Towards integrating Indigenous culture in urban form

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Abstract

Indigenous peoples throughout Canada and New Zealand have long lived and continue to live within the urban environment, where they are commonly physically disconnected from their ancestral homelands. Indigenously grounded urban design and development principles provide an opportunity to bring Indigenous cultural connection into the urban environment. However, there remains a gap in the incorporation of Indigenous values and traditions within planning processes. Moreover, when Indigenous values are recognised in planning it is primarily at the tribal or nation scale, therefore commonly neglecting the more pan-tribal values of the urban Indigenous diaspora.

This paper explores the gap from a First Nations and Māori perspective. It draws on data from four First Nation communities in Vancouver, Canada and a predominantly Māori community in the Waiwhetū papakāinga in Wellington, New Zealand. The research illustrates how Indigenous cultural values can be utilised in the development and design of spatially just urban environments aimed at respectful co-existence. The authors argue that planners should allow for and encourage Indigenous communities to be decision makers in their urban environment and enable them to drive their own projects according to their own values, traditions and customs.

Key Words

Indigenous urban planning, Indigenous urban design, co-existence, self-determination, Indigenous diaspora.

Introduction

> "[Y]ou've got to believe it comes at a social cost for Maori youth to be growing up in an environment where your culture's alien, where it's invisible - not just marginalised, it's not even there." (The Press, 19/01/2013).

In this quotation Eruera Tarena speaks of the lack of visible Māori identity in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. However, following the 2010/2011 earthquakes in the city, its rebirth is consciously including a cultural recovery that offers a significant opportunity for a bicultural identity to be meaningfully established in the city for the first time. This includes formally acknowledging landmarks in the Māori language; construction of a cultural precinct; planting of native shrubs important to local Māori; making shared histories visible; introducing locally specific Māori symbolism and a Māori design ethic; and making space for Māori ceremonies and performances in the centre. It is not wholesale change, rather an attempt to reflect the Indigenous people in the city and landscape as a normal feature of the Christchurch identity. In our view, it is shocking that achieving a shift like this has taken the devastation of a natural disaster in the city. But it is indicative of the marginalisation of Indigenous voices, names, histories, landmarks, practices and symbolism in the business-as-usual practices of city planning. It is a pointed issue of spatial injustice.

The physical and visible disconnect between Indigenous groups and urban areas is common in colonised countries around the world. Yet, there is limited research directly on this issue at an

international level (Porter, 2013). In order to launch into this area in a more concerted way, we decided it would be beneficial to appraise our own situation in New Zealand, but also complement that work by observing the situation in another location. We chose to build on the strong link that already exists between New Zealand and Canadian Indigenous researchers (e.g. Lightfoot, 2010; Maaka and Fleras, 2005) and their similar colonial histories and related implications for Indigenous populations to investigate the issue of urban cultural recovery in two different contexts. The rapid colonisation of New Zealand and Canada had profound implications on both Māori and First Nation peoples. One significant effect of colonisation has been the alienation of Indigenous culture through legal mechanisms that instigated the confiscation of Indigenous lands, causing disconnection from traditional homelands (Hill 2009), including lands now within urban areas.

A key foundation for this paper comes from a desire on the part of the authors to reinsert Indigenous aspirations in (post)colonial urban environments. This paper serves as an exploratory beginning to that endeavour. Driving this ambition are the specific backgrounds of the authors. Two of our authors are Māori with a firm commitment to analysing how Indigenous knowledges can be valued and can inspire Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) visions for the built environment. One of the Māori authors also has direct familial connections into the New Zealand case study location of Waiwhetū. Another of our authors is a recent immigrant to New Zealand from Canada where he had previous experience working with First Nation communities and Indigenous organisations on sustainability and environmental management issues. Together, we offer a unique perspective from which to investigate embedding Indigenous culture in urban form.

Currently, New Zealand and Canada are both highly urbanised countries where more than 80% of the population lives in urban centres (Statistics Canada 2006, Statistics New Zealand 2013). New Zealand Māori have had a particularly rapid migration experience, with 85% of the population being rural in 1900 and 85% being urban by 2000 (Kukutai, 2014). The migration intensified after WWII in response to workforce incentives to boost urban industry, with resultant adverse effects on Indigenous language, traditional social structures, health, education and housing quality (Ryks et al., 2016). Canada's urban Aboriginal population is also rising rapidly – from 6.5% in 1951 to 53% in 2006 (Peters 2011). Canada's total Aboriginal population is 1,400,685 and the urban Aboriginal population is growing at 4.8% annually, while the Canadian population as a whole grew by 0.9% annually between 2006 and 2011 and the urban population grew by 1.2% (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2013). Indigenous populations are disproportionately poor; suffer higher rates of unemployment and incarceration; and endure poor quality housing and health outcomes. Yet the focus on urban marginalisation and social inequalities masks the structural impacts of colonisation and diversity of Indigenous experiences in places across both countries (Peters, 2011; Robson and Harris, 2007.).

In both New Zealand and Canada the growing Indigenous urbanised population (but still a minority in relation to non-Indigenous urban population) experiences displacement, spatial injustice and marginalisation (Wilson and Peters, 2005). Displacement of Indigenous peoples is not simply physical it involves the erasure of Indigenous cultural, political and social practices, and identities. The result is that while a majority of Indigenous people in New Zealand and Canada live in cities, these places are often devoid of any meaningful sense of Indigenous culture.

