

## **The Transformation of Indigeneity**

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(without the Abstract)

### **Abstract**

Using both a theoretical discussion and a demonstrative research study of a Maori family, this paper examines the ways in which the concept of indigeneity began as a local response to the disruptive changes of global capitalism but became transformed into a subversion of its people-based prefigurative character. In New Zealand, indigeneity, or the repositioning of social groups in relation to place across time, has legitimated the claim of the ruling group of neotribal capitalism, rather than all Maori, to the inheritance of the traditional tribes, and to the historical grievance settlements. This subversion of an indigenous movement in the interests of repositioned power relations shows how indigeneity has become part of global capitalism's new mechanisms of dispossession and disenfranchisement in the contemporary period.

### **Introduction**

Despite the widespread intrusion of global capitalism into local economies it appears that globalisation is able to be modified by the very character and strength of local 'people power' movements. Certainly, new social movements do appear to have, if not actually triumphed over global intrusion, at least to have re-created the global into local versions that seem to maintain both community forms of social life and the texture of local histories and cultures. However, the New Zealand experience shows that the revival of communality and tradition may not be what it seems. Despite the appearance of a revived Maori society, the meaning of social relations, between people as well as between people and place, has been qualitatively altered. Processes that enabled the capitalisation of traditional resources, the use of these resources for commodity production, and the structuring of the relations of production outside the contradictory democratic-capitalist state into neotribal capitalist modes of regulation, have altered the meaning of social relations and of place in fundamental, though concealed, ways.

I have argued elsewhere (Rata, 1996, 1999, 2000) that the recent Maori retribalisation movement which developed out of 1970s' pan-Maori ethnification has led to the emergence of a new form of tribal structure and social organisation that is fundamentally different from the traditional tribal form. This emergent regime is conceptualised as a neotribal capital regime of accumulation, resulting both from the capitalisation of the traditional means of production, and also from the production of commodities within the new tribal modes of regulation. Neotribal capitalism is characterised by class relations of production concealed by the reified communality of neotribalist ideology.

The capitalisation mechanisms have been: firstly, the juridification of the tribes as the owners of traditional lands, waters and knowledge; secondly, the brokerage of these traditional resources into the institutions of the capitalist state; thirdly, the subsequent inclusion of these capitalised economic resources into the national and international sphere of wealth circulation; fourthly, the exclusive and privileging relationship of a section of Maori to the capitalised means of production; and finally, the exclusion and dispossession of detribalised Maori from ownership of the means of production.

The use of the newly capitalised lands, waters and knowledge for commodity production has resulted in the emergence of exploitative class relations between a new bourgeoisie, located in sites of power and control in the corporate tribal regulatory structures, and a proletarianised worker-in-community class. While commodity fetishisation and surplus-value appropriation common to all capitalist regimes results in division and exploitation, the dual status of the tribal worker, as both wage-earner and shareholder in neotribal capitalism, provides a double concealment of the exploitative relation of commodity production and its concealment in the reification of communal social relations.

In New Zealand, the response to global intrusion and the resultant emergence of neotribal-capitalism, has taken an indigenous form. My purpose is to examine the ways in which a particular and influential concept of indigeneity was established by the circumstances which led to neotribal capitalism and then subverted by the emergence of that regime. During the 1970s and 1980s both Maori and Pakeha sought solutions to the disruptions resulting from the post-sixties capitalist crisis in constructions of indigeneity. The concept of the ethnic subject as the Maori indigene on the one hand, or as an ethnic subject (a Pakeha) in relation to the indigene on the other, was to define a new relationship between Maori and Pakeha, and between each group and its geographic and historical place.

Maori and Pakeha exist as ethnic<sup>1</sup> categories in relation to each other<sup>2</sup>. A shared history, structured by nineteenth century colonisation and twentieth century assimilation, has shaped the identity of each to the other. The most recent expression of reflected identity construction is the indigenisation of ethnicity, a new development in the relationship in which difference rather than similarity is emphasised, particularly difference in relation to place, though still embedded within the older historical self-other construction.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Wallerstein (1991: 188) 'most writers would take "ethnic group" as the most meaningful empirical referent of status group, and there is no doubt it fits the spirit of Weber's concept (which is of) primordial groups into which persons are born, fictitious families presumably tied together by loyalties which are not based on calculated goal-oriented associations, groups encrusted with traditional privileges or lack of them, groups which share honour, prestige rank, and above all, style of life (often including a common occupation) but which do not necessarily share a common income level or class membership.'

<sup>2</sup> Renata Tamakihikurangi to the Settlers of Hawkes Bay, November 1860 'Just as you are all English, though one is a Bishop, and another a soldier, and another a settler; so we (Natives) are all one; Maori is my name: though one man builds houses, and another provides food, and another makes canoes, and some (thanks to you!) are fighting now' (cited in Caselberg, 1975:83).

In this new repositioning structured by the concept of indigeneity, Maori were to be both the driving force and the referent. Indeed for a brief period in the 1980s, the term ‘tangata whenua’ or ‘people of the land’ became synonymous with the word Maori, as the indigenous referent became accepted and used, not only by Maori revivalists, but also by Pakeha biculturalists. During this intense, although short-lived period of commonality of reference, which I refer to as the bicultural project (Rata, 1996a), significant numbers of Maori and Pakeha shared aspirations of a new and more equitable relationship based upon the concept of indigeneity. The status of Maori was to shift from that of a subordinate colonised and assimilated group to that of tangata whenua, with the associated rights of priority to place.

Pakeha were to establish their relationship to the land through their relationship to Maori. This new repositioning, with Maori as tangata whenua and Pakeha as tangata tiriti (people of the Treaty), placed Maori in the senior position, as the tuakana or elder, and Pakeha, the more recent arrival, as the teina or junior<sup>3</sup>. From the 1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act, the honouring of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi<sup>4</sup> through legislative inclusion of the principles of the Treaty in government statutes, became the structuring principle of the relationship. The Treaty of Waitangi, within the bicultural period of commonality, was perceived to legitimate the right of Pakeha to occupy New Zealand in a defined relationship with Maori.

