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# Tupua te Kawa: Indigenous methodologies for non-Indigenous (and Indigenous) organisations

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**Abstract**

This paper proposes using Tupua te Kawa – a set of Indigenous values at law – together with tribal, kaupapa Māori (Māori approach) and Indigenous methodologies, to introduce a framework for facilitating non-Indigenous organisations' engagement with and implementation of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices. The framework recognises that Tupua te Kawa, an outcome of giving legal personhood to the Whanganui River via Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Settlement Claims) Act 2017, can be a reorientation to Indigenous methodologies by non-Indigenous organisations. This paper provides strength-based examples of how non-Indigenous organisations can engage with Indigenous knowledges, values and practices appropriately and effectively through Indigenous methodologies. The paper illustrates the critical role Indigenous methodologies play when connecting Indigenous frameworks to Indigenous worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices. To highlight the criticality of honouring Indigenous languages when seeking to understand Indigenous worldviews, te reo Māori (the Māori language) with translations is used throughout, which is necessary to receive the full benefit of the paper.

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## Introduction

> Nō te kawa ora a 'Tupua te Kawa' hei taura here nā Te Awa Tupua me ōna tangata ki te kawa nō tawhito rangi. Tupua te Kawa is the natural law and value system of Te Awa Tupua, which binds the people to the River and the River to the people. (Whanganui Iwi and The Crown, 2014)

This kīanga (expression, saying) acknowledges the relationship between all lives, where people are part of nature. Te Awa Tupua is an indivisible and living whole comprising the Whanganui River from the mountains to the sea, incorporating its tributaries and all its physical and metaphysical elements (Whanganui Iwi and The Crown, 2014). This simplified definition of the above kīanga sets the direction of this paper, which signifies the importance of connection and points to the transformative purpose of employing Indigenous methodologies in non-Indigenous (and Indigenous) organisations, that is, living the values of Tupua te Kawa to enable and uphold those connections.

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the critical role of methodologies in facilitating engagement with Indigenous frameworks in non-Indigenous organisations by situating Indigenous methodologies within the totality of Indigenous worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices. We illustrate this by developing a framework for non-Indigenous organisations, which are informed by Tupua te Kawa – a set of Indigenous values at law – that include key principles, methods and examples of application. The framework emphasises the interconnectedness between Indigenous worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices and how Indigenous methodologies can facilitate those connections. As a result, we argue that in the context of Indigenous methodologies, research and practice are one and the same, whereby there is no practice-theory divide because practice is an embodied expression of theory (Hapeta et al., 2019). Therefore, the paper contributes to theory and practice, research application and organisational application and is useful for both management researchers and practitioners.

There is a danger of Indigenous knowledge being institutionalised away from its Indigenous communities where it began and continues to inform identity and ways of living and being (Smith et al., 2016). In the context of this paper, the danger and potential consequences include the isolation of traditional Māori knowledge, concepts and phenomena from their origins (Paenga and Paenga, 2008) or the possibility of reconfigured knowledges, concepts and phenomena being usurped within other cultural frameworks or being globalised (Durie, 2011). The dangers and consequences can be seen in cultural appropriation and through issues of intellectual property rights (Ahu et al., 2017) or through Indigenous tokenism or exploitation (Love and Hall, 2022). Understanding Indigenous methodologies within the totality of Indigenous worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices is necessary because each part that makes up the Indigenous world is not separate but is understood in relationship to the whole (Kawagley and Barnhardt, 1999). In Aotearoa New Zealand, this is true for a Māori worldview, which

illustrates the interconnectedness between people, actions and the environment (Rout et al., 2021; Tipene-Matua et al., 2009).

In 2017, Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act was passed, formalising a new way to view, use and understand Te Awa Tupua – the Whanganui River. Te Awa Tupua Act is a statute aimed at reconciling the relationship between Whanganui iwi (tribes affiliated with the Whanganui River) and the Crown in light of breaches of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, one of the founding documents of Aotearoa New Zealand (Collins and Esterling, 2019). Te Awa Tupua Act enables Whanganui iwi to care for, protect, manage and use the Whanganui River through the kawa (for the purpose of this paper, this means immutable principles and values) and tikanga (customs, practices) maintained by uri (descendants of the river tribes) over time (Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, 2020b). Tupua te Kawa is the law system for the Whanganui River (Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, 2020c) and is a key outcome of Te Awa Tupua Act. Non-Indigenous organisations, such as local and regional councils, government departments and private organisations, which have a legal, fiduciary and moral responsibility and relationship to the Whanganui River, are now tasked with ensuring that their decisions, practices and actions adhere to the kawa and tikanga outlined in Te Awa Tupua Act.

Whilst focused on Aotearoa, the insights from this paper have implications for other Indigenous contexts. There is a growing need to meaningfully engage with and utilise Indigenous knowledge when conducting assessments and adapting to environmental change and decision making (Wheeler et al., 2020), especially as agents of environmental conservation (Etchart, 2017). Meaningful engagement will not, however, be realised if the process of including Indigenous people is not carried out in a mutually respectful manner (Dennis-McCarthy, 2018). Respectful processes require a commitment to understanding each other's – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – worldviews through applying appropriate methodologies. The commitment should go beyond a legislative obligation to one that encourages bravery and vulnerability among organisations, managers and researchers to function effectively in their roles as stewards of the environment and leaders committed to change.