Thompson–Fawcett (2010) highlighted the need to re-imagine the urban landscape as rich with

Indigenous identity, values and principles. These values intricately link to philosophies from an historical and intimate relationship between people and place. Urban design and planning practice have significant roles to play in reconnecting the Indigenous past with ever-evolving contemporary urbanisation and in doing so, articulate a right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968) that reshapes urban experience for all urban residents. Integrating Indigenous cultural values within the built environment can provide a vehicle for advancing Indigenous aspirations for spatial justice by creating a sense of identity through direct association to a place that is often dominated by Western design and planning practices (Awatere *et al.* 2010, Kyser 2011, Kyser 2012, Thompson-Fawcett 2010).

In this article, we use examples from both Canada and New Zealand to explore challenges and opportunities that arise from integrating different meanings of place, culture and participation in the co-creation of urban environments to better reflect Indigenous identities. Our aim is not to provide a comparative analysis of urban experience in Canada and New Zealand, but rather to highlight key issues and reflect on how they might be addressed. First we discuss the role of worldviews and identity and how they shape approaches to planning and urban design. We then present results of research that explored Indigenous people in their communities and discuss how the articulation of Indigenous identity in the city can better inform design and creation of urban environments in the future.

Worldviews: Connecting Identity and Place

In New Zealand there has been increased efforts to understand Indigenous values within planning discourses and practice. In part this has been driven by legal necessity, which requires decision-making authorities to utilise more inclusive planning procedures when Indigenous groups have interest in a particular issue. For instance, the Resource Management Act, 1991, legal precedent, and Indigenous treaty settlements have been instrumental in requiring planning authorities to engage and work collaboratively with Indigenous groups on planning and decision making around resource management matters (Coates 2009). However, the focus on resources, environmental management and planning reinforces the view that resources can be possessed and controlled rather than viewing them in terms of functions and relationships (Howitt, 2001). In addition, such a focus contributes to the view of rural (or non-urban) spaces as the place for expressing indigeneity. The struggle for spatial justice for urban Indigenous peoples seeks not simply engagement, consultation or collaboration between Indigenous and non-indigenous, but recognition of the cultural violence that has occurred through erasing Indigenous identity from cities (Castree, 2004). Urban environments are more representative of western values, colonial pasts and global identities rather than Indigenous values, which often either exclude or dilute Indigenous identities, weakening connection to place, leading to loss of agency and integrity. The view of urban indigeneity as illegitimate persists, and as Porter (2013: 284) suggests, "[w]e have not yet fully come to grips with what coexistence might look like or mean in urban settings."

Academics such as geographers, planners, historians, anthropologists and political scientists make available a broad range of knowledge derived from ontologies of indigeneity as a means of increasing Indigenous agency in management and planning of environments. This knowledge often works towards the advancement of Indigenous aspirations and provides an understanding of how Indigenous and Western philosophies may work collaboratively in planning and urban design practices (Awatere *et al.* 2010, Connelly *et al.* 2011, Durie 2005, Mead 2003, Sandercock

1998, Smith 2012, Thompson-Fawcett 2010). Harmsworth (2002: 2) argues that for Indigenous culture to survive action must occur not only to maintain Indigenous identity but also to re-shape practices of the past, which disregarded Indigenous perspectives:

> "the survival of indigenous culture, including values and knowledge will require positive steps based on explicit models, processes and systems to counter the tide of ubiquitous global culture fuelled by Western values and exploitation."

Much of this knowledge creation has been formed and constructed out of 'decolonising' or post-modernist research methodologies, which explore Indigenous knowledge through research approaches that give meaningful considerations to Indigenous epistemologies (Smith 2012, Sandercock 1998, Bishop 1999). This article draws from research derived through an approach adapted out of post-modernist research methodologies and conducted in 2013. The research explored the role of Indigenous knowledge in promoting the development and design of Indigenous spaces. The research highlighted the importance of place making, the importance of reconnecting Indigenous identity to a place or an environment that was uniquely and intimately a part of who they are, as a means of achieving spatial justice in urban contexts. Urban areas have retained only minimal connection to values and identities of Indigenous groups, making place-making for Indigenous people in the city particularly important. This paper explores approaches to reclaiming urban environments so that they are also Indigenous spaces.

Worldviews and Identity

This section provides the theoretical framework navigating and highlighting the intimate connection between Indigenous epistemologies associated with identity and the geographies of place, and how they interconnect with the discourses of planning theory. This section also provides both theoretical and real life examples of the interaction between indigeneity and planning discourses.

'Ko ahau ko te awa, ko te awa ko ahau' - *I am the river, the river is me'* this expression highlights elements of a Māori worldview that emphasises genealogical relationships between people and the environment around them. The phrase reflects a relationship between humans and a physical environmental feature. Thompson-Fawcett (2010) links these Indigenously derived understandings of the world to behavioural actions, which are built upon specific values, traditions and skills that relate directly to their locality. In the context of the expression 'ko ahau ko te awa, ko te awa ko ahau' - which is predominantly referenced by the tribal groups from within the Whanganui region of New Zealand - a direct relationship is acknowledged between the people of that region and the river.

