership dissolves. This is the thinking behind some in government who argue that the Tiriti should be abolished once the settlements are complete. Should that perspective ever be presented to the public, it could usher in major civil unrest. The Tiriti is not a memorandum of understanding or a partnership agreement or a contract that can be terminated. It is an enduring covenant. So, what does Partnership look like for Māori?



Whanaunga

I have recently completed my doctorate investigating Māori concepts of relationships compared to Industrial relationship assumptions. What I found was somewhat obvious to me, with a few unexpected surprises, but the idea of family guides all relationship expectations for Māori.

The Māori term for family is *whānau* and if you've lived in New Zealand for longer than a few months you will no doubt be familiar with this term. Unlike the Industrial 2.5 kids (or less), *whānau* for Māori is a broad term for extended family.

An even broader relationship term is *whanaunga*. As I discovered, *whanaunga* isn't directly derived from the word *whānau*, but it is closely related. *Whanaunga* means to lean in toward others, like a mutually submissive relationship. Perhaps it is similar to the way some Asian cultures bow in respect to others. For Māori, however, it tends to be an egalitarian style of honouring, to put others before oneself.

Seen in the sense of *whanaunga*, partnership then implies a much deeper and more enduring commitment to relationship. A commitment that holds people together through all kinds of trials because the relationship is the highest priority, not any predetermined common outcome. What is produced from the relationship, then, is a by-product or bonus, rather than the primary aim.

In this sort of relationship everyone is a contributor and every contribution is valued even though it may be different. Partnership fosters a certain unity in diversity and all involved have some input into the decision-making processes.

From a governance perspective, this shows the importance of consultation. For Industrials, this process can be seen as painfully slow, but for the Indigenous the process is much more important than the destination. As the often-quoted African proverb says, "if you want to go fast, go alone; but if you want to go far, go together". This is not about teamwork, it's about harmonious and mutually rewarding relationships. It is about tribalism—about family.

Protection

I have already introduced the idea of sustainability as a relatively recent governance priority and that Industrials have a different understanding of sustainability than the Indigenous. Sustainability would fall under the principle of Protection, especially the protection of the environment.

However, Protection with regard to bi-cultural governance under the Tiriti is usually interpreted as protecting the culture of the Indigenous party to the Tiriti. When I read about how businesses ought to go about this, I can't help but feel it is shamefully condescending. Nevertheless, it does provide Indigenous Māori with a basis for claiming some voice in the decision-making processes so that our cultural priorities are understood, appreciated and cared for.

Indigenous governance will not stand for mere lip service consultation. *Kaumātua*, Māori elders, learn to listen very deeply to what is being shared. They don't just hear words but also motivations and underlying meanings. They assess what they are hearing against other evidence they have gathered and other voices contributing to the discussion and they make decisions taking it all into account. To truly feel part of a governance process, Māori need to see how their voice has influenced outcomes and actions. Is Indigenous knowledge understood and appreciated? Does the strategy bear their influence? Do the outcomes indicate mutual benefits?

As I have shown already, allowing Indigenous voices to be heard in the decision-making processes of governance can be very beneficial for organisations that take the time to listen and adopt Indigenous priorities and practices. It does not often lead to quick profits but the payoff over time will be well worth the effort and investment.

More information about distinctly Māori business aspirations can be found on the Te Puni Kōkiri website here: <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/>.

The onus is on business and community leaders to protect the rights of Indigenous people to influence in this way.



Participation

What this all suggests is that a Partnership between Industrials and Indigenous, that Protects the rights of the Indigenous, will result in Participation by the Indigenous in the governance processes of the entity in question.

This all requires a willingness to share power. It is an issue of equality; both in the opportunities to participate and sharing in the beneficial outcomes or profits resulting from mutual participation.

Unfortunately, Partnership is still most often expressed in the form of tokenism where some representation of the Indigenous perspective is made visible, without full authoritative engagement by the relevant Indigenous community. At worst, it can degenerate into appropriation, where cultural forms, like language (e.g. Māori names, artwork) are co-opted without any involvement or authorisation from Indigenous informants.

Participation by both parties to the Tiriti must be authentic, genuine and meaningful. There needs to be a commitment to allowing Indigenous voices to influence organisational culture, actions and outcomes.

If you think this can be done without conflict, you are dreaming. Organisations that desire Indigenous input into their governance strategies need to be prepared to be challenged, and prepared to stay at the table to work things through to resolution—but

For Further Reading

In addition to the endnote citations, further helpful information can be found online...