This use of the concept of indigeneity to establish belonging to place is a local solution to the destabilising processes and psychological uncertainties that characterise globalisation. In a world that was rapidly shedding the remnants of old colonial ties and the economic certainties<sup>5</sup> that those ties have provided, Pakeha sought to establish their identity as a people with a particular history and culture through a redefining of their relation to geographical place. For their part, Maori responded to the new economic order with a redefining of their history and geography. The increasing impoverishment of a diminishing and disempowered working class (a class Maori had begun to enter from the early colonial period [Webster, 1998]), and the likely future of generational unemployment within the new and growing underclass created during New Zealand’s free fall into neoliberal ideological ‘purity’<sup>6</sup>, initiated a response that empowered and liberated.

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of the tuakana/teina (elder/younger, senior/junior) is central to Maori kinship and is used widely to express a status principle. Tuakana may refer to the older siblings, to a senior genealogical descent line or to the pedagogical concept of the older caring for the younger in return for authority recognition.

<sup>4</sup> The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi was signed between the majority of Maori tribes and the British Crown to establish colonial rule on New Zealand. Despite the Treaty Articles guaranteeing continued Maori possession of their lands, most of the land was alienated from Maori hands during the 1860s’ land wars and by subsequent legislation. The campaign to honour the Treaty and redress its neglect was a basic platform in the bicultural project of the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>5</sup> New Zealand enjoyed a close cultural and economic relationship with its ‘mother country’, Britain, until the early 1970s. The loss of special trading privileges forced New Zealand to reorient its position away from Europe towards the Pacific rim and to reconsider its cultural identity in terms of its geographical position as a nation at the bottom of the south Pacific.

<sup>6</sup> New Zealand’s new rightist governments of the past fifteen years have based their policies upon the neoliberal ideology that captured a group of influential Treasury officials, businesspeople and politicians

The Maori solution was to be the revival of a past identity, the revival of a tribal people with power over their lands, waters, forests and knowledge and in control of their past and their future. It was to be the rejection of the disempowerment of a colonial heritage and the establishment of a revived society secured within the Treaty partnership with Pakeha. The defining of their relation to geographical place was to be the legitimisation of that self-determination. Ironically, that process required the recognition of the Pakeha dominant group, who, in turn, required a identity grounded in place and attainable through the new relationship to Maori. The process of a new form of mutual recognition and interdependence became the bicultural project of the 1980s, a project notable for the vigour and commitment of its adherents in its early stages and for the rapidity and silence of its demise in the early 1990s (Rata, 1996a).

Despite the briefness of this period of commonality, the bicultural project is a watershed in New Zealand history. Out of the enabling processes accompanying the political recognition of indigeneity emerged a neotribal capitalist regime of accumulation, a regime characterised by the incorporation of traditional Maori lands, waters and knowledge into the global economy, by the emergence of new class relations between people and these traditional means of production, and by the concealment of these new class relations of production in the neotribalist ideology of communality.

Part one of this article examines processes of Maori indigeneity identity redefinition in response to changing material conditions; to ethnification, indigenisation and retribalisation, in order to discuss the ways in which these local solutions to global intrusion became reshaped in their enactment, emerging as the modes of regulation of neotribal capitalism. In part two, the concept of the indigenisation of ethnicity is demonstrated in a discussion of a research study into a Maori family's revival and retribalisation.

### **I. The Indigenisation of Ethnicity**

As the intrusive global force subverts the local in the dialectically conceptualised moment of interaction, reified communal relations of neotribalist forms of capitalism, such as neotribal capitalism, become part of the conditions of existence of the postfordist regime. New modes of regulation, situated within local social structures such as the tribe, regulate the depoliticisation of the capital-labour antagonism (Rata, 1999a). Two main mechanisms enable this process of depoliticisation to occur. Firstly, the

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during the early 1980s. Despite assurances that policies of state deregulation, privatisation and marketisation would bring increased prosperity, New Zealand is now characterised by decreased prosperity, greater wealth inequalities, increased poverty, the appearance of third world diseases such as TB, and social fragmentation. The mythical reified 'market' of the neoliberals has been unable to maintain an organised society that provides benefits to all its citizens although it has increased the wealth of its adherents. A 1998 'hiko of hope' (march from one end of the country to the other) by the poor and excluded, sought to bring to the attention of the enriched group, the less pleasant consequences of wealth redistribution for others in the society.

labour-capital relationship is resited outside the capitalist state into communities (such as the tribe) that lack structural recognition of class contestation. Secondly, the class consciousness of the worker and the opportunity for the expression of its antagonistic relationship to capital within the contradictory capitalist-democratic state are replaced in the strengthening of subjectivity, or identity formation, as primary ethnic and indigenous subjectivity.

Self-consciousness (that is, how one learns to know one's self in complex processes of imaging and recognition in the self-other interaction) develops as the consciousness of the ethnic self as the primary subject. This is especially the case during a period of political repositioning in which ethnic categories are the defining units of recognition and reorganisation<sup>7</sup>. Social relations that are, in reality structured by material conditions, are reified as teleologically and ideologically determined. The subject as an ethnic self is structured into kinship vertically through genealogy, as well as horizontally through present day family relationships. This placement within two dimensions of time, the past and future as well as the present, expands subjectivity as the ethnic subject is conscious of him or herself within social relations outside of the living.