> "The river is of huge importance to the iwi: it is their ancestral river, their arterial highway, and a source of physical and spiritual sustenance. Although few Whanganui Māori now live on the river, it remains a focal point."(Beaglehole 2012: 5)

Another crucial connection for Indigenous communities is with the land. Within a Māori worldview, land (or whenua) reflects not only a physical or tangible element, but imbues and constructs a spiritual connection between people and papatūānuku (the earth mother). When a child is born, the placenta is buried in the ground, and through that act, the relationship between child and mother earth is cemented, recognising one's turangawaewae (place to stand/ancestral home) and also the practice of utu (reciprocity). For this reason land/whenua is the basis of one's Māori identity; it is one's turangawaewae; and it is the realm in which cultural principles and values are created. Rewi (2010: 57) emphasises this assertion:

> "Ko te tangata kāore ōna tikanga, he rite ki te rākau kaore ōna pakiaka
> Ka pūhia e te hau, ka hinga noa, ka maroke, ka popo, ka hanehane
> People without identity are like the tree with no roots to establish itself firmly. It is constantly at the disposal of the elements."

Understanding the world through an Indigenous lens highlights the interwoven nature of such an epistemology. The distinction between what is tangible and intangible is not defined by concepts of real and non-real. Tangible and intangible are equally enmeshed and are not regarded as distinctive elements but as one whole. Understanding Indigenous knowledge and the link with culture enhances comprehension of the distinct beliefs and structures of Indigenous peoples (Marsden 2003).

However, there has been recognition within the planning community that practices, concepts and structures have directly and indirectly acted in ways which silence, marginalise, exclude and oppress Indigenous communities because of differences and incompatibilities in epistemologies (Yiftachel 1998, Sandercock 2004a). Planning with and in Indigenous communities presents challenges to the planning profession. There has been a failure in traditional planning processes to accommodate notions such as multiculturalism and bi-culturalism. Moreover, planning processes commonly focus exclusively on tangible or "real world" factors that can be measured; these challenge the interconnectedness of intangible and tangible elements at the heart of Indigenous worldviews.

To embrace indigeneity meaningfully, planning processes should incorporate principles of stewardship, cultural identity, collective rights, and the political right to land and governance for Indigenous peoples in their contemporary environment (Porter, 2013). Rather than expecting Indigenous peoples to adapt to Western planning processes and practices, processes and practices would do well to accommodate differing modes of operation based on different worldviews and values; an approach that planning has generally failed to welcome (Sandercock, 2004a; Harwood, 2005; Walker 2008b).

The conventional planning approach follows a technocratic, linear path focused on the outcome or desired output. It is common that Indigenous groups are recognised in their presence, but valued primarily as passive observers. This is a point raised by Sandercock (2004a) who contends that the usual approach to ameliorate issues of cultural marginalisation is to structure planning through inclusionary and participatory methodologies ensuring that Indigenous groups are 'included' and are 'participating' in the planning process.

However, participation and inclusion, as discussed by Friedmann (1987) and Ackerman (2004), work at varying scales, whereby Indigenous or minority groups may participate in engagement activities, but are not normally included in decision making processes. The linear, technocratic method allows developers and resource users to state they have 'consulted', 'included' or 'involved' Indigenous groups in the planning process - which will often meet the legal bar set for involvement of 'special interest' or 'interested stakeholders' in planning processes - but Indigenous groups are not merely stakeholders and their inclusion should signal that they have some influence on decisions (Ruckstuhl, Thompson-Fawcett and Rae, 2014).

Sandercock (2004a) explores the notions of participation and inclusion and stresses that the focus in Indigenous contexts should be on sovereignty and rights. Sovereignty infers a special obligation of Crown or State to engage with Indigenous populations as a distinct and recognised group that has standing above that of stakeholder groups (Tipa 2006, Tipa and Welch 2006). However, recognition of Indigenous sovereignty rights is often neglected.

Primarily, this is due to an inability to incorporate Indigenous values into planning processes effectively because of lack of understanding on the part of the planning profession of Indigenous or other worldviews (Sandercock 2004a, Umemoto 2001). The inherent and fundamental basis of planning is challenged by the call to change the process, practice and purpose of planning to engage genuinely with the views and values of Indigenous peoples. Thus conventional planning processes continue to result in a marginalisation of Indigenous peoples in terms of shaping and re-culturing the urban environment.

Nevertheless, there are promising examples of planning endeavours that have adopted a more explicit focus on justice and social equity around resource use, albeit still almost exclusively focused on the non-urban environment. Lane and Hibbard (2005) relay examples from Indigenous peoples of New Zealand, Australia and Canada and explore the joint management and co-management agreements between Indigenous groups and central, local and provincial governments in relation to natural resources. In the New Zealand context the development of co-management and joint-management agreements has occurred between tribal entities and local government and environmental agencies. These agreements loosely relate to the combined management of natural resources within particular jurisdictions, and through such structures, Indigenous values are recognised and applied within collaborative planning approaches, for example in relation to significant waterways (Tipa 2006, Tipa and Welch 2006) and fisheries (Hepburn *et al.* 2010).

Although co-management and joint management agreements represent a step forward in integrating Indigenous values into planning practice, Indigenous values are still not equitably recognised. Rona (2014) analyses the shortcomings in implementing co-management practice, such as a lack of mutual learning and understanding, sound and lasting relationships, and power sharing between local bodies and Indigenous groups. Sandercock (2000) has similarly explored notions of co-management and joint management through promoting planning practices that aim at managing co-existence in shared space. The concept of co-existence emphasises differences in society - recognising the plethora of groups with distinct beliefs, ideologies, social structures and ways of being. Sandercock (2000) asserts that the role of planners is to understand imbued difference and contemplate how co-existence can be meaningfully implemented in planning practice.