In this paper, Indigenous methodologies are Indigenous ways of giving and receiving knowledge about and with Indigenous peoples (Porsanger, 2004). Indigenous methodologies are often explained as ways of understanding and conducting Indigenous research (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Given the definition by Porsanger (2004), we argue that Indigenous methodologies are not only research methodologies but are applicable as methodologies for organisations because they are situated within the totality of Indigenous worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices. Furthermore, Indigenous methodologies are underpinned by Indigenous ontology to the extent that ontology informs assumptions about human nature (Henry and Foley, 2018). This paper illustrates several tribal and kaupapa Māori methodologies as *examples* of Indigenous methodologies. In the context of Te Awa Tupua, tribal methodologies are Whanganui iwi approaches to acquiring and disseminating knowledge, how those methods work and how they might inform non-Indigenous organisational practice.

This paper is divided into two key sections. To understand the interconnectedness of worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices, the first part of the paper provides the necessary context by discussing Indigenous methodologies, key aspects of te

ao Māori (a Māori worldview, a Māori universe), as well as kaupapa Māori methodologies. The second part of the paper presents Tupua te Kawa as a framework of methodology by interrogating several Indigenous, kaupapa Māori and tribal methodologies through the four kawa of Tupua te Kawa, highlighting the principles, methods and possible applications.

Te reo Māori is used throughout the paper not only to maintain the integrity of what is described, but also because these are the words that are used in relevant law, policy and practice, while English translations are given. This paper comes from a place of strength in the potential of Indigenous methodologies to enrich mainstream organisations by approaching questions of indigeneity through an Indigenous lens. The privileging of an Indigenous perspective is not intended to diminish non-Indigenous knowledges. It is about providing Indigenous peoples with a foundation on which to stand and a way for non-Indigenous organisations to embrace their responsibilities in relation to Indigenous peoples, and in this case, the Māori people of Aotearoa (Bishop, 2008).

The first co-author is Whanganui uri, whose knowledge, experience, education and upbringing by and on the Whanganui River are interwoven throughout this article. The second co-author identifies as Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa, Whakatōhea and Ngāti Kahungunu, was born in Whakatāne and raised in Rotorua, and whose research centres on Māori and Indigenous management philosophy. The third co-author identifies as Ngāi Tiriti (a descendant of European settlers enabled by Te Tiriti o Waitangi), having chosen to migrate to Aotearoa, with ancestors from Russia, Poland, Scotland and England. The fourth co-author is Tūwharetoa and was born in Taumarunui, a small town on the upper reaches of the Whanganui River.

## Context

### *Indigenous methodologies*

The risk of bringing Indigenous knowledge into non-Indigenous spaces is that this knowledge is open to misinterpretation, appropriation and critique (Kovach, 2009). This risk elevates methodology as a means of upholding the integrity of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous methodologies are now being recognised for the knowledge and the knowing they afford, namely, their processes of inquiry (Gone, 2019). The role of methodologies is not only to uphold Indigenous knowledge and practice but to situate them in cross-cultural communicative contexts (Wilson, 2008), which requires understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Kovach, 2009). This understanding should neither be misinterpreted nor appropriated by non-Indigenous people. Instead, the function of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations is to effect emancipatory and empowering praxis and inquiry, value the transformative power of Indigenous knowledges and pay homage to Indigenous ways of transmitting knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Pihama, 2010; Smith, 2012).

The transmission of Indigenous knowledge in the pursuit of creating understanding is a layered endeavour (Kovach, 2009). Wilson (2008) exquisitely describes Indigenous methodology as ceremony. His view of methodology is rooted in relational connotations – with and between people, the environment and lands, with the cosmos and ideas, ultimately raising one's consciousness and insights into Indigenous worldviews. Indigenous

worldviews are signified by the unification of humans with the natural world (Royal, 2002), which provides Indigenous people with cognitive, perceptual and affective maps to make sense of the landscape to achieve life's purposes (Hart, 2010). Smith (2012) identifies connecting as an Indigenous project, which positions individuals in sets of relationships with other people and the environment, and to be connected is to be whole. In te ao Māori, relationships manifest through whakapapa (genealogies, layers of descent), which is a tool to understand the world and human relationships with it and to express mātauranga Māori (pursuit and application of Māori knowledge) (Pihama, 2010).

## *Te ao Māori*

Te ao Māori is a Māori universe that has all the subtleties, idiosyncrasies and nuances of Māori culture (Opai, 2021). Te ao Māori is the principal base from which the values of the people flow and is a rationale for the way in which Māori conduct their lives (Pohatu, 2008; Royal, 2002). Bear in mind that Māori are not homogenous; they live in diverse cultural realities (Durie, 1995). A Māori worldview acknowledges a natural order to the universe (Davis, 2006), in which the relationships between nature and people manifest through whakapapa. Whakapapa begins with Māori creation stories, which establish relationships between people, the environment and the spiritual world (Lockhart et al., 2019; Toki, 2014). Te Kore (the nothingness) is the source of all things, where unlimited potential for being exists (Barlow, 1991). During the creation of the world, Te Pō (the dark night) and light were separated from chaos, then later came Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), from which all things are derived (Barlow, 1991; Walker, 1996). Te ao Māori worldviews allow for interpretation and insight as situated and tested by Māori thoughts, values, principles and applications which are all interconnected through whakapapa (Pohatu, 2008).

One way Māori thoughts, values and principles are applied is through tikanga. Tikanga, in its philosophical sense, underpins Māori ontology as it informs assumptions about human nature and shapes epistemology by promoting a way of living according to the principles of te ao Māori (Henry and Foley, 2018). Tikanga can also be defined as rule, plan, method, habit, anything normal or usual, reason, meaning, authority, control, correct or right (Williams, 2001). Under the highest level of tikanga, the core values that underpin the totality of tikanga Māori are whanaungatanga (relationship building), mana (prestige and authority), tapu (sacred, protected, prohibited), manaakitanga (hospitality, kindness) and utu (recompense, retribution) (Gallagher, 2008). Closely associated to tikanga is kawa, which also refers to fundamental principles or values that determine appropriate tikanga (Tinirau, 2017). Definitions of these terms can be fluid in application and vary among tribes. In his inquiry on the relevance of kawa to modernity, Durie (2011) found that the outward expressions of kawa have little meaning if they are detached from their underlying philosophy and values.

