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RESEARCH ARTICLE/ÉTUDE ORIGINALE

Decolonizing Deliberation: Experiments from Aotearoa New Zealand

Emily Beausoleil

Te Herenga Waka: Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand
Email: emily.beausoleil@vuw.ac.nz

Abstract

Deliberative processes are an antidote to despair about the inadequacies of politics-as-usual, but the "deliberative wave" (OECD 2021) of these initiatives around the globe has the potential, in some contexts, to be the latest face of colonization. In Aotearoa New Zealand, one project has worked since 2019 to design a climate assembly that enacts Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) obligations to honour Māori political authority. This article outlines the project's three innovations to the citizens' assembly design that centre Māori forms of governance and reflect Māori deliberative protocols, and highlights three important distinctions to how a group of tangata Tiriti (people of the Treaty) has worked in partnership with tangata whenua (people of the land). Each feature has been vital to becoming Te Tiriti-led despite a context of ongoing colonization, with this place-based assembly having major implications for deliberation theory and practice worldwide.

Résumé

Les processus délibératifs sont un antidote au désespoir face aux insuffisances de la politique habituelle, mais la « vague délibérative » (OCDE 2021) de ces initiatives à travers le monde a le potentiel, dans certains contextes, d'être le dernier visage de la colonisation. En Aotearoa Nouvelle-Zélande, un projet travaille depuis 2019 à la conception d'une assemblée sur le climat qui met en œuvre les obligations de Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) pour honorer l'autorité politique Māori. Cet article décrit les trois innovations apportées par le projet à la conception de l'assemblée des citoyens, qui centrent les formes de gouvernance Māori et reflètent les protocoles délibératifs Māori, et souligne trois distinctions importantes dans la manière dont un groupe de tangata tiriti (peuple du traité) a travaillé en partenariat avec les tangata whenua (peuple de la terre). Chacune de ces caractéristiques s'est avérée essentielle pour permettre aux Te Tiriti de prendre la direction des opérations en dépit d'un contexte de colonisation continue, avec cette assemblée basée sur le lieu ayant des implications majeures pour les délibérations.

Keywords: climate assembly; Aotearoa New Zealand; deliberation; decolonization; Indigenous-settler relations

Mots-clés: assemblée sur le climat; Aotearoa Nouvelle-Zélande; délibération; décolonisation; relations entre autochtones et colons

Introduction

Celebration of the current "deliberative wave" (OECD, 2020) is understandable given deliberation's ability to foster compromise, perceived legitimacy and broad uptake regarding polarized political issues, and to support conventionally sidelined or stifled perspectives to hold dominant views to account (Fung, 2003; Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Stromer-Galley and Muhlberger, 2009; Curato et al., 2017; van der Does and Jacquet, 2021). But there are concerns that such initiatives gaining traction around the world might, in some contexts, be a form of neocolonialism. When deliberation can reinforce settler dominance through demographics, prevailing "settler common sense" and cultural norms, what might be required to "decolonize deliberation" in settler-colonial societies?

As heralded as it may be, democracy is implicated in and has been used to support ongoing colonization. In settler-colonial countries like Canada, Australia, the United States and Aotearoa New Zealand, demographic overrepresentation of settlers means aggregative democracy, such as elections or referenda, works to silence Indigenous voices and suppress Indigenous rights. Fortified by structures and discourses of colonial power, demographic overrepresentation has also embedded Anglo-European norms, language, protocols and practices in every mainstream site of decision making, naturalizing settler narratives and frameworks as "common sense" (Rifkin, 2014) and reproducing "*the* pivotal settler colonial and national assumption: that the Crown *always already had and continues to have superior underlying title to Indigenous lands*" (Mackey, 2014: 240). Indigenous and decolonial scholars around the world thus often find democratic institutions and processes deeply suspect in conditions of ongoing colonization (Jackson, 1994; Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2014; Tully et al., 2022).