The notion of 'co-existence' has been explicit in the conceptualisation and application of Indigenous identity when it comes to New Zealand's Whanganui River and Treaty Settlement (Whanganui River Deed of Settlement) between the Crown and the local iwi (tribe) of the River. This Settlement recognises the Whanganui River as its own legal entity – Te Awa Tupua / *The River which holds its own mystic, a supernatural being.* The creation of a river as a legal entity which is represented by its human agents who must act to maintain the core values ascribed to it through the Settlement will mean a significant change in planning functions in relation to the river as well as the decision making role of Whanganui River iwi (Waitangi Tribunal, 2014).

What this Treaty Settlement underlines is how identity within an Indigenous context can transcend traditional legal structures - instituting a paradigm shift in planning for natural resources. The recognition of Indigenous self-determination associated with the Whanganui River Settlement has resulted in changes for institutions and practices in terms of how the dominant non-indigenous society relates to Indigenous claims to resources. It can be viewed as an (albeit non-urban) example of transformative planning (Walker, 2008a). The river as its own legal entity embodies the notion of co-existence described by Sandercock (2004a). It also speaks

to Lane and Hibbard's (2005) call to challenge socially embedded structures derived from traditional planning discourses and create new ways of envisioning our wider environment. However, when Lane and Hibbard (2005) asked for new approaches to managing the wider environment through including the Indigenous frame, they were referring to co-management and joint-management planning models. The Whanganui River Settlement creates a new approach which re-imagines and re-creates these models - reconceptualising understandings of the environment and how to engage with it. This more nuanced model, like the co-management and joint management models that preceded it, has yet to transpose itself within urban environments.

Co-existence: Integrating worldviews within planning and urban design

By way of example, we turn to Rolleston and Awatere (2009) who offer a route to urban co-existence. They propose the use of Māori principles, concepts and mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge) to inform urban design processes in the development of urban environments. They draw on knowledge from cultural environments such as papakāinga (home community) and marae (meeting grounds) and re-package them within a contemporary planning and design approach to urban development (see Table 1). The principal assertion of Rolleston and Awatere's (2009) research is that urban design is not simply about physical buildings and their placement, but the interconnections that buildings have with people, place, spaces and the wider environment from an Indigenous point of view.

It acknowledges that the outcomes of planning and urban design shape relationships between people, and between people and the environment, while at the same time emphasising that the way people interact with each other and the environment is dynamic; changing planning and urban design outcomes. In other words, planning / urban design should not be thought of as empty containers; the activities that go on in and around the urban environment are active and vital. Taking indigeneity seriously in planning / urban design will not only result in a different physical environment. It will result in changes in how that environment is understood and used.

For this reason, urban design strategies as advanced by Rolleston and Awatere (2009) work from an Indigenous epistemology, forming relationships and understandings from within the web of connections that create and construct the holistic dynamics of Indigenous communities.

Table 1. List of Māori Urban Design Principles, adapted from Awatere *et al.* 2008: 31

Principles	Description
Wairuatanga:	The embedded emotion and spirit which fosters an innate connection with place for the people of that locality
Manākitanga:	Hospitality and security, therefore, embracing people, visitors and providing them with a safe place to be
Whānaungatanga:	Participation and membership, thus community participation and pride built upon community unity
Kaitiakitanga:	Guardianship or stewardship, therefore the protection of important environmental and community sites through community ownership and collective responsibility

Rangatiratanga:	Leadership, identity and self-determination, therefore the action of taking charge of the future
Mauritanga:	The life essence or life force of an environment, therefore acting to ensure the maintenance and or restoration of such mauri
Orangatanga:	Maintaining the health and wellbeing of the community, therefore the promotion of wellbeing
Mātauranga:	Knowledge and understanding of the world around you and sharing that knowledge with others
Kotahitanga:	The act of cohesion and collaboration, therefore encouraging community unity and leadership

These concepts in Table 1 provide pathways for urban development that work according to Māori principles and values that are commonly prioritised within the traditional papakāinga environment. Integrated within them are notions associated with aspects of liveability and endurance, based on an Indigenous foundation that links to communal structures.

Awatere *et al.* (2010) claim that such design approaches move away from conventional Western planning and design modes and work to create a space imbued with values of collective ownership and shared identity. Awatere *et al.* (2010) maintain that Indigenous concepts do not inherently find resonance within standard design guidelines (such as the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol), which therefore, do not accommodate Māori settlement processes (Awatere *et al.* 2010, Awatere and Rolleston 2009). This highlights, within the New Zealand context, that Indigenous values have yet to integrate into urban design processes and understandings of how the urban environment could be better linked to Indigenous values.

The Indigenous design principles have the potential to provide another layering onto traditional Western notions of liveability and building design if incorporated into practice. The interfacing of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems has the ability to provide creative solutions to the design of environments and achieve a greater sense of cultural value and identity in bi-cultural (and multi-cultural) settings. It also presents an opportunity for Indigenous groups to re-claim their own identity within the design of urban form and through that process lay claim to their right to the city.

Methodology

The analysis presented in this paper derives from a study that examined the role of Indigenous knowledge and values in planning for urban environments. It was important to establish a research process that was culturally appropriate – respectful and beneficial to those Indigenous peoples involved. Such a methodology "privileges Indigenous concerns, Indigenous practices and Indigenous participation as researchers and researched" (Smith, 2012: p.111). This approach facilitates the research being both politically empowering and a decolonising activity. Our research also provided the opportunity for the first author to reflect on his journey, lived experience, sense of place and culture as Māori in Wellington; to travel to Vancouver to experience the urban Indigenous experience as an outsider; and to return and reflect on the lessons for the potential of urban places that recognised urban indigeneity.