Mātauranga Māori is a core component of the knowledge base of tikanga (Mead, 2003). Mātauranga Māori is the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding, which follows a systematic methodology based on evidence, incorporating culture, values and worldview (Hikuroa, 2017). Mātauranga Māori contains knowledge systems, theories and actions and is expressed in multiple forms, for example, through whare (houses or schools), such as toi whakairo (carving), rāranga (weaving), whaikōrero

(oratory), kapa haka (contemporary performance), astronomy, fishing and gardening (Smith et al., 2016). Most importantly, mātauranga Māori is, first and foremost, valid in its own right (Hikuroa, 2017). Te reo Māori is critical in supporting the aspirations of Māori ways of knowing and doing in order to maintain cultural diversity, knowledge and different ways of interpreting the world (McAllister et al., 2020). Te reo Māori is a valued and integral companion ensuring deeper understandings of te ao Māori (Pohatu, 2008), where pronouncing te reo is one of the fastest ways to show respect for Māori people and their culture (Opai, 2021). It is also important to ensure that words from the Māori language are not divorced from their cultural roots (McNatty and Roa, 2002).

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) provides a foundation for the inclusion of mātauranga, ethics and tikanga in research (McAllister et al., 2020; Mika et al., 2022b). Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, was signed in 1840, alongside the English text – the Treaty of Waitangi (Orange, 1987). Neither text provided detailed guidance on how best to implement its provisions such as participation, partnership and protection; nonetheless, together, the Treaty texts enabled Aotearoa to emerge as a modern and independent state (Durie, 2004). For Māori, the Treaty is a means of acknowledging the role of Māori people, knowledge, values and philosophies (Forster, 2003). In management discourse, such acknowledgement is understood as Māori responsiveness, which is concerned with instituting organisational forms, functions and intercultural relations which honour the partnership between Māori and the Crown within the Treaty (Mika et al., 2018). Durie (2003) identifies four other ways the state has approached recognising Māori interests under the Treaty: biculturalism – the introduction of Māori values and cultural norms into the public sector and elsewhere; Māori recruitment – establishing a critical mass of Māori staff to provide leadership; mainstreaming – recognising Māori aspirations and greater involvement of Māori people in the public sector; and delivering effective outcomes for Māori.

## *Kaupapa Māori*

Research on Māori dates back to colonisation, with Māori people often being the research subjects of Europeans (Powick, 2002). The publishing of books about tūpuna Māori (Māori ancestors) and their histories was often misrepresented. These were often written in terms of how Europeans understood their own, usually Christian, culture (Royal, 1992). It is no wonder then, "the word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary" (Smith, 2012: 1). Kaupapa Māori research, therefore, was born from Māori struggles for rangatiratanga (self-determination) (Henry and Pene, 2001) and mana motuhake (autonomy) (Pihama, 2010). Kaupapa Māori emerged from the wider revitalisation of Māori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices (Bishop, 2008) and is a broad term literally meaning Māori strategy, theme, philosophy, approach, topic, institution, agenda or principles (Ryan, 1995). Kaupapa Māori is evident in Māori approaches to theory (Smith, 1997; Smith, 2012; Walker et al., 2006), research (Borell et al., 2020; Smith, 2012), social services (Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, 2019, 2020), evaluation (Williams et al., 2019) and health and well-being (Te Kotahi Research Institute, 2020).

Kaupapa Māori is research that is related to being Māori, connected to Māori philosophy and principles, takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori and the importance of

Māori language and culture and is concerned with the struggle for autonomy over Māori cultural well-being (Smith, 1997). Kaupapa Māori is conscientising, ensuring transforming research praxis through awareness raising and action (Smith, 1997). Kaupapa Māori gives full recognition to Māori cultural values and systems and is a philosophy that guides Māori research (Walker et al., 2006). Finally, kaupapa Māori research is an attempt to claim space, partly the space to convince research communities of the need for greater Māori involvement in research (Smith, 2012). For instance, Māori researchers have made important contributions in Indigenous management scholarship (Love, 2019). They include Henry and Pene (2001), who for example, contributed to the pursuit of better outcomes for Māori. Further scholarship includes Māori approaches to management (Mika and O'Sullivan, 2014; Spiller et al., 2017), the role of Māori values in business (Best and Love, 2010; Knox, 2005; Mika et al., 2022a; Wolfgramm et al., 2020), new directions in organisational theory and practice (Dell, 2017; Dell et al., 2020) and, more recently, Māori responsiveness in mainstream organisations (Mika et al., 2018).

## Tupua te Kawa as a framework of methodology

Situated in the context of Indigenous and kaupapa Māori methodologies, this paper draws on kaupapa-ā-iwi (tribal philosophy), which is informed by tribal knowledge and place-based difference (Wilson, 2008). Central to Indigenous epistemology are tribal epistemologies (Kovach, 2009), which are shaped by ethics and philosophy that are congruent with a Māori worldview (Henry and Foley, 2018). In the pursuit of meaningful engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, it is necessary to apply pedagogy – a method of teaching. A pedagogy of place shifts the emphasis of teaching about local culture to teaching through culture (Barnhardt, 2008) and is a pedagogy of the community (Sobel, 2005). Pedagogies and methodologies of place move beyond generalisations of a Māori worldview because Indigenous knowledges are as diverse as the communities using them (Drawson et al., 2017). Such knowledges are therefore difficult to define, deconstruct and compartmentalise (Kovach, 2009).