Such otherworldly belonging strengthens the consciousness of the self as primarily an ethnic subject, and of kinship as the structuring principle of primary ethnic subjectivity. This double reification makes class consciousness a limited temporal self-constructing principle in comparison and explains the pervasive strength and enduring quality of ethnicity in identity formation, despite the construct of ethnicity as a socially imposed category of particular status-groups. In his discussion of status-groups as 'fossils' Stavenhagen<sup>8</sup> (quoted in Wallerstein, 1991:195) argues a similar process whereby an ethnic or religious group maintains its strength despite its ideological character. Indeed, it may be argued that the ideological nature of the status-group in an ethnic form *is* its strength in that the ideology serves as the 'justification or rationalization of the

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to Wallerstein (1991: 189) for a discussion of changing political circumstances in colonial and postcolonial Africa that have given rise to the emergence of 'more self-conscious categories' such as religious and ethnic categories. His comments concerning the relationship between territorial identification and increased ethnic identification are particularly interesting. 'The rise of ethnic movements and the coming of independence created still more categories. Territorial identification - that is, nationalism, - became widespread and important. Along with such territorial identification came a new devotion to ethnic identification, often called tribalism.'

<sup>8</sup> 'Stratifications (i.e., status-groups) represent, in the majority of cases, what we call social *fixations*, frequently by juridical means, certainly subjectively, of specific social relations of production, represented by class relations. Into these social *fixations* intrude other secondary, accessory factors (for example, religious, ethnic) which reinforce the stratification and which have, at the same time, the function of 'liberating' it of its links with its economic base; in other words, of maintaining its strength even if its economic base changes. Consequently, stratifications can be thought of as justifications or rationalisations of the established economic system, that is to say, as ideologies. Like all phenomena of the social superstructure, stratification has a quality of inertia which maintains it even when the conditions which gave it birth have changed. As the relations between classes are modified . . . stratifications turn themselves into *fossils* of the class relations on which they were originally based. . . (Furthermore), it seems that the two types of groupings (dominant class and higher stratum) can coexist for some time and be encrusted in the social structure, according to the particular historical circumstances. But sooner or later, a new stratification system arises which corresponds more exactly to the current class system.' Stavenhagen, R. quoted in Wallerstein, 1991: 195).

established economic order'. This rationalisation function supports the continuing strength of neotraditionalism in the emergence of neotribal capitalism<sup>9</sup>.

It is unsurprising that the Maori ethnification movement was the revival of kinship relations in the temporal world, since kinship provided the residual character of the status-group. As importantly, indeed more so, was the revival of genealogy, the mechanism that establishes ethnic continuity across time. Genealogy provides the historical dimension to the ethnic self-definition and, when linked to place, enables the shift from an identity formation based upon ethnicity alone to an identity constructed within the discourse of an ethnic indigeneity.

The reasons for the rapid shift from the Maori pan-ethnification movement of the 1960s and early 1970s to an indigenisation movement in the 1980s are to be found in the new politics of recognition between Maori and Pakeha that was the bicultural project. Initially Pakeha had recognised the distinctive ethnicity of Maori within the liberal tradition of universalism<sup>10</sup> which, paradoxically, involves the recognition of the other's distinctiveness. The search by Pakeha for a self-defining post-colonial history and geography meant the recognition of Maori history and geography. Indigeneity moved to a central position in the political relationship between Maori and Pakeha because it established Maori as the referent of place. This enable Pakeha to relate to the referent in their own path towards geographic positioning.

The intentions of the proponents of indigenisation, both Maori and the supporting Pakeha biculturalists, was to change the colonial based dominant-subordinant relationship between Maori and Pakeha and establish a new political positioning in which Maori social and economic aspirations could be realised. However, despite the emancipatory intentions driving this project, the outcome has been the creation of wealthy corporate tribes and the double dispossession of many urban Maori. Those Maori (whom I identify and refer to as ethnic Maori<sup>11</sup>), who are unable or unwilling to establish identification

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<sup>9</sup> It would also support the argument that the strength of neotraditionalism in ethnic subjectivity formation serves to displace those Maori (especially young Maori) who are identified as Maori by others but whose existential reality does not match the cultural capital of neotraditionalist ideology. The fragmentation of self identified by Toon van Meijl in his important study of the crisis of identity experienced by young Maori when 'confronted with traditional representations of culture . . . as part of educational programmes' (van Meijl, 1999: Abstract).

<sup>10</sup> Throughout the modern period liberal universalism has been the ideology of global capitalism. Paradoxically, its tendency to include other groups politically, as well as economically through assimilationist policies, has enabled groups to demand political rights based upon those very principles of inclusion, and thus, become increasingly distinctive.

<sup>11</sup> 'Given the terminological confusion' in discussing race and ethnic group, Wallerstein (1991: 188) has suggested 'describe first the empirical reality and see what might follow theoretically rather than lay out in advance a theoretical framework within which to explain the empirical reality'. The empirical reality here is the existence of large numbers of mainly urban Maori who are dispossessed from the benefits of the historical grievance settlements. However, to describe this group in opposition to tribal Maori is to impose an urban-rural / nontribal-tribal dichotomy. This is not the case since many urban Maori are tribal (particularly retribalised) Maori. The group 'without a name' whom I refer to in this paper as 'ethnic Maori' are those who are nontribal (for a variety of reasons), who may be urban or rural dwellers, and who do not identify existentially with Maori cultural forms. These people may be distinguished as belonging to the Maori ethnic category in that they describe themselves as Maori and/or are recognised by others as

with a tribe and/or to identify with Maori cultural practices, are excluded from the settlement of the historical injustices. Ironically, these injustices led to their impoverishment and loss of identification in the first place.

It is in the shift from the pan-Maori indigenisation movement to retribalisation that urban Maori have become dispossessed. Returning to the past for the components of indigenous identity construction, such as the Maori language, family genealogy and kinship revival, also involved reviving the concept of the tribe as the structure of social organisation. However, the revived contemporary tribe, juridified within the state as the legitimate inheritor of a traditional communal society, is not the same societal structure of that previous historical period. Fundamental differences, such as the capitalisation of traditional lands and waters, the use of those resources to produce commodities for profit within the national and international sphere of capitalism, and the emergence of class relations of production in relation to those capitalised resources, have ensured that the outcome of retribalisation was not the revival of the traditional tribe but the emergence of the mode of regulation of neotribal capitalism.