The Indigenous communities chosen came from both New Zealand and Canada and were selected primarily because of their relative connection to the urban environment. However, this

was not the case for all Indigenous communities, for instance the Sts'Ailes Nation, which is based on the upper Fraser Valley of British Colombia. The Sts'Ailes Nation (although rural in its nature) provided an important case to compare the urban Indigenous context against. The other communities, Waiwhetū in Lower Hutt New Zealand, Squamish Nation, Sto'lo Nation, Tseil (Tsleil) Waututh Nation and also the Vancouver Friendship Center are centred within city environments.

The methodology used was developed out of two frameworks. The first was Sandercock's (2004b) post-modernist framework, which uses a multiplicity of methods for research such as storytelling and conversations. The second was Smith's (2012) decolonising methodology, which recognises the inherent values of Indigenous groups and ensures that all actions align and consider those values.

The vehicle which encapsulated each of these methodologies was derived from a learning structure which is recognised within Māori culture as Tu taha kē ai, which means to stand at someone's side. The benefit of Tu taha kē ai is that it bonds the researcher and the informant in a manner of equal footing, wherein the process of research is not guided solely by the researcher, rather the research process is a mutual interaction whereby the researcher stands at the side of the informant, watching, listening, sensing, and joining in. This approach was particularly relevant when interviewing people of older generations who often felt inclined to not only share but also to teach, and was particularly useful in cross-cultural settings. The ethos of the research was to allow respondents to tell their own stories. Therefore, while interview topic guides were used as conversation starters, respondents were free to take the conversation in any direction they chose. These conversations were not interviews in the sense of a mechanism to 'extract' data from respondents, but rather served as a means of bonding and sharing lived experiences over multiple days and interactions. The Indigenous knowledge was transmitted carefully, deliberately, often slowly, in accordance with the level of goodwill in the engagement. The participants were able to talk and share in a manner that did not marginalise their position or beliefs as Indigenous people. This was partly due to the informal nature of the interaction, which allowed for mutual discussion rather than following a question and answer format. Conversations were conducted with a total of eight participants (see Table 2). Participants came from a wide range of professions and fields in New Zealand and Canada, and included band employees, council members, community historians and kaumatua (elders). The focus was on hearing context-rich, concrete, detailed accounts as these informants engaged in their daily activities and interactions with others, rather than a multitude of accounts. This offers the potential for an in-depth, nuanced understanding developed from close proximity to the participants.

For the purposes of this paper the authors have chosen to focus on key interactions that best articulate the message of Indigenous identity and how it may better inform the design and creation of urban environments.

Table 2: List of key informants

Key Informants	Community
Key Informants 1 & 2	Waiwhetū Kaumatua (elders) males age ~80s (NZ)
Key Informant 3	Sts'Ailes Nation, male age ~50s (CA)
Key Informant 4	Sto'lo Nation, Elder, female age ~60s (CA)
Key Informant 5	Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center, female age ~30s (CA)
Key Informant 6	Squamish Nation, Elder, male age ~60s (CA)
Key Informant 7	Tseil (Tsleil) Wau'tuth Nation, male age ~30s (CA)
Key Informant 8	NZ/Canadian Health Professional, female age ~40s

Results and Discussion

This section of the article examines how specific Indigenous communities interact with their urban environment, highlighting two key points. First, Indigenous groups utilise their own epistemological understanding of the world as a means to create community cohesion and belonging. Second, although the maintenance of Indigenous culture is pertinent to preserving Indigenous identity, it does not have to be practiced within rigid, static understandings associated with Indigenous cultural institutions.

As a means of unravelling Indigenous epistemologies and their interconnection with individuals from specific Indigenous communities, key elements - *land*, *buildings* and *family* - will be explored to understand how they inform and create a sense of cultural identity that strengthens indigeneity claims to the city.

Land - Whenua

Identity threads itself through a number of different webs and structures. However, from within understandings and foundations of Indigenous identity, there is one element which holds supremacy; this is of course land - whenua. This is because land is not merely a resource but a fundamental and intrinsic aspect of one's being, which is a point unambiguously articulated by Key Informant Six (Squamish Nation Elder):

> "We always maintain our connection to our land as that is our source of strength, that is our roots, that's our trees, our food, that's our DNA, and no matter what, we would never leave it, despite all the risks of disease, laws, you name it, we are defined by our land; that is our strength."

The land therefore, superimposes itself as a metaphysical being, and as noted by Informant Seven, "there is a lack of comprehension and understanding of these intrinsic values and beliefs amongst normal society." This clearly reflects the tensions between worldviews wherein Indigenous groups appreciate land as a spiritual entity with its own mauri (life force) and also wairua (spirit). This is personified within the shared conceptualisations of land as Mother Earth, or Papatūānuku; something provided by the great creator for purposes of survival not ownership. The Indigenous understandings of land inherently contradict the predominant Western conceptions of single land ownership where the owner has exclusive legal right to use, dispose of and exclude all others (Blomley, 2004). Such a conception contravenes collective rights, which provide Indigenous agency at both the individual and collective scale as the land is a collective asset, providing for the individual and shared needs of group members (Holder and

Corntassel 2002).

This cultural chasm of misunderstanding is linked to the assertions made by Dei (2002: 5), who states Indigenous knowledge "is based on cognitive understandings and interpretations of the social, physical and spiritual worlds", which can be confusing for those who have not studied or engaged with this realm.