Tupua te Kawa recognises a set of Indigenous values at law that reflect the innate relationship between the Whanganui River and uri as guardians and sovereign partners in protecting the mana of the river (Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, 2020c). Tupua te Kawa identifies four kawa that guide the understandings and practices of the Whanganui River (Whanganui Iwi and The Crown, 2014). This paper uses Tupua te Kawa as a framework of tribal methodologies to propose a way for non-Indigenous organisations, particularly those organisations which have a relationship with the Whanganui River, to apply Indigenous methodologies when engaging and implementing Indigenous knowledges, values and practices.

The framework (Figure 1) begins with te ao Māori at the centre as the principal base of values identifying the way in which Indigenous, and in this case, Māori people, conduct their lives (Pohatu, 2008; Royal, 2002). Moving outward are the four intrinsic values of Tupua te Kawa that underpins and supports Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui Iwi and The Crown, 2014). Beyond that are principles relative to each of the intrinsic values that guide and inform behaviour, practices and decisions relating to Te Awa Tupua. The most outer realm conceptualises methodologies which involve the use of both kaupapa Māori and iwi (tribal) knowledge systems, narratives, distinct worldviews, teachings and technologies developed and sustained over generations (Webber and Macfarlane, 2019).

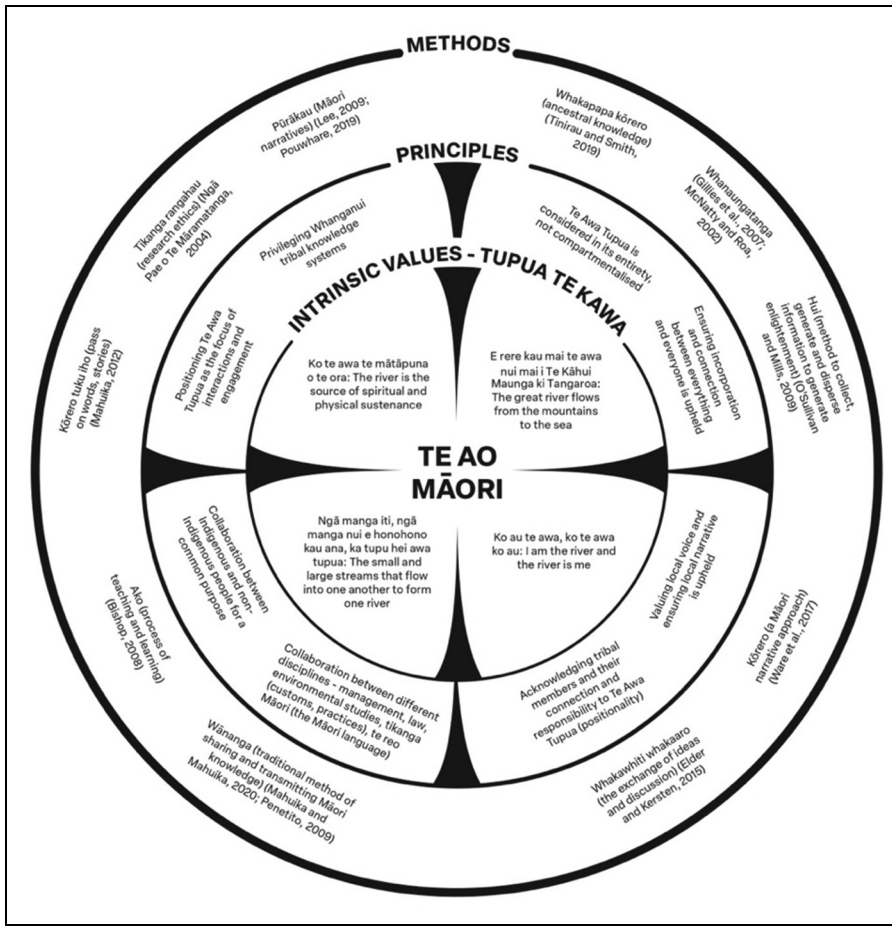


**Figure 1.** Tupua te Kawa as a framework of methodology.

The examples within the framework are not exhaustive nor are the methods fixed to certain principles and values. The framework is illustrated in a circular motion to represent the importance of context and appropriateness in any given situation. Each of the four values, principles, methods and examples of application are discussed in the next section.

## Applying Tupua te Kawa

### *Ko te awa te mātāpuna o te ora: The river is the source of spiritual and physical sustenance*

Two key principles that are part of this kawa are positioning Te Awa Tupua as the foremost focus of interactions and engagements and privileging Whanganui tribal knowledge systems. Smith (2012) identifies three interrelated Māori strategies that are relevant for

positioning Te Awa Tupua and its tribal knowledge systems. These strategies are celebrating survival, discovering the beauty of Māori knowledge and claiming and reclaiming. Harrowing evidence was retold in the Whanganui River Waitangi Tribunal report (1999) which detailed the findings and recommendations on the claims inquired by Whanganui iwi against the Crown for breaches of the treaty (Waitangi Tribunal, 2020). The evidence legitimised tribal history pivoted on past experiences, which not only speaks to but celebrates the survival of Whanganui tribes. Privileging Māori knowledge is evident in an overwhelming reception of Te Awa Tupua Act (Mika and Scheyvens, 2021), with its success attributed to the ontology of the river as a spiritual ancestor of Whanganui iwi (Kramm, 2020). In addition to the principles of positioning and privileging, tikanga rangahau or research ethics provide the appropriate set of practices required to obtain data (Henry and Pene, 2001). Tikanga or ethics not only apply to research, but to organisational practice as well, whereby ethics underpin Māori ontology to the extent ontology informs assumptions about human nature (Henry and Foley, 2018) and reflects Māori values and beliefs (Powick, 2002). 'Whanganui kaiponu' is a kīwaha (colloquial saying) used to describe the preservation and extreme protection of Whanganui tribal knowledge (Baron, 2019; Haami, 2017). Whanganui kaiponu ensures care and consideration has been given to the type of tribal information gathered and shared and how it is shared to whom and for what purposes.