The replacement of communal relations by class relations and the change in the meaning of the lands and waters, has been concealed by the neotribalist ideology of communality. The contemporary tribe has been juridified as the legitimate inheritor of the traditional lands, and as the legitimate social structure of the indigenous people. To be indigenous has become defined as being tribal. Urbanised ethnic Maori who are not tribalised, now exist as a separate group and are excluded from the benefits of indigenisation. The result is dispossession from the return of lands, waters and reparation payments made by the New Zealand government during the past decade as compensation for historical injustices.

Indigenisation emerged as a concept of historical and geographical definition in order for Maori to achieve a political recognition intended to result in improved material conditions for all Maori. However, it became transformed within the retribalisation process to become an important concept within the neotribalist ideology of the new tribes. Indigeneity became the concept of historical continuity. The traditional tribe of the past became linked to the contemporary tribe within a historical continuum despite the fundamental difference between the traditional and contemporary tribe. Indigeneity was the link between past, present and future. Whoever could define themselves as indigenous could claim this historical continuity and claim ownership of traditional lands and waters.

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being Maori. There may be one or a combination of reasons for this categorisation: physical appearance, the real or desired identification with a parent or ancestor who is Maori, historical placement in a social or geographical location with others who identify as Maori, the desire for a Maori identity or personal circumstances particular to an individual. (Indeed, things are not always as they seem. I know of one young person with the surname of his adopted Maori stepfather and the brown physical features inherited from a West Indian ancestor, who has for so long be assumed by others to be Maori that he now accepts this identity as his own.) The important questions are these: what does it mean to be Maori in the absence of a tribal connection and/or a Maori cultural identity? What are the consequences for the identity formation of the Maori person ineligibility for inclusion as a beneficiary of the historical grievance settlements?

Indigenisation was a positioning of relationship to place across time. The revival of kinship links, researching genealogy and establishing histories that conceptualised the tribe as indigenous, were important tasks for many Maori during the 1980s. Identifying the self as the ethnic self, with an identity positioned in time and place though claims of indigeneity, was the task of the those Maori who sought an identity that would be recognised by the Pakeha protagonist. Out of the recognition of identity (firstly, Maori recognising themselves in ethnic, indigenous terms) then having that self-recognition accepted by Pakeha, emerged a new power relation. Both Maori and Pakeha claimed political rights based upon their relation to geographical place. Pakeha had become willing to recognise Maori identity in terms of place at this particular historical point because they, too, in their response to globalisation forces, were constructing their own identity as a particular people with a particular relation to New Zealand.

Just as the ethnic self was conceptualised as an indigenous self, so too was the tribe conceptualised within a historical continuum, forming the indigenous self as a tribal self. Reparation claims to the Waitangi Tribunal for the settlement of historical grievances were based upon evidence that demonstrated this continuity between the tribal claimants and the historical tribe. Considerable research was undertaken to establish the historical claim. The issue here is not the authenticity of the historical evidence. Lands had been taken illegally, the tribes had been dispossessed and displaced over a hundred and fifty year period. That is not in question. The issue is rather who are the inheritors of those processes of dispossession and displacement? Where is the real continuity between that past and the present?

Despite the appearance of continuity, the contemporary tribes are a new structure. Their capture of the settlements has resulted in a double dispossession of the very people for whom the settlement process was designed to compensate. Access to the benefits of the grievance settlements is through the tribes only. Many ethnic Maori, unable to establish their tribal genealogy and gain access to the settlements, are dispossessed from these reparations as a direct consequence of the thoroughness of their displacement. A more just criteria of entitlement to the settlement benefits based upon continuity with the past would recognise tribal displacement rather than tribal identification. After all contemporary Maori poverty is the consequence of the historical displacement and dispossession.

Given the reparative purpose of the grievance settlement process, it is a harsh irony that those most entitled to reparations are those who will not only be excluded from these settlements, but will be permanently placed within a newly created impoverished under class as a consequence of the settlement benefits going elsewhere. There is now no possibility of inclusion<sup>12</sup>. The emergence of neotribal capitalism, from out of the intended liberating settlement process of the bicultural project, has established permanent class divisions, including that of an excluded underclass of ethnic Maori.

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<sup>12</sup> The election of the Labour Party, in coalition with the Alliance Party, to government may prove this wrong. That will depend upon the new government's political will to ensure that the benefits of the historical grievance settlements benefit all Maori and its ability to challenge the claim of the 'new' tribes to the economic resources of the traditional tribes. This is possible, given the involvement by many of the

Indigeneity is not a concrete thing. It is the concept of the meaning that we give to belonging to place in time. The new contemporary meaning of indigeneity is a meaning possible only within the historical period in which it has emerged. Previously it wasn't important to be indigenous. In order for the concept to emerge, it had to mean something to those using the word. The meaning had to be recognised and shared by those able to provide that recognition. Indigeneity emerged as a way of relating Maori ethnicity to Pakeha. Without the Maori-Pakeha relationship, the concept of Maori as indigenous is merely descriptive. But within that relationship indigeneity became the means of differentiating the two ethnic groups geographically and historically. The relationship between the two differentiated groups is a power relation mediated by indigeneity.

The concept of indigeneity is a political construct of historical and geographical placement. Referring to 'indigeneity' as a construct does not mean that Maori did not occupy New Zealand before Pakeha, nor that they are not 'indigenous'. Of course they are. It does mean however, that the meaning of indigeneity has changed within the political repositioning of the bicultural project. For their own reasons, Maori claimed indigenous recognition. In turn, for their own reasons, Pakeha recognised that claim in concrete material ways through the establishment of historical grievance settlements. The claim and its recognition established a shared meaning of the concept of indigeneity, a meaning mediating the power relation between the two groups. Once recognised by those in power, the indigenous claim brings political benefits, its disallowing results in exclusion and dispossession. The claim for indigeneity recognition was made by the tribes and recognised by the state as the crucial time when the settlement process was being established. This early recognition enabled the tribes to become the legitimate claimants, and ethnic Maori, outside the legitimated tribal identity, to be excluded. The fact that the Treaty of Waitangi was signed by the tribal chiefs supported this position of tribal legitimacy.

