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# Indigenous Māori and Japanese management in a curious case of 'East meets East'

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# INTRODUCTION

Much is made of the wholesale inculcation of Western management theory and practice into Japanese enterprises in the early to mid twentieth century (Dirks, Huchet, & Ribault, 1999; Nakano, 2018; Nishiyama, 2000) and the subsequent fascination of the West with Japanese management methods (Ouchi, 1981). While typically cast in binary terms as cultural dichotomies of Western ethnocentrism and Eastern holism, scholars now argue for more blended (e.g., ambicultural) approaches to transdisciplinarity in management thinking and doing to aid the common search for more sustainable economies and enterprises (Bargh, 2012; Everard, 2011; Lowe, Kainzbauer, Tapachai, & Hwang, 2015; Nicholson, Spiller, & Pio, 2017). The goal is not to dismiss the efficacy of Cartesian rationalsim, reductionism, and objectivism (Harris & Wasilewski, 2004; Subramanian & Pisupati, 2010), but to acknowledge its limitations (Scharmer, 2009) and provide negotiated zones for Eastern paradigms of paradox, holism, humanism, and collectivism to effect constructive change in both Western and Eastern firms (Fang, 2012; Lowe et al., 2015). Unidimensional ideals of profit maximisation and economic growth that exclude consequences for natural and human environments (Friedman, 1982) are under sustained attack by logics and evidence that account for ecological impacts (Everard, 2011; Frame, Gordon, & Mortimer, 2009). These are examples, however, of synthesis in transdisciplinarity in which Western science is still the ‘yard stick’ against which non-Western knowledge is measured in spite of Western science being just one of 6,900 culturally mediated knowledges (Bohensky & Maru, 2011; Cole, 2017). An example of this is the Japanese concept of *kaizen* (Macpherson, Lockhart, Kavan, & Iaquinto, 2015) which indulges Western commercial sentiment and the Cartesian “knowledge-creation-application-performance” logic (Chia, 2003, p. 953, cited in Lowe et al, 2015, p. 307). An alternative is to be found in indigenous transdisciplinarity (combining Western and Eastern paradigms) where values-based rather than values-free knowledge creation is evident in the elevation of human wellbeing as the central goal and activity of organisations and management (Cole, 2017; Durie, 2006, 2016). Wellbeing in the indigenous paradigm is an aggregated whole comprising social, cultural, economic, environmental and spiritual dimensions (Nicholson et al., 2017), which for Cole (2017), manifests at the level of the whānau (family) rather than the firm.

Instead of relating East and West, this paper engages in an 'East meets East' analysis comparing Māori and Japanese management philosophy (Mika, 2014a; Mika & O'Sullivan, 2014; Nakano, 2018; Spiller, Craze, Dell, & Mudford, 2017) premised upon anectodal evidence of similarity between the two cultures (Mika, 2014b; Neville, 2013; Tiopira, 2016). The paper informs empirical research of Māori and Japanese firms in comparable industries in Japan and New Zealand. A focus on fisheries, given joint ownership of Sealord between Japanese firm Nissui and Māori firm Aotearoa Fisheries, offers a prime candidate for analysis (Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, 2012; Mika, 2013). The paper focuses on Japanese and Māori conceptions of entrepreneurship, innovation, sustainability and wellbeing because they occupy a centrality within Western and Eastern management discourses, but attach differing premises and aspirations (Anand & Sen, 2000; Bavikatte, Jonas, & von Braun, 2010; Bosselmann, Engel, & Taylor, 2008; Durie, 2006; Kates et al., 2001; Mika, Warren, Palmer, Jacob, & Bradley, 2018; Mulligan, Mulligan, Matahaere, & Haronga, 2005; Schroeder, 2010; Sen, 1985, 1999; Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009; Stoner & Wankel, 2010; Subramanian & Pisupati, 2010; Warren, 2017). The thesis to be examined is how Māori and Japanese managers and firms balance cultural (wellbeing) and commercial (wealth) imperatives in business (Mika, 2016) using indigenous and non-indigenous management philosophies to as the basis for contributing to alternative conceptualisations of economy and enterprise. This paper examines two non-Western management styles: Māori and Japanese as alternative models of managerial practice.