Deliberative processes that invite a demographically representative group of citizens to participate can reinforce settler dominance in both of these ways. In settler-colonial societies, where settlers not only strongly outnumber Indigenous peoples in their own land but also disproportionately have the resources, experiences of institutional access and responsiveness and perceptions of self-efficacy that predispose to civic participation (Newton, 2018; Marriott and Alinaghi, 2021), deliberative forums are likely to have overrepresentation of settler voices. Second, while deliberative forums seek to create conditions where reason trumps power, and even minority views might prove ultimately persuasive, formal inclusion alone proves insufficient to ensure equal voice when settler values, norms and language saturate society. Such "discursive hierarchies" privileging settler terms and frames create a Sisyphean struggle for other perspectives to be heard and found persuasive (Fraser, 1992: 118; Harris, 2019). Finally, deliberative design can reflect settler values, protocols and practices. Deliberation, as a rule, does not acknowledge its cultural specificity or the impact this has on reinforcing existing inequalities. Yet some scholars argue that both deliberation and its study presume Western ontologies, logics and protocols:

> deliberation is the child of the Enlightenment and modernization in the West, which valued problem-solving, reasoning and strong individualism. The rest of the world followed different modernization paths, and thus Western-specific history and its deliberation legacy cannot be easily applied to them. (Min, 2014: 2-3)

These critics conclude that deliberation in theory and practice currently does not, perhaps may never, wholly escape this cultural framework (Min, 2014; Banerjee, 2021). Even if deliberation proves to be universal if contextually nuanced, as others propose, the study of deliberation remains to date still firmly seated in Western practical and analytic contexts. Conventional modes of deliberation also employ a particular "speech culture" of white, educated, middle-class men characterized by direct address, reasoned argument and unaffected and disembodied speech (Young, 2000: 38-40, 55). For these reasons, deliberation, just as Charles Taylor finds for liberalism, is not a "meeting ground for all cultures but is the political expression of one range of cultures" (1994: 62). Where deliberation's conventional "speech culture" characterizes public decision making, it can privilege speakers from these already advantaged communities.

What, then, would it mean to "decolonize" deliberation? Second-generation deliberative scholars have acknowledged different "deliberative cultures" around the world, and called for deliberative quality to be evaluated "in ways relevant to specific contexts without losing its core in reason-giving and listening" (He, 2006; He and Warren, 2011; Sass and Dryzek, 2014; Bächtiger et al., 2018: 19). Others have argued that the facilitation and structure of deliberations can provide effective checks on already dominant voices (Siu, 2017; Holdo, 2019; Drake, 2023). Yet "decolonization is not a metaphor" and must also entail respect for ongoing Indigenous political authority and material redistribution of power (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

This article contributes to scholarship that seeks to decentre the West and achieve greater parity in deliberation practice and theory by offering key insights from an ongoing experiment in Aotearoa New Zealand to interrogate and innovate what deliberation looks like when truly reflective of Māori political authority and modes of collective decision making. In working to honour Indigenous authority in a context of ongoing colonization, the project emblematizes broader patterns of challenge and possibility for deliberation within settler-colonial societies. And while the initiative is emphatically place-based in defiance of Anglo-European colonial habits of seeking universals abstracted from context (Haraway, 2003; Beausoleil, 2020; Banerjee, 2021), its insights and innovations to date offer rich provocation for practitioners and scholars located on different ground, who seek to rebalance power in deliberation across Indigenous-settler lines. More specifically, this project highlights the cultural specificity of certain design features often taken for granted as a neutral backdrop to deliberation, as well as points of difference in both design process and structure that support genuine power sharing and centring Indigenous forms of authority and dialogue.