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leaders of the new government (including the new Prime Minister, Helen Clark) in the 1980s' bicultural project (Rata, 1996b) which led to the intended outcome of the grievance settlements and the unintended outcome of the neotribal capitalism. Previous legal challenges by urban Maori to tribal only settlements have focussed upon issues of urban Maori claims and not addressed the main issue - which is the claim of the contemporary tribe to be the inheritor of the traditional tribe. The tribes claim exclusive ownership on the basis that they are the legitimate inheritors of the traditional means of production. Urban Maori argue that the fisheries belong to all Maori and that the inability to make genealogical links to a tribe dispossesses large numbers of Maori from their rightful inheritance. No one has yet disputed the definition of the tribes as the revived traditional tribe in these prolonged legal battles. Refer to Rata (1996,1999) for the argument that the tribes are the mode of regulation of a neotribal capitalist regime of accumulation characterised by the capitalisation of traditional resources, class relations of production and a neotribalist ideology of communality, and are therefore no more the legitimate inheritors of those resources than are urban Maori. It may be argued that the intentions of the biculturalists who established the grievance settlement process were to bring all Maori 'in from the margins' and that the dispossession of large numbers is in contradiction to the purpose of the process of establishing historical justice. The final outcome of these lengthy legal and political challenges will affect not only the fisheries resource but the wealth generated by the return of large areas of land, confiscated since 1840, and the right of Maori groups, tribal or urban, to access government funding through the provision of social, economic, health and education services to Maori. The stakes of legal recognition to historical inheritance are very high.

The rapidity of the movement in tribal definition from the social structure of a traditional people to the mode of regulation of a neotribal capitalist regime of accumulation is demonstrated by the speed with which retribalising groups had to move in order to stake their claim for indigeneity, and therefore their status as the legitimate inheritors of traditional resources. The juridification of the tribes occurred in the first half of the 1990s. Those with histories in place, those with the means to establish a history, were recognised. Urban Maori had already been excluded by the decision to recognise the tribes as the legitimate inheritors of the traditional resources. The years since 1992 have been marked by urban Maori fighting a rearguard action to have that legitimacy extended to urban collectivities conceptualised as ‘new’ tribes (although not to urban Maori as individuals).

## II. Kinship Revival and Retribalisation

The next section discusses the research study of a Maori family’s revival and retribalisation in order to show the concrete ways in which indigeneity became constructed, as families and tribes developed histories and self-definitions located within a historical and geographical consciousness.

The extent and determination of the Maori movement of kinship and tribal revival is exemplified in the story of the Rimu whanau and one of its contributing nuclear families, the Pawhau whanau (Rata, 1996b, 2000). Not only did the Rimu family restore kinship ties lost during the migrations to urban areas in the 1930s and 1940s, but important cultural practices concerning land, birth and death were revived, family and tribal history and genealogy was researched, the Maori language was revived by some whanau members and used with young children as their first language<sup>13</sup>, family claims to tribal lands and waters were revived with the return of some of the family to the ancestral homelands, and finally, a marine farm was established on these tribal lands. These were enormous accomplishments which attests to the determination of the whanau to reject the impoverishment of life in the cities for the potential of a return to a traditional way of life. That these tasks were accomplished within a decade makes the feat more impressive.

Family revival and tribal identification were two sides of the one coin for the Rimu whanau. Access to traditional resources depended upon genealogical knowledge, and that depended upon the extent of family disintegration that had occurred in the previous two to three generations during the migration to the industrial cities. As with many Maori families in the 1970s and 1980s considerable effort was made to research family genealogy. The reconstituted Rimu whanau was made up of two contributing nuclear families who had been unknown to each other until the death of one of the fathers in 1987 was recorded in a regional newspaper. In accordance with the revivalist aspirations of the

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<sup>13</sup> This is no longer the case. Since the mid-1990s English has replaced Maori as the language of the whanau. Maori is now used very rarely. I have addressed the reasons for the increased vulnerability of the Maori language in the post-kura kaupapa Maori era in an unpublished paper ‘Kura Kaupapa Maori - Some Hard Questions’ delivered to Te Uepu Maori Hui, Te Puna Wanaga, Auckland College of Education, 10 November 1999.

Pawhau family, the death notice was in the Maori language and gave genealogical information which alerted a family in another city to their close kinship ties with the dead man.

During the previous decade the Pawhau family had been totally committed to reviving traditional Maori ways. A second marriage and family enabled the Maori father, known in the research study of his life as 'Pia', to reject the Pakeha working class lifestyle of his adult urban years. Pia began using the Maori language again, he talked incessantly and obsessively to his wife, Kotiro, about his childhood spent on tribal lands. Stories were told about the illegal and volatile alcohol brewed in kerosene tins hidden away from the vigilant eyes of the marae committee in secret locations on the gumfields. He talked about the violence generated by this explosive brew, and the time, as just a young boy of five or so, he saw a man kicked to death during one terrible night of drunkenness and rage.

He spoke of the anger and humiliation felt by the entire village, and still remembered vividly by the adult man, when Department of Health officials arrived along the rough and rugged dirt road that led down to this most northern and isolated New Zealand settlement, with brand new corrugated iron toilets. He recalled the mixture of languages that existed in that space before Maori was replaced by English. The descendants of the gumdiggers from the Austrian Empire who had settled in the 'wopwops' (outback or isolated rural areas) of northern New Zealand around the turn of the century were known as Tararas, onomatopoeically echoing their Maori-Dalmatian patois. Humorous examples of Maori-English were recalled with accompanying stories of the old people who had never quite grasped English but enjoyed playing with the sounds, making such neologisms to amuse the children as 'santapoos' for sandshoes.