# MĀORI MANAGEMENT

As the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori settled the country as early as 950AD most likely from East Polynesia (the Society, Marquesas, Astral and Cook groups), bringing with them polynesian language, culture, foods, plants and animals and adapting them to the more intemperate climes of the southern lands (Buck, 1958; King, 2003). Until 1769 when Captain James Cook re-discovered Aotearoa New Zealand, life was governed by chiefly leadership, a tribal system of organisation, Māori language, culture, and knowledge, constituting a Māori world view untainted by outside influence (Buck, 1958; Firth, 1973). One of the compelling aspects of the Māori world view is the notion that humans are descendants of the heavens (Ranginui) and earth (Papatūānuku) (Royal, 2003). This cosmological view of human origins produces an ethical code centring on mutual responsibility, interdependency and reciprocity as the basis for maintaining balance whilst satisfying existential wants and needs of the collective (Marsden, 1992). Yet, Māori chiefs readily adapted European technologies, food products and systems of commerce, trade and exchange into tribal usage, eventually owning mills and ships and producing and selling surplus goods internationally (Petrie, 2006). However, growth in post-contact tribal economies was curtailed by European colonisation, which from about 1850 effected a massive and irreversable loss of land, language, cuture and life displacing tribal institutions and economies. A process of decolonisation, reconstructing tribal institutions, reviving language and culture and rebuilding tribal economies has been underway since 1975, but a difficult road lies ahead as tribal and nontribally aligned Māori attempt to find common ground (Mika, Smith, Gillies, & Wiremu, 2017). Of the 4,509,900 people resident in Aotearoa New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2014b), 701,700 (or 15.6 percent) identify as Māori (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a). The Māori economy is estimated to be worth NZ$42.6 billion in commercial assets, contributing NZ$11 billion to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Nana, Khan, & Schulze, 2015).

In this context, when looking at models of managerial practice to adapt to local needs, the tendency in Aotearoa New Zealand is to look to the United States and the United Kingdom (O'Sullivan & Mika, 2012). Yet, Aotearoa New Zealand is a long way from either. Moreover, given its history and location, Aotearoa New Zealand tends to identify more strongly with its Oceanic neighbours. The global search for alternative ways of managing that not only promise, but deliver sustainable value. This paper suggests

Mika and O'Sullivan (2014) examined the extent to which Māori management retained traces of traditionalism using a functionalism as their framework of analysis. They found that Māori management is a mix of traditional Māori values and methods integrated with modern management theory and practice. They defined Māori management as:

> *the systematic action-oriented deployment of resources by Māori and potentially non-Māori managers within a Māori world view (āronga Māori), to achieve purposes which are meaningful and of benefit to whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe), iwi (tribe), Māori communities and others, in terms of both the means and ends, and which may be conducted within both Māori and non-Māori organisational contexts.*
>
> (Mika & O'Sullivan, 2013, p. 14)

Breaking down our rather extravagant definition, Māori management is about getting things done using a variety of resources—consistent with the orthodox view of management. From there however, Māori management differentiates itself by reference to a Māori world view. A Māori world view brings into play aspects of Māori culture. These include: a commitment to intergenerational wealth and wellbeing; long-range planning horizons (25-100 years being common); the practice of Māori values such as *rangatiratanga* (self-determination), *whanaungatanga* (relationships), *kaitiakitanga* (stewardship), *manaakitanga* (generosity) and *wairuatanga* (spirituality); and the pursuit of multiple objectives—social, cultural, economic and environmental—as indicators of progress and outcomes (Morgan & Mulligan, 2006; Spiller et al., 2017).

Māori management also sets out to benefit one's tribe and others, meaning the general community, society, and economy. Māori management is not only concerned about what gets done (the ends) but how (the means), with considerable purchase placed upon procedural correctness or *tikanga* in the Māori language because of wider responsibilities to family, one's tribe and the environment (Mead, 2003). Māori management can be practised within Māori and non-Māori organisations as a subset of what an organisation does or as an integral part of its operations. Exemplars of Māori management exist that incorporate elements of this definition. Two stand out: Tūaropaki Trust and Wakatū Incorporation. These organisations demonstrate that it is possible to fulfil economic goals, operate sustainably and to do this in a Māori way.

Tūaropaki is a whānau (family) trust comprising around 2,000 owners just north of Taupō with its base of operations the settlement of Mokai (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2011). Tūaropaki invests significantly in sustainability. Moreover, it is one which is highly profitable, with growth prospects and dividends that astound for a relatively small ownership base. Yet, as their astute chairman Tūmanako Wereta explains in his laconic way, their success is due in equal part to aspiration, luck and divine intervention (Mika, 2009b). Tūaropaki's assets include dairy farms, a geothermal power plant, an expansive green house, a communications satellite, and a stake in Miraka, a Māori owned dairy factory powered by Tūaropaki's geothermal energy well. Food, energy and communications are their strategic priorities because these are things they know the world will always need. Waste from the milk factory and green house is fed into a worm farm, which produces fertilizer for the farms. All of this was achieved by the trustees and their advisors with the support of their owners. Only recently has the trust appointed a management team.