A Climate Assembly for Aotearoa

Listening to climate assembly advocates at a 2019 Aotearoa Climate Emergency conference, Māori journalist and climate advocate Nadine Anne Hura (Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi) (2019) identified several norms and frames already likely to present colonial risks for a deliberative process in Aotearoa: notions of "expertise" that may overlook Māori without "any degrees or initials in front of [their] name" but profound knowledge on climate impacts and action; colonial presumptions

that well-developed and long-practised modes of deliberation do not already exist in Aotearoa; blank spots regarding the structural inequalities born of colonization that impact who has capacity or interest to participate in or reason to trust the legitimacy of a deliberative forum on climate. Even the language of "citizens' assembly" "centres European knowledge and devalues, if not completely ignores, the significance of collective notions of identity vested in whānau [family], hapū [subtribe] and iwi [tribe or nation]" for Māori. Above and beyond these risks, Hura also cautioned that demographic representativeness was problematic "in a land where the indigenous population has already been decimated by colonisation."

At the final plenary of the conference, amid general support for a citizens' assembly on climate, some attendees voiced related concerns: namely, that in Aotearoa New Zealand this assembly would need to recognize Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the foundational Treaty for Crown-Māori relations (1840) that requires those who "have settled in this country, and others to come" (Preamble) to uphold Māori political authority. A working group formed that day to focus on what a "Te Tiriti-led" climate assembly might look like, and "The People Speak–Te Reo o Ngā Tangata" (from here, TPS) was born.

This article examines the process that began that day by a largely Pākehā (European-descent or white New Zealander) group to take up the task of learning and unlearning in order to create a truly Te Tiriti-led climate assembly. As a scholar-practitioner working at the interstices of democratic innovation and decolonization, I was invited into the project as an independent evaluator from 2021. With a striking commitment to transparency and collective learning, I was given access to all TPS documents and meetings for the benefit of the project, as well as others considering or experimenting with similar initiatives.

Typically this evaluator role focuses on the inclusiveness, quality and consequentiality of the deliberative process (Dryzek, 2009; OECD, 2021). With the climate assembly still to occur, I have had a particular role in this context of evaluating whether and how the process realizes its aims to be Te Tiriti-led throughout the years-long collaboration. As Pākehā, my vantage on this dimension of the work is limited by the nature of "settler common sense" and the structured and socially rewarded obliviousness of settler vantage (Mills, 1997; Medina, 2013; Beausoleil, 2020), whose unlearning is lifelong and intergenerational. For this reason, I have taken a decidedly descriptive approach to share insights and innovations as articulated by the project team themselves, with this writing accountable to Ngāti Toa as mana whenua (territorial authority) and only submitted for publication with their approval, ensuring the "Māori final word" integral to a Critical Tiriti Analysis (Came et al., 2023). These are drawn from interviews conducted from 2021 to 2022 with all central members of the collaboration to date—four tāngata whenua (Māori, people of the land) and four tāngata Tiriti (non-Māori, people of the Treaty)—as well as observation or transcripts of all planning and governance meetings, convened community dialogues and weekly TPS meetings, from late 2021 to time of publication. In the spirit of the group's initial invitation, and with the permission and support of those involved, I offer here what has emerged to date as important innovations to the deliberative design as well as significant lessons for settlers in this project, both learned and still underway.

Being Te Tiriti-Led

"if enough people can be brave, if enough people can unlearn racism and injustice, then we can actually build good relationships in this country, we can reclaim what Te Tiriti promised." – Moana Jackson

What "Te Tiriti-led" means is a complex question, because of irreconcilable inconsistencies between translations regarding whether Māori sovereignty was affirmed (as in the te reo Māori text) or ceded (as in the English text). Despite ongoing debate, the Waitangi Tribunal tasked with clarifying the meaning of the Treaty concluded in 2014 what Māori and their allies have been asserting since 1840:

> The rangatira [leaders] who signed te Tiriti did not cede their sovereignty.… When all of the evidence is considered, including the texts as they were explained to rangatira, the debates at Waitangi and Mangungu, and the wider historical context, we cannot see how other conclusions can be reached. (2014: xxii)

