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# DEVELOPMENT: SOVEREIGNTY OR DEPENDENCY?

*Manuka Henare*

The approach I find most useful when discussing planning and development is to draw on my own personal experience as well as the experience of the office in which I've been employed for thirteen years. Prior to that, I worked for Corso and Community Volunteers, so for some 24 years I have been involved in community and people's development both in Aotearoa and overseas. While the bulk of my work has been with non-governmental organisations, I have also from time to time helped on the New Zealand Government's external aid programme.

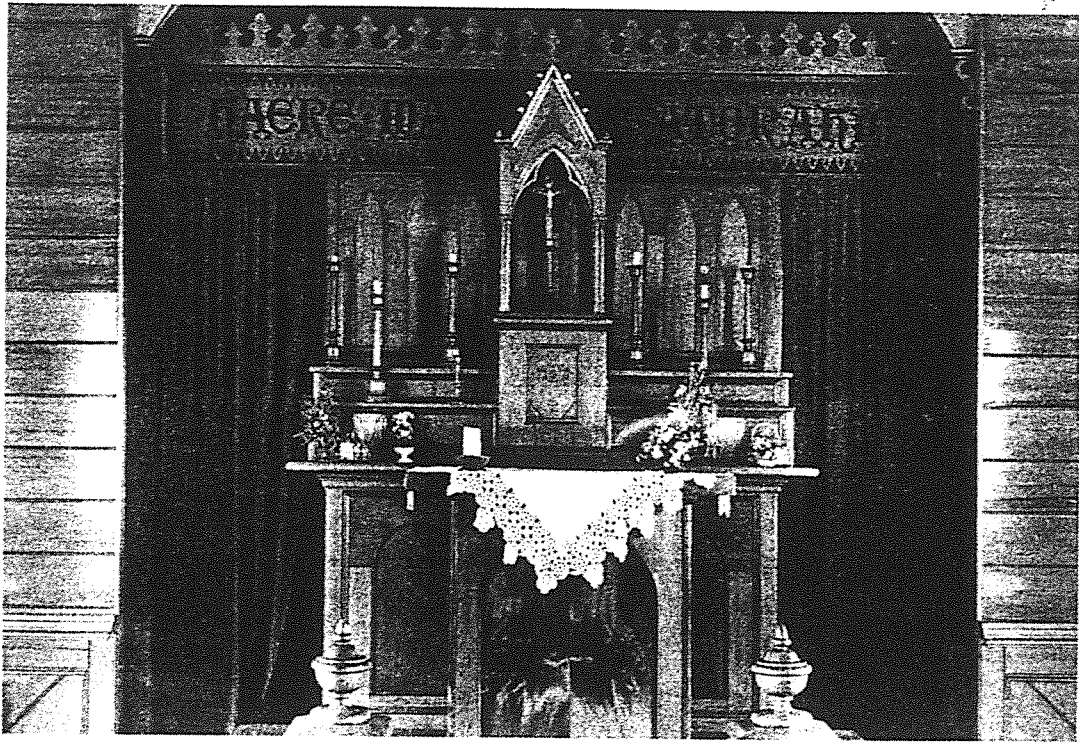
This work experience has involved a number of things: first of all, the funding of all kinds of groups – in the Pacific, in Africa, in Asia and in Aotearoa. Many of these groups consist of people like ourselves; they belong to a kinship system, a tribal system, or some other cultural context similar to that of Maori. I have been fortunate enough to sit down with a great many of these tribal groupings as they've tried to address the very same questions that our people are addressing now. In some parts of the world – in Tahiti, Kanaky, India and so on – where you have minority groups struggling for their cultural identity and to give effect to their tino rangatiratanga, there are very particular problems. It is their experiences which have led the Commission I work for to re-examine the notions of planning, development and partnership, and the central place in them of religion and culture.

The programmes we run are called "partnerships" and involve between two and four million dollars a year in total. We have only two full-time people and two part-time people. So we've had to be organised, otherwise we'd have had all hell break loose. There's nothing worse than keeping people at the doing end, at the development end in a village, waiting while you get your office organised.

The work has therefore required me to be a bureaucrat, in the sense of someone who looks after other people's money and makes sure that when it's passed on it can all be accounted for. This involves audits and that difficult task of trying to meet the recipient people's wishes and hopes at the same time as meeting the demands of donors, whether they be government or the Catholic Church or any other non-governmental organisation. Sometimes there are great tensions in trying to meet the aspirations of both sides, especially when your heart leans more towards one side than the other.

But this relationship between so-called donor and recipient, which is one of power, has to be addressed. I have seen many Maori groups and organisations experiencing the same sort of difficulties, and I predict that over the coming few years they will in fact intensify. One of the things about transferring money or resources from a dominant group who see themselves as givers, to another group who are seen as receivers, is that it's usually the dominant group who sets the agenda. So there are powerful tensions built into the process, somewhere in the middle of which is that beautiful word, "development".