Two particular methods that can support acquiring an understanding of Te Awa Tupua are kōrero tuku iho (Mahuika, 2012) and pūrākau (Lee, 2009; Pouwhare, 2019). Literally meaning to pass on words and stories, kōrero tuku iho is an art form of oral history and tradition (Mahuika, 2012), which holds powerful narratives about the past, present and future (Webber and Macfarlane, 2019). Similarly, pūrākau is also a form of Māori narrative that means more than Māori folktales, myths and legends (Pouwhare, 2019) and contains epistemological constructs, cultural codes and worldviews fundamental to Māori identity (Lee, 2009). Kōrero tuku iho and pūrākau can be expressed and manifested in tribal proverbs, kīwaha, traditional and contemporary performances, songs, anecdotal evidence, such as observation and recollection, evidence presented during Treaty of Waitangi claims, interviews and documentaries. The methods can be applied by engaging a tribal expert or facilitator, with some organisations employing kaumātua (elders). For example, Rangitihi Tahupārae, a Whanganui kaumatua, was the first person to hold the position of Kaumatua o Te Whare Pāremata (elder of parliament) in 2000. His role was to oversee and support the use of tikanga in parliamentary ceremonies and processes (Mika, 2019).

Examples of application can be through engagement with a cultural (preferably tribal) facilitator or expert or through the appointment of local advisors or advisory panels, such as the Te Ao Māori Strategy External Advisory Panel of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (2022). Viewing multi-media aids and attending exhibitions or productions of relevance can also be useful. For example, multimedia aids are available (MEL Films, 2019; Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, 2020a; Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, 2019; Paora Joseph Productions, 2014), and exhibitions have been curated (Te Atawhai o Te Ao, 2022) to socialise the stories of Te Awa Tupua. Fonterra Co-operative Group Limited (2022) decided to integrate their appreciation of Māori culture through the development of an actual pou (post) to tell their company story through the art of wood carving. Applying methods must be supported by creating organisational policy and procedures

that outline processes for Māori culture and tikanga within the organisation through practices, such as ruruku (to invoke, incantation), mihi (greeting, giving thanks), waiata (song) and kai (food) (Spiller et al., 2017). Policies could then be incorporated and or complemented with cultural competency or cultural confidence professional development (Haar et al., 2020) to further embed the values and practices within the organisation to enable change.

## *E rere kau mai te awa nui mai i te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa: The great river flows from the mountains to the sea*

This kawa speaks to the entirety and interconnectedness of Te Awa Tupua. Too often, the Whanganui River has been compartmentalised physically by its bed, banks and waters, legally through its subjection to a raft of statutory regimes, organisationally through the jurisdictions of local and Crown agencies and through issues of navigability, sale and compulsory acquisition (Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, 2020b). Te Awa Tupua Act provides a new lens through which to view the Whanganui River, encouraging the incorporation and connection between all aspects of the Whanganui River and its people – a holistic approach to interacting and engaging. The following methods related to this value are whakapapa kōrero, whanaungatanga and hui. Whakapapa kōrero acknowledges and illustrates the connection of humans to all things in the world (Tinirau and Smith, 2019), which differs from kōrero tuku iho because it situates individuals in the context of a connected whole (Wilson, 2008). Whakapapa kōrero can be used to build knowledge and relationships over the course of any engagement journey. Similarly, whanaungatanga is more than networking; it is about developing and enhancing relationships and connection (Gillies et al., 2007), which has an essential spiritual dimension (McNatty and Roa, 2002). Hui is a form of social engagement and is a manifestation of whanaungatanga (O'Sullivan and Mills, 2009) because connections are made between people. Meaning more than just a meeting, hui can also be informal conversations, the exchange of information, as well as ritual encounters such as birthdays, weddings, funerals and other cultural occasions (Salmond, 1975).

Whakapapa kōrero can be applied and expressed in many ways. For example, if one has never visited or engaged with a non-Indigenous organisation, a pōwhiri, the traditional ceremony of a Māori welcome or ritual encounter (Tauroa, 1986), and or a whakatau (less formal welcoming ceremony) might be proposed as a first encounter. Today, pōwhiri can be used in the workplace for welcoming esteemed guests, new employees or foreign visitors. At times, pōwhiri might be followed up with whakawhanaungatanga through introductions and the delivery of pepeha, which can include one's mountain, river, waka (ancestral canoe), tribe and sub-tribe one comes from, or it could also be the use of a whakataukī (proverb) symbolising tribal markers. Researchers in The Collaboration Lab, part of one of New Zealand's national science challenges, developed a pōwhiri model to generate solutions to natural resource planning issues (McAleer, 2017). Pōwhiri, whakatau and whakawhanaungatanga are opportunities to establish connections and linkages (Kennedy and Cram, 2010), introducing one another and engaging in critical dialogue on purposes, objectives, risks and opportunities. These processes not only create linkages and establish good foundations but provide the well-spirited beginning needed to embark on any journey relating to te ao Māori. Indigenous methods of

engagement are not restricted to traditional processes. Recently, technology has become an important avenue and vehicle for the delivery of tribal knowledge and methodologies (O'Carroll, 2013; Webber and Macfarlane, 2019).