Wakatū Incorporation is another Māori land-based enterprise based in Nelson comprising over 3,000 owners. Wakatū started with an $11 million asset in 1977, and now has assets valued over $250 million (Kono NZ, 2014). The majority of the incorporation's wealth is tied up in property (70 percent), with the rest invested in Kono. Kono is a vertically integrated food and beverage business employing over 300 people, farming over 530 hectares of land and sea (Kono NZ, 2012). Kono products include indigenous branded wine, seafood and fruit exported to more than 25 countries. What sets Wakatū apart, however, is its focus on its people and its land and the values that underpin its approach to management. Wakatū views itself as a *kaitiaki* (guardian) of the natural resources over which it has *mana* (authority). This fundamentally alters the way in which management define their role, from entreprenuers to custodians, and how assets are defined, from capital to *taonga tuku iho* (legacies).

Mika and O'Sullivan (2014) suggest that Māori approaches to planning, organising, leading and controlling—the basic functions of management—offer managers in Aotearoa New Zealand an indigenous alternative to managing. Māori managers integrate Māori and *Pākehā* (Western) values and methods to produce results that matter to them.

## JAPANESE MANAGEMENT

In 1981, American professor William Ouchi wrote a book called "Theory Z: How American business can meet the Japanese challenge." Ouchi's (1981) book provides a compelling account of his research into Japanese companies and how differently they seem to manage compared to their American counterparts. Ouchi describes the Japanese way of managing as a clan-based approach, what in New Zealand we might term a 'tribal' method. Features of Japanese organisations include: lifetime employment; non-specialised (generalist) careers; implicit control; collective decision making; collective responsibility; and holistic concern. The typical American firm of the time was cast in completely opposite terms. Professor Ouchi's point is not to say that one way is better than the other, but simply that there is something worth learning about managing from another culture, and that there is a systematic way of doing so. Incidentally, it turns out that the Japanese way has much in common with a Māori way of managing. Apart from differences in economic scale and language, one of the other differences is that the body of research on Māori management is comparatively small; more is needed.

## THE BUSINESS OF FISHING: THE SEALORD DEAL

In pre-European times (pre-1769), fish was a significant food source for Māori, not just for personal consumption but also for inter-tribal trade between coastal and inland tribes that was regarded by Māori as a commercial activity despite the absence of money (Waitangi Tribunal, 1988, p. 7). Māori fishing rights, as with land, were defined by the mana whenua (authority over land) held by whānau (families), hapū (subtribes) and iwi (tribes) to catch fish in those places. Tribal practices also defined the manner in which fish was caught, when fishing was done, who did the fishing and how the catch was distributed. Sophisticated methods, equipment and knowledge of the practices of fishing among Māori was observed by early European explorers, which included deep sea fishing using large drag nets, one measuring 1,900 metres (Waitangi Tribunal, 1988, p. 7). This "bent for trade" and "passion for commercial pursuits" among Māori extended to provisioning whaling ships during early contact and the growing settler population post 1840 (Waitangi Tribunal, 1988, p. 8).

However, by the 1860s the proverbial tide had turned against the expanding Māori fisheries. As the European population numerically exceeded the Māori, attitudes toward Māori hardened after the New Zealand land wars and laws were passed which sought to wrest from Māori control of their lands, waters and fisheries (Howard, 2003, pp. 187-191; Waitangi Tribunal, 1988, p. 9). A series of laws were enacted which had as their basis the non-commerciality of Māori fisheries, a premise which continued to influence regulation of the fishing industry until 1989 (Mahuika, 2006). These laws purported to protect Māori interests in fishing by reserving Māori rights to fisheries, but prohibited the commercial sale of fish as being inconsistent with Māori custom, which was supposedly only for subsistence (Waitangi

Tribunal, 1988, p. 9). As a consequence, Māori involvement in commercial fishing in New Zealand up to the mid 1980s was limited to customary (non-commercial) and recreational fisheries (Mahuika, 2006, p. 237). Māori however held the view that their 1840 Treaty of Waitangi guarantees as to fisheries included a commercial element (Mahuika, 2006, p. 239).