What, then, are some of the lessons to be learned from my own experience? First of all, the idea of development comes out of the colonial experience of most of the world's population. Certainly we're no different from most of the people of the



Pacific, Asia and Africa. One of the interesting lessons I've learned is that development can mean quite different things to different people. If you belong to the dominant group, you will see development in a certain light. If you belong to the so-called receiving group you will have quite a different view of development. And that is why many tribal groups throughout the world have actually rejected the term development or even the idea of development. Bitter experience has taught them that development means that the dominant group has some idea of what they want you to do. The process of transferring funds, resources, or whatever, is to get you to do what it is that they believe is good for you.

Out of this comes the idea of dependency. Whole nations at the moment are in a state of dependency; so much so that over the last thirty years the debt of many Latin American and African countries has become so vast that there is no way that they can ever pay it off. I happen to be one of those who believe that the creating of a state of dependency is in fact a deliberate tactic. There are many others who say it's an accident. Well, I just can't help but say, why is it the black, brown and yellow people who always accidentally get into debt? And it's always another group who accidentally seem to be in control? Indeed, is it not our own experience?

So we have to be very clear about what we mean when we say "Maori development". Is it development on someone else's terms, with which we will happily fit in? To me, that's a key question. For what we may be witnessing among our own people today is in fact an extremely sophisticated way of continuing dependency. I haven't made up my mind, but I can't help but be a bit suspicious.

Another, more positive view of development, and one I happen to like personally, is linked with the idea of self-reliance: the idea that it is self-reliant development which actually leads to some sort of national sovereignty. I accept this because my history as someone from Tai Tokerau has taught me that the Maori development of last century had something to do with tino rangatiratanga. If not, if the development programme we're on about has nothing to do with tino rangatiratanga, then it is, in fact, a state of dependency we're talking about. And we should not be using words that mean one thing and then trying to make it sound better by putting in these other flash new

words, "tino rangatiratanga". Because if I've understood the tupuna correctly, they had a very specific intention and a very specific meaning which went with those very powerful words.

Let us now look closely at the connection between development and sovereignty, the idea that sovereignty assumes full meaning when it follows certain phases or steps in a programme of self-reliance.

First of all, you should be able to see a group in *full control over a geographical area* which includes land and sea, since this constitutes the actual living environment of a group of people. It includes all their possessions and resources. If it's not the whole of Aotearoa or Te Wai Pounamu, it's some important parts of it.

Secondly, you can see some evidence of *self-sufficiency in daily life*, and this includes all the essential requirements just to be a healthy and fit person.

Thirdly, you can see a commitment by a people to *building up a complex economy*. As you will see a bit later, it is my conviction that our tupuna of 1830, 1840, were beginning to involve themselves in the emerging complex economy. That's why they went trading. They didn't sit down and have a big waananga: should we, should we not? They didn't have to look at the cultural implications. As far as I understand it, they saw steel axes, looked at their stone ones and said, "I can cut down a tree in a day, or I can spend two weeks." And the choice was simple. That's why there were adzes literally thrown up all over the countryside.

Another part of this economic aspect is that genuine development situates the economic growth within the social and cultural aspirations of a people. This takes into account cultural heritage, tradition and a people's freedom to decide their own economic and social ways of doing things in order to be the makers of their own future.

Fourthly and finally, *political independence* includes and integrates all of the above aspects.

I offer those steps to you as guidelines, because I suspect we will know when we have got tino rangatiratanga; when, in fact, we have all those things. Anything less is not tino rangatiratanga – it is something else. And we should name it for what it is.

There is one further lesson to be learned. Many of the people in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, particularly tribal groups, have found that, in order to plan their development for today and the future, they have to take into account their experience of colonialism. One of the things that these groups have to do is literally cleanse their minds of all colonial attitudes, values and processes. Just thinking that you have a room full of brown people who are all gung ho about tino rangatiratanga doesn't necessarily mean you've got it. It could be that there's just a new form, a very sophisticated form, of dependency being created: now they have brown people helping to continue dependency. So unless there is some sort of cleansing process involved, we may not end up with planning and development as we might wish it.

That's just something of my experience of the last twenty-odd years. Now, when we talk about planning and development for hapu and iwi, how do we do it? Well, first of all, our tradition teaches us that you plan the future by looking at the past. That's what my uncle at Whangape keeps telling me. So let's do that, because I think certain principles of planning and development come out of the actual experience of generations of hapu and iwi, certainly since the 1820s.

What I want to do is to look carefully at the ideas of kawanatanga and tino rangatiratanga, that is, Articles One and Two of the Treaty of Waitangi. And think

following a conversation with Maori Catholic leaders in 1845. They compared Aotearoa to a ship and said that the Pakeha was very welcome to sail in her. You may even take the helm and steer her, they said, if that is your wish. But you must always remember that it is our ship.