## *Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au: I am the river and the river is me*

Whilst Te Awa Tupua Act has been described as pioneering (Salmond, 2020), receiving national and international exposure, what is written about the act seldom comes from those engaged and impacted by it in their daily lives. The granting of legal personhood to Te Awa Tupua opens both the river and uri to the world and is an encouraging opportunity for advancing the aspirations of Whanganui iwi. It is necessary to ensure the local narrative is valued, and the direction of policy and practice in relation to the river is as Whanganui iwi intend. Testimonies by tribal elders are covered extensively in the Whanganui River report (Waitangi Tribunal, 1999), outlining the impact of Crown decisions, actions and inactions on the river, its environment and its people. This value acknowledges the importance of privileging local voice and ensuring the local narrative is upheld, along with the connection and responsibility of Whanganui uri to Te Awa Tupua.

Positionality describes an author's worldview, which is located within a particular social, economic and political context of society (Foote and Gau Bartell, 2011) emerging out of family narratives, knowledges and experiences (Kennedy and Cram, 2010). Positionality is not an analysis of who should or should not be doing Indigenous or kaupapa Māori work but alludes to and identifies the need to be aware of one's position and situatedness when working and engaging with Te Awa Tupua. For non-uri (non-descendants of the tribe), this position might include being reflective about your own identity (Papps and Ramsden, 1996) and placing yourself through a process that is relationally oriented (Sinclair, 2010), as illustrated in the following examples of application.

Examples of application include the possibility of employees in non-Indigenous organisations responding to positionality through the exploration of their own ancestry by developing their own ways of identifying themselves. Appointing tribal members or those with at least a familiarity of the Whanganui River will ensure responsibility in assisting others to know a Whanganui worldview in a respectful and responsible manner (Kovach, 2009). The process of actively involving communities in Te Awa Tupua and kaupapa Māori work can include but is not limited to obtaining tribal consent, establishing committees as controlling authorities, developing and implementing appropriate codes of conduct, employing and training community members and the use of facilitators (Fisher and Ball, 2003). Kii Tai Education & Culture Ltd is a Māori, Whanganui-based organisation which prides itself on facilitating experiences that support positive engagement with te ao Māori, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. The organisation has supported the facilitation and hosting of international visitors (Whanganui and Partners, 2022), delivering cultural programmes and modules in schools (Durie Hill School, 2021) and providing professional development and cultural confidence transformational programmes for non-Indigenous organisations. Additionally, kōrero, a Māori narrative approach, is not just speaking and talking but is a chiefly endeavour recognising the status and significance of those who kōrero and share stories (Ware et al., 2017). Like other forms of conversing, such as talk story (Kovach, 2010), yarning (Fredericks et al., 2011) and talanoa (Vaioleti, 2006),

kōrero encourages uri to share narratives, enables incorporation of feedback and enhances communication. Similarly, whakawhiti whakaaro or the exchange of ideas and discussion (Elder and Kersten, 2015) privileges uri as meaningful contributors, not just conduits for information extraction. Tribal experts and elders can fact-check information shared about the Whanganui River; cultural advisors can be appointed to provide guidance; and privileging tribal knowledge can be achieved through the careful selection of texts, literature and information sources.

### *Ngā manga iti, ngā manga nui e honohono kau ana, ka tupu hei awa tupua: The small and large streams that flow into one another form one river*

This value sees the Whanganui River as a singular entity comprising many elements and communities working collaboratively for the common purpose of Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui Iwi and The Crown, 2014). It is the coming together of Māori and non-Māori people, the rafts of disciplines, knowledges, experiences and expertise for the betterment of Te Awa Tupua. This approach is reflected in a Whanganui expression of adding to the kūmete – a food bowl. Metaphorically speaking, the idea of a kūmete is that everyone contributes to it with their individual resources, knowledge and kōrero, growing and developing resources until such time the kūmete overflows (Ngāti Rangi, 2020). It is only then you can begin to take from the kūmete. This approach encourages everyone to contribute, the value of which can then be savoured by all, for the common good. Two methods related to this value are wānanga and ako. Wānanga is to contemplate and think deeply about something (Opai, 2021) and is a traditional method of sharing and transmitting Māori knowledge, where meaning is made through dialogue (Ware et al., 2017). Wānanga involves a conscious union of mind and spirit (Penetito, 2009) and is not only applied in tribal contexts or solely with Māori people but can facilitate discussion on an array of topics with diverse groups (Mahuika and Mahuika, 2020). Ako, in its literal sense, is the process of teaching and learning to create contexts for reciprocal learning (Bishop, 2008) that are unique to tikanga Māori (Pihama et al., 2002).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the interface of Māori and non-Māori spaces has been analysed from the perspective of minority–majority group relations and biculturalism (Sibley, 2004), and Pākeha (New Zealand European) paralysis – the emotionally and intellectually difficult experiences when engaging with Māori (Hotere-Barnes, 2015). Examples of application include wānanga, which has the potential to facilitate the engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and ideologies, especially as a site "for healing the colonial trauma and mamae (pain) that has disconnected and fractured our communities over time…" (Mahuika and Mahuika, 2020: 375). In an organisational setting, wānanga can be set aside for specific purposes or can be conducted on site or away at a marae (place of gathering, village) or site of significance. There are also varying levels of wānanga, from engaging in dialogue or group conversation to whare wānanga (higher schools of learning) which are created for specialised areas of knowledge (Mahuika and Mahuika, 2020). Furthermore, Te Awa Tupua, as a singular entity comprising many elements and communities, does not assume everyone has comparable capability. This will be true for organisations and individuals who are at different stages of understanding Te Awa Tupua. Accommodating varying levels of understanding can be

aided by ako as a pedagogy as it incorporates problem-solving methods (Morelli and Mataira, 2010; Wehipeihana et al., 2016).