In the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840, the chiefs of New Zealand's tribes and all Māori, were guaranteed by Her Majesty the Queen of England "full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, fisheries and other properties" which they may "collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession" (Kawharu, 1989, p. 317). The Māori version of the Treaty states: "ka whakaae ki nga Rangatira ki nga hapu – ki nga tangata katoa o Nu Tirani te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa" (Kawharu, 1989, p. 317). Kawharu (1989, p. 319) translates this passage of the Treaty as: "The Queen of England arranges [and] agrees to the Chiefs to the subtribes to people all of New Zealand the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands over their villages and over their treasures all." While fisheries is not explicitly stated in the Māori version, this is implied by reference to 'taonga' (treasures). The Waitangi Tribunal concluded that Māori had never "abandoned their claims to full fishing entitlements" (Waitangi Tribunal, 1988, p. 10).

## SETTLEMENT OF MĀORI FISHERIES CLAIMS

In 1986, the New Zealand government introduced the quota management system to more sustainably manage the fisheries resource (Loche & Leslie, 2007). This created property rights in the form of quota for each commercial fishstock (Mahuika, 2006, p. 238). The government mistakenly assumed there would be no effect on Māori fishing. But subsequent Treaty claims by Māori (see for example, Waitangi Tribunal, 1988, 1991; 1992) clearly established that Māori had 'unextinguished' use of marine resources. A High Court injunction in 1987, led by the New Zealand Māori Council, prevented the introduction of further species into the quota management system which effectively forced the Crown entered into negotiations with Māori for the settlement of breaches of Māori fishing rights under the Treaty of Waitangi (Mahuika, 2006, p. 238).

The settlement of Māori fisheries claims occurred in two stages: (i) the enactment of the Māori Fisheries Act 1989 and the allocation of 10 percent of quota that had been transferred into the quota management system to the Māori Fisheries Commission, which had been set up under the Act to hold and distribute quota to all Māori and help Māori into the business of fishing; and (ii) a deed of settlement on 23 September 1992 between Māori and the Crown, which provided Māori funding to purchase a share of Sealord, one of New Zealand's largest commercial fishing companies, which had come on the market (Mahuika, 2006, p. 239). In addition, under the deed Māori would "receive 20 percent of the quota for all species that were yet to be introduced into the quota management system" (Mahuika, 2006, p. 240).

The Māori negotiators had "persuaded the Government to put up $150 million to assist Māori in a joint venture with Brierley Investments to buy Sealord [Products Ltd] from from Carter Holt for $375 million... with the Sealord deed given effect in the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992" (Walker, 1990, p. 295). On the one hand, the Sealord deal gave Māori a total of 37 percent of all quota, but on the other Māori had relinquished their Treaty right to take fish for customary purposes which had been protected under section 88(2) of the Fisheries Act 1982 (Walker, 1990, p. 295).

The Sealord deal is prominent among Treaty settlements in New Zealand for several reasons. First, it was negotiated by a small group of Māori negotiators on behalf of all Māori, thereby operating without the "mana and collective wisdom" (i.e., mandate) of their tribes (Walker, 1990, p. 296). This 'top-down' approach was rationalised by the negotiators, the

Crown and the courts as being a momentary opportunity for Māori to secure a significant stake in the global fishing industry through a singlular transaction (Walker, 1990, p. 296). Second, it was a global settlement made on behalf of all Māori tribes and Māori individuals whereas settlements to that point had been generally made with iwi (tribes) and hapū (sub-tribes). Third, the deal extinguished any future claims Māori might have to commercial fisheries under the Treaty of Waitangi and allowed the Government complete authority to regulate commercial and customary fishing in New Zealand. Fourth, the Sealord deed and the legislation did not prescribe the method for allocating fisheries settlement assets to tribes. It would take another 11 years before the method of allocating quota to Māori was resolved by the enactment of the Māori Fisheries Act 2004 (Mahuika, 2006, p. 240).

The allocation model distributed 100 percent of inshore quota and 25 percent of deepwater quota on the basis of a tribe's coastline length, with the remaining 75 percent of deepwater quota distributed based on a tribe's population (Mahuika, 2006, pp. 242-243). As of February 2012, 54 of 57 iwi had achieved mandated iwi organisation (MIO) status under the Māori Fisheries Act 2004 and had received their share of $526 million in fisheries settlement assets allocated by Te Ohu Kai Moana, the Māori Fisheries Trust (Te Ohu Kai Moana, 2012, p. 10).