Bowman, Emma. "The Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Clause in the Mixed Ownership Model Legislation" BLaws paper, Otago University, Faculty of Law, 2012. Available online here: www.otago.ac.nz/law/research/journals/otago041729.pdf

Joseph, Robert. "Contemporary Māori Governance: New Era or New Error?". Presentation slides available online here: <http://maorilawreview.co.nz/2014/12/indigenous-peoples-good-governance-human-rights-and-self-determination-in-the-second-decade-of-the-new-millennium-a-maori-perspective/>

Katene, Selwyn. "Modelling Māori Leadership: What Makes for Good Leadership?". MAI Review, Vol. 2, 2010. Available online here: <http://www.lrhartley.com/seminars/katene.pdf>

Māori Law Review. "Indigenous Peoples' Good Governance, Human Rights and Self-Determination in the Second Decade of the New Millenium – a Māori Perspective". Available online here: <http://maorilawreview.co.nz/2014/12/indigenous-peoples-good-governance-human-rights-and-self-determination-in-the-second-decade-of-the-new-millennium-a-maori-perspective/>

that won't happen in a hurry. It takes time to learn to appreciate other cultural perspectives and often it can only emerge by holding crucial conversations guided by a competent mediator or facilitator.

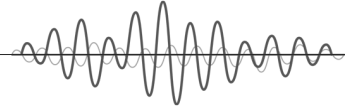
Conclusion:

In this presentation, I have introduced the concepts of Indigeneity and Governance. I contrasted Indigenous perspectives against what I call Industrial assumptions. I noted how priorities can differ vastly because of the very different ways of viewing the world—and even though we use similar terminology, they can mean quite different things.

I briefly introduced the intention of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and touched on how each of the three articles were interpreted differently by each party.

On the basis of this covenant, we now live in a bi-cultural nation. This has implications for how corporate entities operate in Aotearoa New Zealand, and it is commonly understood that three core principles ought to apply in all business dealings: Partnership, Protection, Participation.

As you go out into the world to make your mark. You will do well to reflect on the value that Indigenous perspectives bring to the commercial world in an increasingly connected and complex age, and vow to protect the life-force in all things for the benefit of future generations.



[determination-in-the-second-decade-of-the-new-millennium-a-maori-perspective/](#)

Mead, Hirini Moko, et al. "Māori Leadership in Governance". Hui Taumata Action. Victoria University of Wellington. Available online here: <https://nfparticles.wikispaces.com/file/view/Maori+Leadership.pdf>

Rainey Collins Lawyers. "Business and the Treaty of Waitangi". Available online here: <https://www.raineycollins.co.nz/files/businesssthetow-unleashingeconomicpotential.pdf>

Te Puni Kōkiri. "The Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as Expressed by the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal". Available online here: <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/documents/download/179/tpk-treatyprinciples-2001-en.pdf>

Waitangi Tribunal. "The Treaty of Waitangi Principles". Website: <https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/treaty-of-waitangi/principles-of-the-treaty/>.

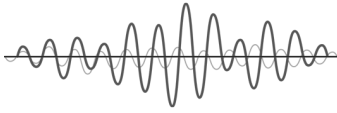
Waiata

In the tradition of my forefathers I still must conclude my written version of this oratory with a waiata (song). This one is well known, especially since it has been adopted by the All Blacks this year.

It speaks of the Indigenous commitment to unity, to seeking knowledge and to living according to the values of loving all people...

Tūtira mai ngā iwi	Line up together, people
Tātou tātou e	All of us, all of us.
Tūtira mai ngā iwi	Stand in rows, people
Tātou tātou e	All of us, all of us.
Whai-a te marama-tanga	Seek after knowledge
Me te aroha - e ngā iwi!	and love of others - everybody!
Kia tapa-tahi,	Think as one,
Kia ko-tahi rā.	Act as one.
Tātou tātou e	All of us
Tātou tātou e.	All of us.

The All Black supporters' version can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxorRtINRTc>



ENDNOTES:

- ¹ UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Factsheet. Online here: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf
- ² Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (SPFII). 2004. The concept of Indigenous peoples. Workshop on data collection and disaggregation for Indigenous peoples. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- ³ Spiller, Chellie et al. "Wayfinding Leadership: Ground-breaking Wisdom for Developing Leaders." Huia Publishers, Wellington. Kindle Loc. 967.
- ⁴ Snowden, D.J. Boone, M.E. "A Leader's Framework for Decision Making" in Harvard Business Review, November 2007. See also New Zealand based, Jennifer Garvey Berger and Keith Johnston's "Simple Habits for Complex Times", Stanford Business Books, Stanford CA, 2015.
- ⁵ Spiller, C et al. Kindle Loc. 705.
- ⁶ Marsden, M. Kaitiakitanga: A Definitive Introduction to the Holistic World View of the Māori. PDF, 1992. p20. Available online here: http://www.marinenz.org.nz/documents/Marsden_1992_Kaitiakitanga.pdf
- ⁷ Marsden 1992, p15
- ⁸ Brundtland GH. "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future". United Nations, New York. 1987.
- ⁹ Mercurieff, Larry. 2007. "Native Perspectives on Sustainability." [Website]. Accessed July 28, 2016. <http://www.nativeperspectives.net/>, p3.
- ¹⁰ Mercurieff, Larry, p3.
- ¹¹ Marsden 1992, p17.
- ¹² Hiebert, P. et al, "Understanding Folk Religion" Baker Books, 1999, p68.
- ¹³ Bulbulia, Joseph. Religion and the Good Life in NZ study. Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty, Victoria University, 2017.
- ¹⁴ For simplified source, refer: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/files/documents/treaty-kawharu-footnotes.pdf>