What we can envisage, then, under rangatiratanga and kawanatanga is that the new state would be established on a shared basis, on an equality that wasn't based on numbers, since 540-odd rangatira gave to one man equal status. There's a different notion of equality here, an equality based on mana, on the quality of the relationship. The Treaty, therefore, is about mana, and the enhancement of it. Which is why it is extremely difficult to accept Mr Palmer's, Mr Bolger's and everybody else of that ilk's view . . . that the ceding of sovereignty meant that Maori were happy to be governed for the rest of their days and into the future. It is very difficult to imagine that that was the intention of our tupuna.

In 1852 came the New Zealand Constitution Act, which was supposed to have allowed for home rule of hapu and iwi, where Maori laws for the government of Maori districts would operate, and also let the settlers look after themselves, in the context of the provinces where the Pakeha were. But what actually happened was that, instead of furthering this historical build-up towards national sovereignty and national development, it all got sidetracked under the Constitution Act and everything got shunted over to the Crown side.

To me, that was the break. Today, we spend most of our time worrying about the kawanatanga side and looking from time to time to the tino rangatiratanga side. That may be a bit harsh, I know we mean more than that; but in fact we spend all our days discussing this kawanatanga side which has built up a state of dependency. Which doesn't meet any of the criteria of sovereignty. Now we're trying to break the cycle of dependency, and until that's done we can never have tino rangatiratanga. We've got something else.

When we look carefully at the institutions that have been built up, we see that they've spent the last 150 years building up all the structures of state which have enhanced kawanatanga. And have essentially diminished tino rangatiratanga. So much so that none of us are happy about our health, Maori education, Maori employment, Maori anything – none of us are happy. And perhaps you can see why. Because the actual structures that were established were not established for Maori, nor were they intended to enhance hapu and iwi.

Kawanatanga first of all meant the British Crown, then it was passed through the Constitution Act to a New Zealand Crown. At present, the New Zealand Crown consists of the following people: the Governor-General, who as we know is a Maori; the ministers of the government, where there are two Maori; and then there is another grouping, the servants of the Crown – heads of all the departments and ministries – and there's two Maori there. So we probably have more Maori as part of the New Zealand Crown than we've ever had in our history. Very interesting, that.

The problem is: to whom have they given allegiance? To whom are they *expected* to give allegiance is also a relevant question. Because even though their hearts might want to give allegiance somewhere else, there's only one book that they put their hands on, and there's only one person they swear allegiance to. And it isn't nga rangatira o nga hapu me nga iwi. There's a real dilemma there, a built-in conflict of interest.

If we have our development principles right, and if we agree that development has something to do with sovereignty, then being part of an exercise which seems on the surface to be pro-Maori, but doesn't lead to sovereignty of some sort, can only be a

consolidation of dependency in the long run. You may have your own views on this, but that's how it seems to me based on my own work experience.

Let's go a bit further and look at Maori Affairs. The Department of Maori Affairs was not established as an agency of the hapu and iwi. It originated as an agency of the Crown. As I suggested before, it doesn't matter how many brown people you put in that agency, in the end they have to be loyal to the institution they serve. That can't be helped. So there was a built-in limitation on what that agency could do.

We also know that the history of that particular agency of the Crown was very mixed. Essentially, though, it was there to assist in the integration, the assimilation and so on and so forth, of the indigenous people into someone else's country. I think that's fair comment. It's not a comment on all the good Maori that worked in there – not at all. It could be that we would be worse off today if it hadn't been for people being in there slowing the steam-roller down.

Out of the Maori Affairs Department, or related to that, you got the establishment of Maori trust boards, the Maori Land Court, and now we have this Iwi Transition Agency. But our fundamental question again comes back: in developmental terms, which side are they agents for? Are they agents for kawanatanga, or agents for tino rangatiratanga? It's a deep question, it's a tough one to ask. I think the answer's a bit obvious, eh? But this doesn't mean I'm advocating a wholesale "we're not going to get involved in that". Because one of the things I've learned about development is that it's a whole lot of phases. You do this in order to get there. The main thing is to know where *there* is.

There are two common misconceptions about planning and development. One is: if you don't know where you're going, then any road will do. The other one is: if you don't have any clear ideas, then any idea will do. If our vision is a tino rangatiratanga one, we have to follow a certain process and plan all the steps to arrive where we want to be. If our idea of development is woolly, if, as I said, any idea will do, then – a million dollars here, that sounds good, we'll take it.

Development has very little to do with money alone. I know from bitter experience that if you want to kill off the aspirations of a people, fill that country up with money. That's why Niue's in trouble, that's why the Cook Islands are in trouble in terms of their own national aspirations, because they are locked into our economy to serve New Zealand's interests. The Kanaks and the Tahitians have the same difficulty with France, the Hawaiians with the United States . . . you name it . . . We know that experience, we know what it means.

If it's true that we plan our future by looking at our past, then our past teaches us many things. Now we have to get organised to see what it is we have to do to plan our development so that it leads to tino rangatiratanga, which actually means Maori sovereignty.