A poignant example is provided by Key Informant Six (Squamish Nation Elder) who stated:

> "when Canada asked my wife how she had rights to the land that we were claiming back through our settlement process, she said 'because my belly button is buried there'... How can you argue with that?"

The burying of the belly button emphasises the spiritual and intimate connection between the land and the person; two entities connected as one. This narrative of Indigenous identity often conflicts with legal structures and interpretations, which are based more on empirical evidence - often inattentive to emotional and spiritual knowledge forms or observations through an Indigenous lens.

The relevance of land for Indigenous communities is particularly significant; it acts to cement and affirm rangatiratanga, or Indigenous rights within an environment. Through that affirmation of Indigenous rights a sense of place and identity is created and cemented within that environment. The need for land is paramount to Indigenous communities; without land it is difficult to swim the tides of a community's spiritual and cultural traditions.

Buildings - Whare

Other features of Indigenous cultures that perpetuate and uphold key cultural institutions are the central buildings or hubs that act as the heart of the community, pumping blood through the veins and arteries, maintaining and upholding the Indigenous identity. These buildings also provide a critical, culturally-safe place for the dispossessed; this is true for the long house, the marae area, but more importantly other institutions such as pan-tribal urban marae and First Nation Friendship Centres, which arguably act as a surrogate for the 'real' homeland environments of Indigenous communities.

The vignette below is a diary account provided by our first author of his experience meeting with First Nation community members who utilised or were employees of the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre.

> "I walked into this room, which was the kitchen and dining room. The moment I walked into the room, I felt the warmth and comfort - it was like walking into the kitchen back home at the Marae and seeing all the aunties chatting away. I introduced myself, told them where I was from, what I was doing in Canada, and where I had been.
>
> Once introductions were over we proceeded to talk about a number of issues relating to First Nation homelessness, blood quantum laws, and one person in particular shared stories relating to their struggles through alcohol and drug addiction. Highlighted throughout all of these conversations were points of pain, hurt and dissatisfaction with the status quo. After these very informal conversations, and of course a cup of coffee and a meal, I was fortunate enough to organise a formal interview with one of the employees of the Friendship Centre. This was of course after accepting her invitation for me to peel some spuds and help her filet some fish for tomorrow's lunch.
>
> During the interview Key Informant Five talked about how she moved away from home to Vancouver as a child for schooling. During that period she was away from her family, she became very home sick and would often call home, distressed and wanting to go home. Her Aunt then told her about the Friendship Centre, which she then visited. When the informant arrived at the Centre,

she said:

'I stood outside the door, and I saw the totem pole and I stood there and I looked at the totem poles and I thought wow, it's not our colours but it is a totem pole... it felt like I was coming home."
The informant then talked about how she started out as a volunteer in the Centre and later became an employee working with First Nation Elders living in the Vancouver area. What the informant emphasised through her work and her involvement with the Centre was that First Nation people: "are not all the same but we have similar things in common. And if you look at the First Nation people I work with at the Centre, they are from right across Canada, I am from the North, we have people from Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, Nisga'a and others so you know we are all different, we are not the same'."

What this vignette highlights is that Indigenous communities are perfectly capable of adapting to the situation and the needs in non-traditional, urban settings. The Friendship Centre environment creates a refuge for First Nations people and allows them a space to be themselves – to be Haida Gwaii, Nisga'a (inter alia). A similar role is played by the pan-tribal 'urban' marae in the New Zealand context.

In contrast, the wharenui (meeting house) and longhouses within both New Zealand and Canadian traditional Indigenous locations (including urban), and the values ascribed to these buildings, extend beyond the immediate vicinity and into the wider structures of Indigenous environments. They perform the role of the community focal point, and provide a medium for bringing people together and rooting a sense of place and identity within the landscape. The notion of a wharenui / longhouse as a cultural hub, and requisite of Indigenous identity is emphasised by Key Informant Two:

"If you have no marae/wharenui, what do you have in terms of culture? You have to have a home marae you can go home to and say 'that's my marae', and if I want to learn Kapa Haka [Māori dance form] if I want to learn how to weave or carve or speak Māori, I can get it from there. So it is the cultural focal point, and the meaning of it and the principles and mores of the culture are practiced there."

Kāretu (1990) maintains that the marae and the wharenui relate closely to the idea of turangawaewae, which integrates identity and place. Much of this is inscribed within notions of whakapapa and ancestry, where the wharenui or longhouse embody ancestors, which they are named after, or which they represent, drawing a direct relationship between the building and those who descend from it (Sissons 2010).

Key Informant Three (Sts'Ailes Nation Historian) talks about the Grandfather longhouse within the Sts'Ailes Nation:

"Over there we have our Grandfather longhouse and everything here revolves around that longhouse. This is the big daddy and the thing with the Grandfather longhouse is that he is to stay untouched, no improvements can happen to this longhouse, because he is to stay humble."

Other important elements of the longhouse and wharenui are the spiritually based carvings, totem poles and paintings in and around the building and their surroundings. These carvings depict stories and cultural traditions that are founded within the communities, representing key values.

One example are the interconnections between the symbols of salmon and humans (see Figure 1). These carvings reflect the nurturing of ecological harmony between salmon and people. Such examples, as explained by Haggan *et al.* (1998) are similarly visible in the Sty-Wet-Tan First Nation longhouse, which also depicts representations of Salmon and human lifecycles as a means of embodying stewardship. Such cultural traditions mirror the Māori concept of kaitiakitanga, involving protection and maintenance of an environment to ensure survival of

future generations. These representations in the urban environment, where Indigenous people live, begin to address the consequences of injustice (at least in a symbolic sense) by making visual claims to the city.