Frequent references to tangi evoked the poverty of those 1930s' Depression times. Pia vaguely remembered his mother giving birth to twin boys who died in infancy but he never knew whether or not this event had really occurred. It was only after his own death that genealogical research revealed the veracity of his memory as a two year old. Twin boys had in fact lived for several months, and, like many other infants, had died of 'mate Maori' or Maori sickness. Perhaps the high infant death rate, attested to by the headstones in the hilltop cemetery, was linked to the poor water supply (the village had been a nomadic settlement in previous centuries), and may explain the arrival of the 'flash' and offending 'Pakeha' toilets.

The migration from tribal lands, the frequency of early death in the family, alcoholism and violence - those illnesses of poverty, - and the continual biting angst of loss drove Pia and Kotiro to a single-minded determination to fill the empty spaces for the sake of their children. Genealogy was to be the base. From genealogical research would come the knowledge of kinship, the means of tribal identification, the link with history and the certainty of belonging to place. However Pia, like so many other displaced Maori, had little to begin with and few to ask. The name of only one grandparent was known and that was anglicised- (from what exactly?). Even the memory of his father, killed in a farm accident many years previously, had faded into brief childhood recollections of a thin

man with one arm, vigorously playing the fiddle, his stump gripping the bow, head bent in effort and concentration.

The search for genealogy also included a search for the grave of this one armed man. An essential task in the return to Pia's Maori sense of self was to find his father's burial place and erect a headstone. However, the mother too, had died at a relatively young age. After several years of unsuccessful research, made difficult by the fact that the father had been buried in the lands of his mother's people, it was a great sadness to Pia that he became ill and died<sup>14</sup> without finding his father's burial place. The task was entrusted to his widow, Kotiro, who eventually found one old man with memories of Pia's father's burial so long ago in 1944.

That location of the father's grave became important for the next generation's tribal identification. With the juridification of the tribes as the owners of traditional lands, waters and knowledge, and the subsequent capitalisation of these resources and their inclusion in the capitalist sphere of accumulation, retribalisation changed in fundamental ways. Tribal identification became economically, as well as culturally, significant. Genealogical identification with one or more tribe aroused expectations of a share in the historical grievance settlements and the tribes' material wealth. During the 1990s indigeneity shifted from its role in providing ethnic definition to become the means of settlement claim. Throughout New Zealand, tribes developed histories that established their claim to be the indigenous people of a particular area. In the Chatham Islands, to the east of New Zealand's South Island, the indigenous Moriori, have challenged descendants of the nineteenth century invading Ngati Toa and Ngati Mutunga tribes, for legal recognition as the owners of extensive fisheries stretching two hundred miles out into the Pacific Ocean.

In October 1998, national television news juxtaposed two revealing shots. The first showed the jubilation of the large Ngai Tahu tribe celebrating their historic signing of the Settlement Deed on the steps of Parliament Buildings. The return of lands, of the waters containing the prized greenstone that Te Wai Pounamu or the South Island is named after, of extensive fisheries, and of monetary compensation for historical injustices will establish Ngai Tahu as a major corporation in the New Zealand economy. The second shot was of the subdued group, whose bid for recognition as the legitimate historical owner of some of these returned resources had been rejected. This group identify as Waitaha, and claim an indigeneity preceding that of Maori by a thousand years, despite the absence of any supporting archaeological, genealogical and historical evidence (Anderson, 1998).

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<sup>14</sup> One of the many consequences of the high incidence of illness and premature death amongst Maori in comparison to Pakeha is the familiarity of young Maori with experiences associated with illness and death. Such familiarity tends to encourage a fatalist acceptance of lifestyle illnesses, such as lung cancer and heart disease. The premature death of Maori adults means that more Maori children and young people than Pakeha experience their childhood years life without grandparents or indeed without a parent. Illness and death become significant factors in the development of a Maori identity.

The politics of the historical justification of indigeneity is illustrated in the story of the Pawhau family's search for its tribe. Pia had grown up secure in very little, but absolutely sure that his family belonged to the Te Aupouri tribe. He knew of the tribe's migration into the far northern peninsula of New Zealand's North Island during the eighteenth century, and took pride in discovering his direct descent from the eponymous ancestor of Te Aupouri. The family's tribal research during the late 1970s supported the identification with Te Aupouri and confirmed the status of Te Aupouri as the tribe of the Te Aupouri (now renamed Muriwhenua) peninsula. Indeed an important Maori Land Court Hearing in 1975, attended by the elders of the peninsula had declared Te Aupouri to be the tribe of the area (Rata, 2000:164). Although references to the Ngati Kuri tribe had surfaced in a grandfather's death certificate, and an occasional verbal reference, Pia regarded Te Aupouri as the family's tribe and wondered if Ngati Kuri was perhaps a sub-tribe of Te Aupouri.

The rise of the Ngati Kuri tribe between 1986, when the tribe first entered the political arena as a claimant in the Muriwhenua Claim for the restoration of historical grievances, and 1996, when a tribal historian (Norman, W. in Kawharu, 1989:195) could refer to Ngati Kuri as the original people of New Zealand, predating the canoe arrivals of many of the tribes, is a fascinating story of emergence from historical 'invisibility'. Indeed Te Aupouri, after a hundred years as the recognised tribe of the peninsula, is being recast as a migrant tribe by the revived Ngati Kuri (Rata, 2000). This attempt to alter the status of the tribe in terms of its territorial belonging will affect its claim to the ownership of traditional resources. Te Aupouri's recently imposed newcomer status will enable its claim for a share in the ownership of the traditional resources and reparatory payments soon to be returned to tribal ownership with the settlement of the Muriwhenua Claim to be disputed. How did Ngati Kuri reclaim its historical existence and how did Te Aupouri go from its recognised position as the tribe of the peninsula to the ignominy of outsider status in just one decade? And importantly, why did the people of the tribe, such as the retribalising Pawhau family, support this turn of events. Indeed, by the 1996 census, the Pawhau children were able to state that Ngati Kuri was their main tribe.