As the version that was read aloud, discussed and signed in 1840 and privileged in international law under *contra proferentem*, the specific language of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Māori translation) offers the most fundamental guidance for what being "Te Tiriti-led" might entail. The Preamble states that Te Tiriti is motivated by the Queen's "desire to record her recognition that they retain their authority and their lands, so that all may live in peace and good order."[1]

Article 1 extends to British settlers "and others to come" the right to governorship over their own people (kāwanatanga, a transliteration of "governor"). While the English version mistranslates Article 1 as ceding sovereignty to the Crown, "kāwanatanga" was meant to enable the British to enforce their own laws over British subjects abroad (Mutu 2011; Waitangi Tribunal 2014). Article 2 affirms the ongoing "total political authority" (Jackson 1992, 5) (tino ["utmost"] rangatiratanga ["chieftainship"]) of Māori over their lands, villages and taonga (treasures). Article 3 extends to Māori the same rights of British subjects, additional to the rights they already enjoyed in their own society. Article 4 commits the governor to protecting all faiths.

With Articles 1 and 2, Te Tiriti is at core about "the distribution of power between the two signatories" (Mulholland and Tawhai, 2011: 10), as illustrated in Figure 1 and sometimes by the metaphor of the waka hourua, or double-hulled canoe representing two coexisting spheres of authority, lashed together to be able to brave the deep seas. At times it is envisioned as equality between two spheres of authority; at others, kāwanatanga is described as a form of governance that sits inside the broader, more authoritative context of tino rangatiratanga. However they are configured, kāwanatanga is limited by tino rangatiratanga (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016; Network Waitangi, 2016). This notion of two coexisting spheres of governance is further nuanced by the fact that Māori are not "one people": rangatiratanga is exercised at the level of hapū (subtribe), and sometimes iwi (nation or tribe) (Ballara, 1998; Tawhai, 2013: 91; Waitangi Tribunal, 2014: 153).

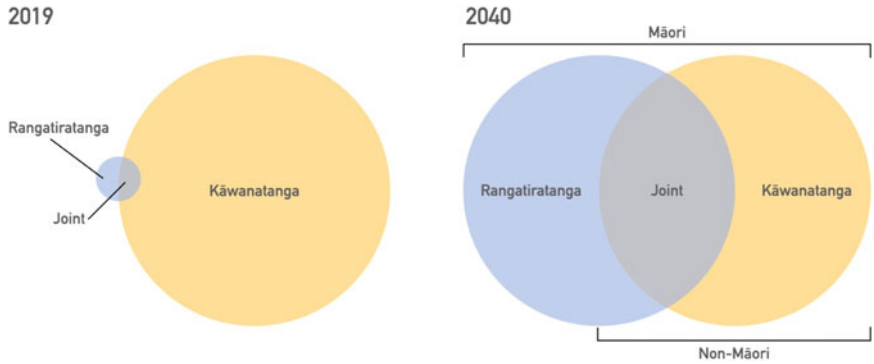

Figure 1. Current and Te Tiriti-based Relationships between Māori and Non-Māori Spheres of Governance, as Envisioned by *He Puapua: Report of the Working Group on a Plan to Realise the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (2019).

Understanding what being "Te Tiriti-led" also requires consideration of the broader context of colonization within which any deliberative process exists. As soon as 1841,[2] Pākehā began to violate the terms of Te Tiriti, presuming to make laws that governed Māori and impose them by force so as to accelerate and "legalize" the mass expropriation of land and aggressive suppression of language, practices, institutions and laws. Understanding and upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi therefore requires attention and redress of this ongoing context of settler-colonial dominance in violation of tino rangatiratanga and overreaching the agreed-upon bounds of kāwanatanga; as Margaret Mutu (2019) observes, quoting legal philosopher Moana Jackson, "to honour the treaty, we must first settle colonisation."