## Implications for non-Indigenous (and Indigenous) organisations

This paper firstly illustrates through Tupua te Kawa as a framework of methodology, the critical role of methodologies in facilitating non-Indigenous organisations' engagement with and implementation of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices. By doing so, we illustrate the importance of how methodologies are situated, connected and enabled within the totality of Indigenous worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices. The critical and connecting role of methodologies ensures that Indigenous worldviews are less likely to be mis-conceptualised and mis-used. As a result, the engagement with and implementation of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in non-Indigenous organisations cannot occur without appropriate ontological, epistemological and axiological underpinnings (Wilson, 2008). Henry and Foley (2018) point out that methodology is not only a process for conducting research, but also acknowledges kaupapa Māori as a framework for understanding how Māori live according to tikanga. Non-Indigenous organisation engagement through Indigenous methodologies is, therefore, not necessarily reflected in qualitative-quantitative or positivist-interpretivist categorisations of methodologies but is founded on Indigenous assumptions, cultural concepts and social practices (Henry and Foley, 2018; Henry and Pene, 2001). An example of embedded Indigenous methodologies is seen in the contextual application of wānanga, where wānanga is not limited to being a research method or method of engagement but is a traditional method of sharing and transmitting Māori knowledge (Ware et al., 2017). Meanwhile, case studies, for example, are known for having research connotations typically combining data collection methods, such as archives, interviews, questionnaires and observations (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Secondly, this paper highlights the strengths and contributions of Indigenous, kaupapa Māori and tribal methodologies to organisational studies and praxis. Earlier, we discussed examples of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous spaces are facilitated, including Māori responsiveness and the ways in which the state has approached recognising Māori interests. According to Durie (2017), kaupapa Māori inspires and contributes to rethinking academic conventions and workplace practices. An example of this re-think is the conceptualisation of the organisation. Indigenous methodologies offer a view of the organisation that moves beyond disembodied systems toward embedded social processes of the culture in which it exists (Ruwhiu and Cone, 2010). Ruwhiu and Cone (2010) argue that historically, organisations have used mechanistic imagery to project organisational theory and practice, employing a one-size fits all approach and ignoring other traditions of knowledge and knowing. Dell et al. (2020) demonstrate how Māori knowledge influences Aotearoa management and organisational practice by proposing Indigenous (Māori) metaphors for organisations. These include organisations as guardians, familial networks, navigators and innovators – signalling a paradigm shift in the way we view and understand organisations (Dell et al., 2020). Part of the paradigm shift from mechanistic to Indigenous imagery of organisations involves using Indigenous methodologies to facilitate achieving mutual understanding (Smith et al., 2016). Reaching mutual understanding via kaupapa Māori approaches also applies to non-Māori as it can help better

understand New Zealand society in creating more inclusive and equitable perspectives of belonging, citizenship and nationhood (Borell et al., 2020).

Finally, reaching mutual understanding through relationality is not merely a question of which methods and how they are applied, but why. The importance and rationale of Indigenous methodologies are iterated throughout the paper. These reasons include to help make sense of the environment to achieve life's purposes (Hart, 2010), to function effectively in our roles exercising tiakitanga (the action of taking care of natural resources) and leaders committed to change, to exercise equal partnership under te Tiriti o Waitangi and to create a more inclusive and equitable society (Borell et al., 2020; Wolfgramm et al., 2020). The Whanganui River gained legal personhood and recognition of Indigenous values at law through Te Awa Tupua Act (Takacs, 2021). The act is not just symbolic of Māori and tribal ideologies but provides compulsion at law for people to move towards a new lens in which to view and understand Te Awa Tupua. In 2020, the long-awaited Upokongaro cycleway and pedestrian bridge over the Whanganui River was opened after delays due to non-compliance with Te Awa Tupua Act. The project was delayed because local authorities had not fulfilled their legal obligation to gain permission to occupy the space and neither consulted appropriately nor collaborated with the communities at place (Ellis, 2022). This is a classic example of the absence of appropriate methodologies when implementing Indigenous frameworks in non-Indigenous organisations. The importance of whanaungatanga, the practice of kōrero and whakawhiti whakaaro and the application of wānanga would have gone a long way in facilitating a more effective process.

Although the example of the cycleway bridge identifies the failings of local authorities, it does so to illustrate the need for a changed lens of the Whanganui River, and to support non-Indigenous organisational engagement and implementation of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices. Tupua te Kawa as a methodology need not be a site of struggle or contention between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews and practices, instead it provides kawa that can facilitate engagement through a process that inspires commitment, guides behaviour and generates confidence (Durie, 2011). Another implication for non-Indigenous organisations and their employees is addressing issues of Pākeha paralysis and cultural safety (Papps and Ramsden, 1996). Jones (2012) argues that an exploration of philosophical questions about Pākeha engagement with kaupapa Māori should go beyond cultural sensitivity to a process involving openness to being taught, a tolerance for uncertainty and understanding power relations.

## Conclusion

This paper has illustrated, through Tupua te Kawa as a framework of methodology, the critical role of methodologies in facilitating non-Indigenous organisations' engagement with and implementation of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices. By doing so, we have illustrated the importance of how methodologies are situated, connected and enabled within the totality of Indigenous worldviews, peoples, knowledges, values and practices. Because of this interconnection, there is no practice–theory divide, and, as such, practice becomes an embodied expression of theory (Hapeta et al., 2019). This paper proposes a framework of tribal methodologies to facilitate non-Indigenous organisations engagement and implementation of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices through identifying and applying key methods and methodologies. The framework presented in this paper conceptualise the four intrinsic values of Tupua te Kawa

and associated principles of positioning, privileging, integration, incorporation, connection, acknowledging and collaboration. A selection of methods were chosen to implement the principles, including kōrero tuku iho, pūrākau, whakapapa kōrero, whanaungatanga, hui, kōrero, whakawhiti whakaaro, wānanga and ako. We interrogated several Indigenous, kaupapa Māori and tribal methodologies through the four kawa, highlighting their principles, the methods that could be used and how these might be applied.