Indigeneity had a new meaning. To be indigenous was to be eligible to claim reparation for historical injustices. History reclaiming had become more than the means of cultural identification. History had become the means to a degree of material wealth. Whoever could claim the history could claim the reparations. The historical defining of indigeneity enabled a group to claim ownership of considerable traditional resources and reparation payments which could be used to establish an economic base for wealth generation. Those in the tiny settlement of Te Hapua, the most northern settlement in New Zealand, the settlement left by Pia and many others in search of a better life many decades ago, had endured generations of poverty. A subsistence existence, living off the land and off the pristine waters of the Parengarenga harbour, was to be further decimated by a 1983 change to New Zealand's fishing legislation, a change which would licence the large fishing interests at the expense of the small part time fisherman.

The possibility of the destruction of the only cash economy left to the people of Te Hapua fuelled a resistance, which, associated with the indigenisation and retribalisation

movements occurring simultaneously, produced a localised movement of indigeneity. The people of the Parengarenga harbour saw, in their indigeneity to the local area, the means to challenge the proposed legislation and, even more significantly, the means to regain control of their lands and waters. A tribal self-definition, which secured them historically to the area, was required to legitimate the political fight for recognition and for reparation.

This was the basis of the new history of Ngati Kuri<sup>15</sup>. A self-defining entity, distinguished from other groups in the region, located in the past and able to assert the rights of indigeneity in order to acquire the material wealth for tribal economic development. Ngati Kuri came back into history because it was needed. It was not that the tribe had never existed. It had, and still existed as a memory in the consciousness of some local people. The name surfaced in the occasion historical document, death certificate and oral narratives. But as a history of a people, a patterned organised narrative of names and events, Ngati Kuri had become invisible. Its disappearance from historical consciousness had many interdependent causes. Defeat by the migrating Te Aupouri in the eighteenth century meant that a very early map of the tribes (one that fed into other authoritative maps for the next two centuries) contained the name Te Aupouri but not Ngati Kuri. The few official references to Ngati Kuri at the beginning of the nineteenth century ended when the combined Ngati Kuri/Te Aupouri group was defeated and enslaved by a southern tribe, Te Rarawa. The forced migration south from their ancestral land occurred at the same time that Pakeha were moving into the area so that, when small groups of Ngati Kuri/Te Aupouri began making their way back into the peninsula, much of the land had new occupiers. The previous traditional mode of production was replaced with a mixture of subsistence farming and fishing, and with a small cash economy based on gumdigging and roadbuilding<sup>16</sup>.

The peninsula itself and its people were known in the official discourse by the appellation Te Aupouri. It was not until 1986 that an older history, re-emerging through the genealogical research undertaken by hundreds of Maori families such as the Pawhau family, became the way of claiming that past, and with that claim, securing the future. Genealogical lines showed the generations of Ngati Kuri who had occupied Muriwhenua before the intermarriage with the Te Aupouri migrants in the eighteenth century. The new history of Ngati Kuri made visible a people who had lost their self-definition. It was a process of self-consciousness that had to occur before recognition by others was possible. The crucial 'event' of self-definition was the compilation of the Muriwhenua Report to the Waitangi Tribunal claiming the return of ancestral lands and waters, and reparations for historical injustices. This document established the history of Ngati Kuri. It was compiled from the oral reports of elders, the collective memories of people and events handed down through generations, from the genealogical information researched by many families, and from the paucity of written material available.

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<sup>15</sup> A lengthy version of the re-emergence of Ngati Kuri is available in Rata, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> For a critique of the concept of an articulation between a traditional mode of production and the introduced capitalist mode refer to Rata, 1996 and 2000.

The term ‘new history’ does not mean a fictitious account. Genealogical evidence establishes Ngati Kuri as the original people of the far north with a distinctive entity before the assimilation into Te Aupouri. However the contemporary consciousness of this previous self-defining entity has arisen out of current material circumstances. This is not a matter of authenticity or inauthenticity. It is a matter of the circumstances that allow a degree of self-consciousness of identity. History is not the past. It is the story, told in the present, of the events and people known to have existed in the past. It is the circumstances of the present that determine the how the story is told, how those people and events are arranged in the telling, who is edited in or edited out in the compilation and how meaning is constructed.

The people of Te Hapua needed to re-establish a self-defining identity, located in a specific place in order to take up a political position. Their material survival was threatened. The new history of Ngati Kuri is, like all histories, a statement of identity through the ordering and patterning of existence so that shared meaning and a collective consciousness are created. What mattered in the changing material circumstances of the 1980s was the establishment of an indigenous identity in order to take up a political position within the bicultural project’s recognition of indigeneity. Because Pakeha now recognised indigeneity, because indigeneity now had currency within that recognition, it had acquired a value not there in the past. Identification with Te Aupouri did not provide the depth of indigeneity that Ngati Kuri identity could offer. The genealogy of Ngati Kuri goes back to pre-canoe<sup>17</sup> settlement period, to the people of the area known as Te Ngaki or Te Kahui o Ngo/Ngu or Karitehe. The later entries of the canoe names, the eighteenth century entry of Te Aupouri names, the early nineteenth century entry of the conquering Te Rarawa people, and the late nineteenth and twentieth century entries of Pakeha names are clearly recognisable in family genealogies.