Another dimension to this context is increasing activity and political will regarding honouring Te Tiriti by government and society more broadly. In response to waves of Māori protest and resurgence in the 1970s, the 1980s saw the beginning of a "bicultural" era in government policy. While this was limited and ever inadequate as government continued to use the English version of the Treaty and thus still operated as if sovereign, legislation increasingly referenced the Treaty, responsibilities for various services began to be devolved to iwi organizations, and the Waitangi Tribunal overseeing redress of Treaty breaches was given broader parameters (Workman, 2017: 27j). Recently, again due to profound, constant and creative efforts by Māori and their allies, Aotearoa New Zealand has seen a surge of shifts and developments by a Labour government towards co-governance, from the commissioning of *He Puapua* (2019) to chart the path to New Zealand upholding its commitments to the *United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), to the creation of a new Māori-led health system (2022), to nationwide procedural changes to support the creation of Māori seats at local councils (2022), to including New Zealand history in the mandatory school curriculum (2023). While many are being removed by the current coalition government, these changes have nonetheless expanded national imagination for and experience of honouring Te Tiriti. Meanwhile, the National Iwi Chairs progress at the community level a

nationwide vision of constitutional transformation by 2040, *Matike Mai Aotearoa* (2016), based on over 300 dialogues with Māori communities regarding what a country honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi would look like; and non-governmental organizations like the Human Rights Commission, the Anglican Church, various schools and countless others have explicitly sought to become "Te Tiriti-led." In short, this project is part of the current wave of growing awareness of and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, though it remains a work in progress regarding how this translates into changed practices, institutions and laws across the country.

A final factor in establishing the terms for being Te Tiriti-led concerns the notion of what being "Treaty partners" might mean to its signatories. Coexisting contradictions are embodied not only in the different versions of the text but also in cultural understandings of what it means to commit to such a contract. Māori have no equivalents to Western notions of ownership or sovereignty. What was often interpreted by settlers as land sales—to European settlers, a fixed and final transfer of "exclusive rights to use, possess, and dispose" (Martin, 1994: 281)—were from Māori vantages often initiating a relationship of reciprocity with "purchasers," by extending to others the capacity to inhabit and benefit from the land (Wharepouri, 1994). Land is not conceived as something separate or transferrable from those who derive lineage, identity and authority from it, nor can it be held without responsibilities for caring for it (Watene, 2022; Winter, 2021). Similarly, though tino rangatiratanga is sometimes translated as "sovereignty," as in the Waitangi Tribunal's conclusion that "sovereignty was never ceded," there is no such conception of absolute and exclusive authority in te reo or te ao Māori (Māori language or Māori world). By contrast, rangatiratanga is "dynamic and not static…emphasising the reciprocity between the human, material and non-material worlds…in a word, trusteeship," an authority that again comes with obligations to care for those under its mantle (Jackson 1994, 120). Both of these untranslatable differences regarding conceptions of land and authority stem from a far more fundamental ontological difference: as Ani Mikaere (2013: 313-14), Te Kawehau Hoskins (2012) and others observe, a Māori worldview is first and foremost a relational one, where survival, identity and authority are "contingent upon the maintenance of our relationships, both with one another and with the world around us…the central purpose of Māori law [is] the maintenance of appropriate relationships of people to their environment, their history, and each other."

This inflects an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as something more than a static document declaring the possession of particular rights or—as misconceived by many Pākehā regarding the Treaty settlements process—as something to be "settled" once and for all. From a relational worldview, Te Tiriti represents an affirmation of a living relationship between two peoples; as legal philosopher Moana Jackson writes, "treaties aren't meant to be settled, they're meant to be honoured" (Tukaki, 2022). As commitment to an ongoing relationship, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not, as its reactive critics claim, about "separatism," but rather establishes terms for an entangled, interdependent and ongoing relationship between two self-governing peoples. As commitment to a relationship, by definition, it signals an open-ended, dynamic and sometimes murky process of negotiating how we are to live together, a process within which the right course of action or path ahead cannot be fully known in advance.