Figure 1: Squamish Nation Hall carved doors.

Source: Kara Puketapu-Dentice 10/06/2013

What this underscores is the significance of structures beyond their apparent utility – each edifice has symbolic purpose, tells a story of importance. Traditional Western planning frameworks attempt to create solutions by asking 'what do we need?' The answer may be to build a Friendship Centre. However, the technical solution may fail to recognise the deeper needs of Indigenous communities. For First Nation and Māori communities, the longhouse or wharenui is the starting point, it is the heart of any planning and all things revolve around it. It is not an amenity facility; it is a dominant feature whose identity, presence and purpose embody the essence of the Indigenous community.

To better understand how the wharenui and longhouse imprint themselves as dominant physical and cultural structures within First Nation and Māori communities, it is helpful to appreciate the importance of 'home' and family (whānau).

Whānau – Home and Family

The term whānau has commonly been translated as 'family'. However, the Māori term whānau is very broad, connecting to identity as defined by one's parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, aunties, uncles, close friends and of course ancestors. Whānau is not limited to the individual nuclear family unit; it provides a web of familial connections based on notions of kinship (Pere 1982). Similarly, Key Informant Four (Sto'lo Nation Elder) stated "when I say brothers and sisters they are actually my cousins, but we call each other brothers and sisters."

The whānau structure and other kinship structures of Indigenous populations deliver a model that is different to contemporary Western understandings of family. This is stressed in the assertions made by Key Informant One (Waiwhetū Māori Elder), who provided an observation that defines the difference between Western and Indigenous world views associated with

whānau and family.

> "When we were brought up, we were taught how to respond to the question, ko wai o matua? Who are your parents? Because you never asked a person what is their name. So you think why is that question? Well that question goes to the heart of Māoritanga, as in to their coming here and their whakapapa."

What that explanation illuminates is that identity is not derived from the individual as it would be in a Western context; rather the connection is to where that person comes from, or from whom they come. This is addressed in Marsden's (2003) discussion of Māori epistemology, which emphasises the idea of whānau as a continuous web of connections between people. Whether that connection is founded in history or in the present, in blood or in bond, it is whānau and the practice of whānaungatanga that provides the ultimate strength and sustenance of Indigenous communities. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples commonly see the wider world as an interconnected web, like a whānau / family – we are all connected to one another. The connections maintain the relationships and give meaning and purpose to what communities do and how they interact with the world around them. The process of reclaiming indigeneity of the city involves creating space, both physically and figuratively, for these interconnected bonding practices. Struggles for spatial justice are thus inherently based on the duality of individual and societal connections between people and between people and place.

Key Informant One (Waiwhetū Māori Elder) also noted that all the significant buildings within the Waiwhetū community share the same birthday – the day of their opening. This alludes to the role of maintaining relationships, of retaining a single point of origin, each building linking to each other and ensuring the values permeate through the community.

For Maori, developing from whānau is the notion of whānaungatanga, which:

> "deals with the practices that bond and strengthen kinship ties of whānau. The commitment of 'aroha'[love] is vital to whānaungatanga and the survival of what the group sees as important. Loyalty, obligation, commitment, and inbuilt support systems made the whānau a strong stable unit." (Pere, 1982: 26).

A prime example of whānau and whānaungatanga is embedded in a Māori creation narrative relating to Papatūānuku and Ranginui[1] and their children. This narrative interweaves through the spiritual and physical realms of the Māori world, placing at its heart the importance of familial bonds. This is achieved by recognising the roles and positions of Ranginui and Papatūānuku's children, who give relevance to the value of a connected society (whānau) maintained by elements working in complementary but also conflicting positions (whānaungatanga). An example of this is the relationship between Tāwhirimatea (deity of the storms and weather) and Tāne Mahuta (deity of the forest). At each level they work with each other as Tāwhirimatea spreads the seeds of Tane Mahuta's forest promoting life and growth. However, the relationship may also work in a way that destroys growth through such things as storms or floods created by Tāwhirimatea. This highlights that whānaungatanga is founded upon connections and actions that ensure familial bonds are continued. These bonds are upheld through both positive and

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[1] The story of Papatūānuku and Ranginui has its genesis in the story of Io. Io was said to have created the world, which we inhabit through the creation of Papatūānuku – earth mother and Ranginui sky father. These two figures procreated creating six deity children that controlled specific realms of the world. In the beginning Papatūānuku and Ranginui were two interlocked entities, creating a world that was shadowed by complete darkness, inhibiting growth and change. The deity of the Forest Tāne Mahuta, child of Papatūānuku and Ranginui, separated the two, causing light to come into the world, allowing life to prosper and grow (Alpers and Hanly 1996).

negative interactions and through a sense of unity and commitment to one another as explored below.

In the context of the papakāinga and First Nation reserves, maintenance of familial connections is emphasised through living in close proximity to each other. This is the bond that papakāinga and First Nation reserves predicate their existence upon, as Key Informant Three (Sts'Ailes Nation Historian) indicates:

> "What you will find here on the reserve is that there will be the parents or grandparents home, around that home will be the homes of their children and grandchildren because they all want to live close to each other."

This example highlights quite clearly the principle of kotahitanga or the action of coming together, bonding together as one unit, close to one another and therefore, building and creating strengths within the safety of the whānau/family. In these examples there is a clear description of familial togetherness. Key Informant Three (Sts'Ailes Nation Historian) explains that within their respective Nations, you will see families interacting with other families, sharing, living and congregating in the homes of other family members.