Establishing tribal connections to place in order to claim historical continuity to the past and into the future, is illustrated by the choice of burial sites for Pia and later, for his brother and sister. Traditionally, claims to belonging had been secured by the burial of the placenta, and later, the dead person’s burial, on tribal lands. These practices symbolically linked the generations, each to the other, and each generation to the ancestral place. The urban migration of the mid-century had broken these connections, although a number of Maori families had used the practice of returning a family member for the tangihanga and burial to maintain links with their tribes. An important part of retribalisation was the return of the living but a way needed to be found for those buried outside their tribal lands to be included. The fact that these people were dead made no difference. In neotraditionalist terms their retribalisation was as important as that for the living.

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<sup>17</sup> New Zealand’s settlement by the Polynesian ancestors of contemporary Maori occurred over several centuries from near the beginning of this millennium. While the circumstances of the first arrivals are unknown, the later part of the settlement process is recounted in the canoe traditions of many tribes. Names from the Kurahaupo canoe begin to appear seventeen generations ago in the Pauhau family’s Ngati Kuri genealogy. Those generations preceding the canoe names begin in mythical times and include names from the Hawaiki or pre-New Zealand period with eighteen generations from Ngo, who may have lived in New Zealand given the reference to the people of the far north as Te Kahui o Ngo/Ngu, to Pohurihanga of the Kurahaupo canoe .

Retribalising families have dealt with the issue of ‘retribalising’ the dead in different ways. Some have accepted the fact of urban burial while others have kept the person ‘alive’ in the tribe by ritual discussions of possible re-enterrment on tribal lands (even if this will never occur), or have indeed carried out that task. Others have ensured that the person has been buried in a Maori cemetery in the city and regular visits are made to the site.

Pia’s family dealt with the issue of family members buried outside tribal lands in an ingenious way. His father had been buried at Ounuwhao, several hundred miles south of Ngati Kuri lands. His mother was buried further south again, at a Maori cemetery in Auckland. In turn the deaths of three of their children (also in mid-adulthood) provided the opportunity to symbolically reunite the parents with their tribe. Pia was buried with his mother in Auckland. This meant that she would not remain alone. Pia’s brother was returned to Te Hapua so that one of that generation would ‘represent’ the family on Ngati Kuri lands. His sister was buried with the father so that he too, would remain connected to his descendants. The presence of father and daughter at Ounuwhao would also serve an important tribal purpose. A hundred years previously, a marriage with a woman from the Ngati Whatua tribe at Ounuwhao had established a tribal connection which was revived by the mid and late twentieth century burials at Ounuwhao. Through the burials of Pia and his siblings, three places were linked to the main tribal site in the far north. And it was to this location that the efforts of the reviving families were directed.

Through the genealogical research Ngati Kuri had been established in the minds of the whanau as their main tribe. This tribal identification provided the access to the lands and waters of their ancestors. Through the need to secure their survival the people of Ngati Kuri had established their history as the tangata whenua (indigenous people) of the far north. Through the revival of kinship bonds the reconstituted Rimu whanau had returned to tribal lands and established a marine farm in order to provide the material base for their tribal life. Ironically however, the result, for this family, as for many others pursuing the same dream, was the failure of that dream, a failure resulting from its very success.

The establishment of the marine farm, the means of economic survival and prosperity, was also the means of family disharmony and disintegration. The genealogical research and the restoration of kinship ties to the family’s tribe had provided access to the traditional lands and waters and to rights to use these resources for economic production. Yet the operation of an economic enterprise designed to support those restored kin relations led to disputes about the very nature of that kinship. Issues of worker-management relations, of ownership of the plant and product, of profit allocation and wage payments raised deeper questions of eligibility to the fruits of the enterprise.

Questions were raised about who was kin and who wasn’t. How was family membership to be decided? Was it a question of descent from the eponymous ancestor selected at the beginning of the family’s restoration as the symbol of kinship unity? Was membership to be determined by commitment to the family, by the provision of the manual skills or management abilities or by financial contributions to the farm? What about those

members who, for various reasons such as caring for young children, were not yet in a position to offer direct assistance to the farm project but who wanted future involvement?

What was the relationship of each member to the land and waters? Who were to be considered owners of the farm and who must settle for an indirect connection via a direct decent member? What did 'ownership' mean? Were family members who had married into or out of the family, or who were Pakeha or from another tribe, entitled to the rights of ownership (including profits) in the same way as family members descended from the eponymous ancestor? Just as the meaning of the lands and waters has changed in fundamental ways, so too has the meaning of kinship. It is now a concept that enables access to place, but that relationship to place is no longer mediated through the communal relations of production of a traditional society. Instead class relations have emerged in the production of the Maori families' material conditions on their historical lands.

A tribal history was created in order to overturn the invisibility of two centuries and to ensure the juridification of Ngati Kuri as the owners of the lands and waters of the far north. Access to the material benefits of the bicultural project grievance settlements is now available only through tribal association. To secure this entitlement, firstly, the tribe must exist as indigenous group in relation to the lands and waters. Secondly, individuals and families must have the knowledge with which to link in to the tribe. Those tribes who missed the claim for indigeneity recognition during the tribal juridification period between 1985 and 1995, and those individuals without the knowledge to link to a tribe are dispossessed.

## **Conclusion**

The ideals of the earlier pan-Maori indigenisation movements of the 1970s and 1980s had been to use the recognition of indigeneity in the creation of a new political relation between the dominant Pakeha and the subordinate Maori in order to improve the material conditions of Maori. Yet the process of the repositioning has resulted in the emergence of a neotribal capitalist regime in which disinheritance and dispossession may well have been made permanent. Many Maori (especially those in urban areas) who make up the majority of the new underclass of New Zealand's increasingly class divided society, are excluded both from Pakeha society and from tribal society. They are an impoverished ethnic group unable to claim the position and benefits of indigeneity. Those have gone to the new tribal corporations of the neotribal capitalist regime. From its initial concept as the means by which dispossessed ethnic groups could establish new power relations within the idealism of emancipation, indigeneity has become a part of the mechanisms of dispossession and disenfranchisement.

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