Three Innovations

By centring Te Tiriti commitments in this project, the project has already stumbled upon three rich innovations of the conventional citizens' assembly, each with significance for deliberative initiatives in settler-colonial societies. The first of these is a pivot from national to regional assembly, indeed interpreting region in terms of the rohe (region of territorial authority)[3] of Ngāti Toa iwi. Initially, The People Speak (from here, TPS) shifted from a national to a regional focus due to internal politics, with one subgroup turning to the greater Wellington region. Yet this region alone covers the territory of six iwi, and despite countless conversations and public presentations with various councils and forums, the project elicited vocal support but no concrete traction. Then, through one member's organization's decades-long relationships with Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira (the mandated authority of Ngāti Toa iwi), they were able to secure a meeting with the Rūnanga's CEO, Helmut Karewa Modlik. Modlik (2021) had already been writing publicly on the need to revitalize democracy to empower citizens and honour Te Tiriti, as well as shifting with his iwi from "seeking permission" to "direct action" to "enhance the wellbeing, prosperity, and mana [authority or power] of our people and all who live in our rohe."[4] Meanwhile, climate change was of urgent concern for others in the Rūnanga. Intrigued by the prospect that deliberative democracy might offer new ways of working to address climate change, Modlik met with TPS and, over a meal on a rainy evening in early 2021, invited the group to focus their scope on the city of Porirua where Ngāti Toa are the only iwi, rather than the broader Wellington region. That invitation was a crucial milestone for the project, beginning a collaboration between tāngata whenua (people of the land) and tāngata Tiriti (people of the Treaty) in earnest. As one TPS member recalls, "we instantly said yes, and pivoted. And all of those dilemmas we'd been living with in frustration and powerlessness and lack of traction all just disappeared." Reflecting now, members note it seems absurd to have considered working nationwide, when Māori authority works according to nation or tribe (iwi), or even subtribe (hapū), and national governance structures like the Iwi Chairs Forum or Kīngitanga (Māori King movement) emerging only in response to a colonial state. Initially borne of conflict and circumstance, this shift from national to regional assembly was thus a profound step towards honouring mana whenua (those with territorial authority) and thus Te Tiriti.

The second innovation emerged during a 2021 workshop with community leaders (Figures 2 and 3), particularly Pasifika[5] leaders in the city, to gauge interest and initial reflections on the prospect of a climate assembly for the city of Porirua. When it was clear the language of "citizens' assembly" was not resonating, one Pasifika leader suggested they "use our own language." The exchange that ensued between Modlik and Pasifika leaders culminated with the idea of creating a standing governance forum based on Pasifika approaches to decision making. Modlik saw this embodying a "waka hourua [double-hulled canoe] with mana whenua [those with territorial authority] and Pasifika and other Te Tiriti partners," a two-part structure of standing governance forum (talanoa) made of community leaders "with a constituency," and periodic assembly (wānanga) of everyday citizens, drawing respectively on Pasifika and Māori terms and protocols for deep dialogue:

Figures 2 and 3. Rangatira (Leaders) of Ngāti Toa Rūnanga and Other Community Leaders in December 2021 Community Dialogue. Photo by Roozbeh Karimi, used with permission.

> it'll be ours and it'll be here, and part of our community. The first kaupapa [work] might be climate change, but this community will decide what we do as a community about it. And political leaders will come to know what the people think.

Like the shift from nation to rohe, this innovation emerged organically through the collaboration; as Modlik relayed later, "where that kōrero [dialogue] went I don't think anyone expected, but I'm grateful for the wisdom that emerged from those volunteers and leaders." And like the prior innovation, it also reflected a more profound honouring of tino rangatiratanga than TPS could have envisioned. As one TPS member observes,

> we would never have come up with the talanoa concept if we didn't already have the tension to solve of a Treaty partnership—tension between sortition and whakapapa/chief decision makers as ways of deciding… so having that Treaty-led approach, we had some different tensions and questions to solve, which makes the quality and strength of our design stronger.