Aside from redistributing fisheries settlement assets to iwi, one of Te Ohu Kai Moana's enduring objectives has been assisting Māori into the business of fishing. Initially, this involved tendering out quota Te Ohu Kai Moana and its predecessors were temporarily holding for iwi. In May 1990, around 7,300 tonnes of deepwater quota and 970 tonnes of inshore quota was leased out, with this increasingly going to iwi owned fishing companies, consistent with the aims of the settlement (Mahuika, 2006, p. 239). As fisheries settlement asset transfers to MIOs have been concluded, iwi themselves are taking on the risk and opportunity presented by the business of Māori fishing (Mika, 2009a).

Under the Māori Fisheries Act 2004, mandated iwi organisations are required to establish subsidiary asset holding companies (AHC) which hold the quota and iwi shares in Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd. Of the AHCs, only a few are involved in fishing their quota, most iwi lease out the annual catch entitlement associated with their quota to Aotearoa Fishieres Ltd or other established fishing companies such as Sanfords, Talley's and others. Thus, iwi have been quickly developing their capability, knowledge and experience in the business of fishing.

Initially, the focus among iwi was on activities associated with quota ownership. This involved negotiating and managing annual catch entitlements, finding and developing commercial governors and understanding the global business of fishing. More recently however, iwi fishing companies and their parent bodies are turning their attention to understanding international markets and how they better align their quota holdings and activities to respond to consumer tastes and preferences (Mika, 2009a). Iwi fishing companies are increasingly examining ways in which to move beyond quota ownership to more active involvement in the seafood industry value chain—the harvesting, processing, marketing and distribution of fish and seafood products (Primary Sector Reference Group, 2009).

At a global level, iwi are collectively engaged in the business of fishing through their shared ownership of Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd, which was incorporated under the Companies Act 1993 on 26 November 2004. Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd is a key feature of the settlement asset allocation framework under the Māori Fisheries Act 2004 ("Māori Fisheries Act," 2004). Te Ohu Kai Moana holds all voting shares and 20% of income shares in Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd, while the remaining 80% of income shares are divided among 57 iwi according to their iwi population as a proportion of the total Māori population recorded in the 2001 Census (see Table 1) (Te Ohu Kai Moana, 2003a, p. 2). By vesting the voting shares of Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd in Te Ohu Kai Moana rather than iwi, it was hoped that "impartial central management" would “minimise gaming behaviour” and produce the fairest arrangement for all iwi (Te Ohu Kai Moana, 2003b, p. 90).

Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd’s purpose is to receive and manage post settlement fisheries assets for Te Ohu Kai Moana and on behalf of iwi as beneficiaries in the settlement (Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, 2005, p. 2; Te Ohu Kai Moana, 2003b, p. 100). Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd’s assets comprise 100 percent ownership of Moana Pacific Fisheries, OPC Fish and Lobster, Pacific Marine Farms and Kia ora Seafoods, as well as 50% ownership of Sealord Group Ltd and Prepared Foods (Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, 2009). In 2011, the Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd (2011) reported total equity of $394 million (up from $314 million in 2005), total revenues of 161 million, net profit after tax of $22.8 million, and a declared dividend of $11.3 million.

The Māori and Japanese are partners in an international fishing joint venture by virture of their shared ownership in Sealord Group Ltd. In this venture, all Māori tribes, and therefore all Māori people, are collectively represented through their ownership of Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd, which in turn effectively owns a 50 percent share of Sealord. The Japanese fishing company, Nippon Suisan Kaisha Limited (Nissui) owns the other 50 percent share (Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, 2009, p. 3), which it bought from Brierley Investments in 2001, after receiving government approval (Moore, 2012). Nissui has a 100 year history in the fishing industry and interests around the globe.

Sealord specializes in the supply of frozen, chilled and canned seafood to wholesalers, processors and retail chains in North America, Europe, Asia and Australasia under widely recognised worldwide brands (Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, 2009, p. 3).

# CONCLUSION

As Ouchi (1981) points out, adopting different management methods requires an acceptance that there is something to learn from other cultures, followed by a commitment to understanding the philosophy before the pracitce. The challenge is to feed that prospect with more Māori management research, education and practice. This is not a solitary endeavour, instead 'many hands make light work.' Nō reira, whano, whano, hara mai te toki, haumi ē, hui ē, tāiki ē! "Proceed, proceed, we are all united in one accord" (Sadler, 2014, p. 7).

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