Similarly Key Informant Two (Waiwhetū Māori Elder) provides a good example of this as he talks about his home as the 'train station' in the papakāinga. Everybody seems to stop at his house for a conversation, a cup of tea or to sit down and read the paper before going home. This shows elements of manākitanga, through caring for whoever comes through the door. It shows whānaungatanga, because it is a place where people / whānau congregate and interact, showing dimensions of orangatanga, because for some it is a place of refuge and respite.

When looking at kinship principles in action there is nothing complex about them. Rather, they are indoctrinated cultural norms. There is an inherent understanding predicated on familial connections, which foster relationships constructed upon a mutual trust and sharing, whether that is conversation, time, food or a place to relax (Metge 1995 and Pere 1982). This is the strength of the whānau bond. Whānau, within the common parlance of New Zealand, seems somewhat of an innocuous term. However within a lived context it provides the backbone to a community's strength. Urban environments would present quite a different face if these Indigenous values and traditions were adopted and utilised in future development.

Key Informant One (Waiwhetū Māori Elder) reasons in philosophical terms the need to cultivate communities within the cultural lens of a nest, which links to their history and helps mould their future:

> "Change needs to come at the birth of the child, and that is how kohanga reo came about, a kohanga is a nest, and well the nest is also your papakāinga, and when you think about it in that way you come to realise and understand that the papakāinga is the base of your genealogy, your history and also your future."

The Elder articulates the need to create community structures that provide for growth, prosperity and more importantly a connection to place and nurturing of cultural identity through strong familial bonds. In an urban environment such elements of cultural maintenance present a challenging proposition due to the dominance of Westernised hegemonic structures. However, the cultural traditions and values associated with whānau and kinship provide the body of knowledge and mechanisms by which Indigenous people living within urban environments can form a sense of cultural identity. The challenge is how Indigenous peoples might reaffirm cultural traditions and values within urban landscapes when those landscapes have lost many aspects of their Indigenous identity.

Conclusion

Land, buildings and family are critical elements of Indigenous claims for spatial justice in the city. The test for planning and urban design is whether these professions and decision makers have the commitment to champion the appropriateness of incorporating Indigenous worldviews, aspirations and self-determination in regard to the meanings and purpose of land, buildings and family in the wider urban fabric. At present, Indigenous groups navigate their own way through engaging with the state by differing means and mechanisms. Ultimately, the state has both the ability and responsibility to uphold and assist in achieving Indigenous sovereignty – but it can also act to "obstruct, and derail" Indigenous aspirations (Durie 2005: 166).

As we saw in the Christchurch situation, planning is quite able to incorporate Indigenous language, design, symbolism, histories, practices and activities when pushed. Similarly, a recent example from the Downtown East Side (DTES) neighbourhood in Vancouver (home to roughly 10% of Vancouver's Aboriginal population) illustrates the efforts to reclaim spaces while also commemorating past injustices through the redevelopment of the former Vancouver Police Department headquarters. The DTES is Vancouver's poorest neighbourhood, with higher than average rates of poverty, homelessness, mental illness and drug addiction (Brethour, 2009). Original plans for the building, which has been vacant since 2010, involved the redevelopment of the space to accommodate offices for high tech start-ups. After much community organizing and protest, a different vision has emerged in consultation with the neighbourhood and First Nations (Alexander, 2016). First Nation architects have developed a plan and design that includes a Coast Salish-style longhouse nestled inside the existing building to reclaim Indigenous spaces and also recognize the historical role the building has played as a focal point for the struggle for social justice in the neighbourhood. The proposed redevelopment extends beyond inclusion of Indigenous symbols to also include a shift in purpose. It will offer a community gathering place, spaces for performances, artist studios, community kitchen, shared workspaces, office space for community advocacy groups and non-profits as well as some offices for profit high-tech start-up firms (Alexander, 2016).

The research findings confirm the case study communities are rich in regard to their cultural diversity and the application of their Indigenous traditions. Dynamic, adaptive mechanisms and approaches have ensured that their identities as Indigenous peoples are being maintained. This has been achieved by applying elements associated with their epistemological framework to processes and structures relevant to the development of their community. This is demonstrated in their built environment through the development of longhouses and wharenui and the integration of traditional values and motifs within other contemporary structures. This substantiates the aspiration to be culturally defined communities. Many of the case study communities also have strong collaborative relationships with government and other organisations, emphasising their ability to be power brokers and decision makers in areas that affect their community. However, it is clear that such relationships would benefit from further development to ensure greater impetus is given to Indigenous groups within decision-making arenas. The research findings also reveal the need to focus on the wellbeing of Indigenous people per se and ensure that effort at government and municipality level is not restricted to the Indigenous community ancestrally based in that locality. The growing urban Indigenous population that lives away from traditional home bases needs similar opportunities as groups whose traditional base is in and around the urban location. To achieve this, planners need to develop policies and plans that allow for and encourage Indigenous communities to be decision

makers in their urban environment and also allow them to drive their own projects according to their own values, traditions and customs.

Urban Indigenous groups should be afforded greater agency in keeping with their decision-making traditions, ensuring their Indigenous identity is recognised even when they do not live within ancestral bounds. Respectful co-existence based on spatial justice means equitable engagement for Indigenous communities who are regarded not as participants or stakeholders, but as partners within planning, urban design and community development processes.

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