Applying these methods in non-Indigenous organisations is suggested through practical solutions, such as engaging with cultural and tribal facilitators or experts, establishing tribal committees or advisory groups, surrounding oneself with multi-media aids, productions, attendance at exhibitions and the careful selection of texts, literature and information sources when learning about the theoretical context of Indigenous frameworks. Systematic improvements are also suggested for organisations to support the application of methods, including implementing organisational policy or codes of conduct to include values and practices from a te ao Māori worldview, normalising practices, such as pōwhiri, mihimihi and whakawhanaungatanga and providing training opportunities for employees. The paper also stresses the importance of good ethical conduct when engaging with Indigenous peoples.

In its totality, Tupua te Kawa as a framework of methodology can assist non-Indigenous organisations which have legal, fiduciary and moral responsibilities to Indigenous peoples, places and purposes. Our attempt to incorporate Indigenous, kaupapa Māori and tribal methodologies seeks to provide non-Indigenous organisations with a foundation to begin to understand and meaningfully implement Indigenous knowledges, values and practices. The foundation acknowledges the role and interconnectedness of understanding and implementing Indigenous knowledges, values and practices with Indigenous peoples over time. The journey towards not only Māori responsiveness but advancing Māori aspirations through new legislation, such as Te Awa Tupua Act, enforces the change necessary to be better stewards of the environment and leaders committed to change. It is advised that the journey is not one of obligation or tension but one of exercising equity under te Tiriti o Waitangi achieved through mutual understanding and relationality by enacting and capitalising on the potential of Indigenous, kaupapa Māori and tribal methodologies. Where there are Indigenous peoples, there are Indigenous methodologies. Tupua te Kawa as a philosophy and as a framework for methodology binds our relationship between all lives, physical and metaphysical, including people, from its mountain source to the sea as an indivisible and living whole. This relationship and interconnecting role of methodologies demonstrate the benefits of engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and, therefore, Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations.

**Glossary**

| | |
|---|---|
| ako | process of teaching and learning |
| Aotearoa | New Zealand |
| hui | method to collect, generate and disperse information to generate enlightenment |
| iwi | tribal, tribe |
| kai | food |
| kapa haka | contemporary performance |
| kaumātua | elders |

| | |
|---|---|
| Kaumatua o Te Whare Pāremata | elder of parliament |
| kaupapa-ā-iwi | tribal philosophy, theme, strategy, approach, topic, institution, agenda or principles, research |
| kaupapa Māori | Māori approach, strategy, theme, philosophy, topic, institution, agenda or principles, Māori research methods |
| kawa | immutable principles and values |
| kīanga | expression, saying |
| kīwaha | colloquial sayings |
| kōrero | a Māori narrative approach |
| kōrero tuku iho | pass on words, stories |
| kūmete | food bowl |
| mamae | pain |
| mana | prestige, authority |
| mana motuhake | autonomy, exercise authority |
| manaakitanga | hospitality, kindness |
| Māori | the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand |
| marae | place of gathering, village |
| mātauranga Māori | (pursuit and application of) Māori knowledge |
| mihi(mihi) | greeting, giving thanks, acknowledgement |
| Ngāi Tiriti | a descendant of European settlers enabled by Te Tiriti o Waitangi |
| Pākeha | New Zealander usually of European descent |
| Papatūānuku | Earth Mother |
| pepeha | tribal proverb, formulaic tribal expression |
| pou | post |
| pōwhiri | the traditional Māori ceremony of welcome or ritual encounter |
| pūrākau | Māori narratives |
| rangatiratanga | self-determination, chieftainship, absolute sovereignty |
| Ranginui | Sky Father |
| rāranga | weaving |
| ruruku | to invoke, incantation |
| tapu | sacred, protected, prohibited |
| te ao Māori | a Māori worldview, a Māori universe |
| Te Awa Tupua | the Whanganui River |
| Te Kore | the nothingness, void, source of all things |
| Te Pō | the dark night, darkness |
| te reo Māori | (the) Māori language |
| te Tiriti o Waitangi | one of the founding documents of New Zealand |
| tiakitanga | the action of taking care of natural resources |
| tikanga | customs, practices, rule, plan, method, custom, habit, anything normal or usual, reason, meaning, authority, control, correct or right |

| | |
|---|---|
| tikanga | rangahau research ethics |
| toi whakairo | carving |
| Tupua te Kawa | a set of Indigenous values at law, natural law system |
| tūpuna Māori | Māori ancestors |
| uri | descendants of the river tribes |
| utu | recompense, retribution |
| waiata | song |
| waka | canoe |
| wānanga | traditional method of sharing and transmitting Māori knowledge |
| whaikōrero | oratory |
| whakapapa | genealogies, layers of descent |
| whakapapa kōrero | ancestral knowledge |
| whakatau | less formal welcoming ceremony |
| whakataukī | proverb |
| whakawhanaungatanga | the act of building and establishing relationships |
| whakawhiti whakaaro | the exchange of ideas and discussion |
| whanaungatanga | relationship building |
| Whanganui iwi | tribes affiliated with the Whanganui River |
| Whanganui kaiponu | the preservation and protection of Whanganui tribal knowledge |
| whare | houses, schools |
| whare wānanga | higher schools of learning, specialised areas of knowledge |

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