

Whakanekeneke Rangatira: Evolving leadership

Fiona Te Momo

Abstract: In 2010, a series of three hui-a-marae (symposium held at a marae) were held to investigate the concept 'rangatiratanga' (leadership). The marae (Māori places of meeting) that hosted the leadership wānanga were Waipapa marae, Rehua marae and Te Herenga Waka marae. From these marae various discussions, issues and positions were presented by many guest speakers; these presentations were followed by reflections in groups and as individuals. Among the many key points that were raised there are six issues that I considered are significant aspects and ideas that contribute to successful contemporary Māori leadership. They are aroha (compassion and love), pakanga (debates), tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty), mana wahine (female leadership), tikanga kore (adapting protocol to suit the situation) and pono (truth) /tika (correct). This paper elaborates on these concepts and reflects further with particular reference to the world of academia.

Keywords: Leadership; Māori

Ehara taku maunga a Hikurangi he maunga nekeneke, he maunga tū tonu.

My mountain Hikurangi does not move, it remains firm and steadfast. (Te Kani a Takirau, 1850)

In Aotearoa New Zealand paramount chiefs like Te Kani a Takirau set the foundations of leadership for indigenous people. In this quote from him, which is now referred to as a proverb, he reminds people to know their turangawaewae (place to stand), duties to the tribe and prestige that comes with leading people, and not to wander chasing opportunities as they pass by. Instead he instructs people to remain firmly fixed in knowing who they are, where they come from and to whom they serve. The formation of leadership arose from a set of structures and values.

Rangatira (leaders) are significant to the development of Aotearoa New Zealand. Traditional leaders emerged in their role by whakapapa (genealogy connections) or mahi (work). Leaders that achieved their roles through their whakapapa predominantly came from a line of ariki (paramount chiefs). However, leaders could also acquire their positions through the mahi they accomplished for their whānau (family), hapū (extended family) and iwi (tribe) (Winiata, 1967). Tracing the evolution of these achievements and accomplishments by Māori leaders is important to understanding the growth of te ao Māori (the Māori world). Therefore, the Manu Ao Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Leadership Wānanga Programme is a movement towards exploring this evolution of rangatira.

At the first hui (meeting), the concepts that emerged were aroha and pakanga. Royal (2010) discussed the notion of aroha and the way a leader can apply it in the field of academia. He provided an example of a kuia (elderly woman) whose grandchild telephoned at night and asks to be picked up, which the kuia accommodates. When I reflect on that example there are many values that emerge. The notions from Durie (2003) about the capacity to care such as manaakitanga surface. These notions are traditional and their values have been transported through the generations to take resident in these contemporary times. The example of a kuia is a reminder for leaders of Māori ethnicity to remember their whānau and that the role they perform does not begin at the institution they work for, rather, it starts in the home. The late night and age of the woman is another indication that the demands of a leader from those they serve can at

times be uncomfortable or an inconvenience. However, the reason for performing such role is to manaaki (care for), tautoko (support) and ensure those whom are being served are noa (safe).

Pakanga is the battle a rangatira or leader encounters. Tamihere (2010) was articulate in his presentation of leadership. His style reflected a 'straight talking' type of person. Being a straight talking person, he met many challenges. Those he served warmed to his leadership style and appreciated the honesty that he showed. I perceived that a straight talker was a person who was upfront with any issue presented and didn't divert but gave their honest opinion even it was not politically correct. Also, this type of leader wasn't afraid to take ownership of the words they used or their actions, neither could they be swayed to change their position if it contradicted their values and beliefs. In institutions the display of this type of behaviour was seldom welcomed by hierarchy or by the majority of mainstream academics. At times this type of leader was silenced.

Tino rangatiratanga and mana wahine was displayed amicably at the second hui. Solomon and McMeeking (2010) address on the ability of Māori to implement authority in a tribal organisation was empowering. The leadership style he discussed resonated with the traditional customs of having mana (prestige) and control over decisions in one's tribal area. His ability to test experts and act as a leader and not allow the experts to over step his authority or talk down to the people he served in a contemporary time for me was enlightening. I sit on various boards, and there are many instances where Māori leaders ask for experts to provide them with guidance and in doing so they concede their ability to make decisions. Fortunately, Solomon acted as a traditional leader like those who contributed to fashioning the 1835 Declaration of Independence.

Surviving as a mana wahine is difficult in institutions. Mead's (2010) approach to discussing leadership was from a humble position. However, she noted that without the support from her iwi the leadership positions she occupied may never have come to fruition. Once again like Royal (2010) she alerted to the importance of balancing the responsibilities of home, the children and the work.

Tikanga kore and pono/tika were highlighted at the final hui. Higgins' (2010) notions of tikanga in institutions raised the concept of tikanga kore. This referred to adapting customs to accommodate the visitors or meeting of the day. However, Higgins cautioned the overuse of changes to the point the values become diminished, tikanga kore. But she reinforced the practicality of changing decisions to care for and support people.

Pono and tika were important values that were raised throughout the three symposia. In Turei's (2010) leadership commentaries she began with 'ahau' (me) and 'whānau'. This depiction is similar to many traditional and contemporary leadership styles whereby the leader centres themselves by establishing their turangawaewae. From that point Turei talked honestly about her upbringing, challenges, and the forces that were impacting on the lives of her whānau. Being truthful is an important leadership quality and keeping the korero tika (correct discussions) by presenting contemporary issues in te ao Māori. For Turei the examples of being a sole parent and her parents becoming unemployed brought those listening closer to the reality of those people who live struggling to be educated and employed.

In summary these six concepts enabled me to critique and analyse effective Māori leadership. Aroha and pakanga, love and battles, are experiences and values Māori leaders will encounter in institutions on a daily basis. The ability to manage a way forward can be achieved by tino rangatiratanga and mana wahine and mana tane (male leadership). Taking control of one's decisions and being passionate about the work done is a way to advance. Tikanga kore is a remembrance that customs are not set in stone and can be modified and that, indeed, it is

necessary to be adaptive in a complex world. Finally, pono and tika are values that a leader must never shed and maintaining one's integrity within the institution by implementing theory and practice should keep a leader in good stead.

Surviving in academia for Māori is never easy and as a leader one should not be complacent. Māori academics are a minority within institutions and are challenged many times to advocate on behalf of Māori cultural developments or to explain Māori issues that hit the national headlines in the media. Therefore a leadership hui in this millennium is significant because it allows academics to take time out, self reflect and revisit the notion of rangatira.

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Author Notes

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Dr Te Momo (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Konohi) is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Health and Social Services at Massey University (Albany campus).

E-mail: f.temomo@massey.ac.nz