Just as working with mana whenua rather than across the nation centred Māori authority and governance structures, this innovation reflected Indigenous ways of working and would have a material impact on power relations, in this instance by shifting the distribution of power in the city. As Modlik stated at the first gathering to discuss the talanoa with its potential members in July, the "talanoa-wānanga" "would provide a place, a mechanism for us to exert at a grassroots and a community level our own rangatiratanga, our own mana motuhake,[6] our own sense of owning our own space. That was a very juicy idea to all of us." Council was envisioned as being invited into this new site of power, but as only one leader among others; and as this Community Leaders Forum would strengthen and draw focus and membership, local and national government would increasingly need to listen. Moreover, this standing forum would strengthen the quality and impact of the climate assembly, as it would provide a new, mana whenua- and Pasifika-led governing body to provide guidance and oversight for the assembly as well as receive and respond to its recommendations. This innovation would thus

also address a common challenge of deliberative processes regarding how recommendations have consequentiality beyond the forum (Bächtiger and Beste, 2017).

When a COVID surge prevented the first in-person talanoa, organizers pivoted to holding an online dialogue to introduce the proposal of this new two-pronged mode of governance for the city. In July 2022, nearly 100 people attended this online meeting, including the Mayor and several Members of Parliament. Clearly, this was felt to be an important gathering; later, Pasifika leaders reflected that the use of the Pasifika word "talanoa" in the invitation as well as Ngāti Toa's leadership were particular draws. During this forum, Pasifika leaders repeatedly emphasized the importance of putting "it into our language, our concepts"—especially as the concepts of citizens or democracy "have been placed on us, we need to really decolonize these concepts"—and yet they also emphasized the complexities and risks in using the term "talanoa" when, to Māori as well as other non-Pasifika communities, the concept is unfamiliar and should not be conflated with assembly or other forms of dialogue. Out of respect for the cross-cultural learning this called for, some Ngāti Toa rangatira (leaders) felt it was important to no longer use the word "talanoa" for what is now called the Community Leaders Forum, but the term's initial use was a key catalyst for community building and crucial conversations on design between Pasifika and Māori communities.

A first in-person Community Leaders Forum was held in December 2022 at Ngāti Toa's Takapūwāhia Marae (meeting grounds), opened with full powhiri (welcoming ceremony) wherein Ngāti Toa welcomed roughly 80 attendees, and aspirations could be named and relationships developed. After this formal ceremony and sharing a meal, a dialogue facilitated by a member of Ngāti Toa clarified this new governance group's terms of reference. Since then, the group has convened every six months, deciding together on the nature, scope and protocols of this forum, key issues to address as a city and core features of the assembly (see Figures 4–7).

Like the Community Leaders Forum, the citizens' assembly has shifted back to the English title for now, yet the unique model for it is the third significant innovation to date. After discussions with TPS about citizens' assemblies, Ngāti Toa leaders developed a model of two deliberative assemblies run in tandem, one for Ngāti Toa alone as mana whenua (those with territorial authority) according to their own protocols and a second, through random selection, for the community of Porirua writ broadly. With the same questions and resources, the outcomes of these deliberations would then be shared in a third site, to identify shared recommendations and aims, yet ensuring mana whenua decisions regarding their own sphere of influence retain autonomy.

This tricameral model (Figure 8) mirrors the three spheres of authority tacit in Te Tiriti and made explicit by Matike Mai Aotearoa (2016; see Figure 1) recommendations for constitutional transformation to enact Te Tiriti today: one sphere where there is the exercise of tino rangatiratanga (total political authority, Article 2 of Te Tiriti) by and for mana whenua (those with territorial authority); one for non-Māori to exercise kāwanatanga or the right to govern

over their own people (Article 1), with the right, derived from Article 3, for Māori to participate equally in this sphere; and a third relational sphere where decisions affecting everyone are made together, informed by tikanga (Māori protocols). A co-design team made of Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā members drawn from the

Figure 4–7. Newly Created Community Leaders Forum (talanoa), June 2023. Photos by Roozbeh Karimi, used with permission.

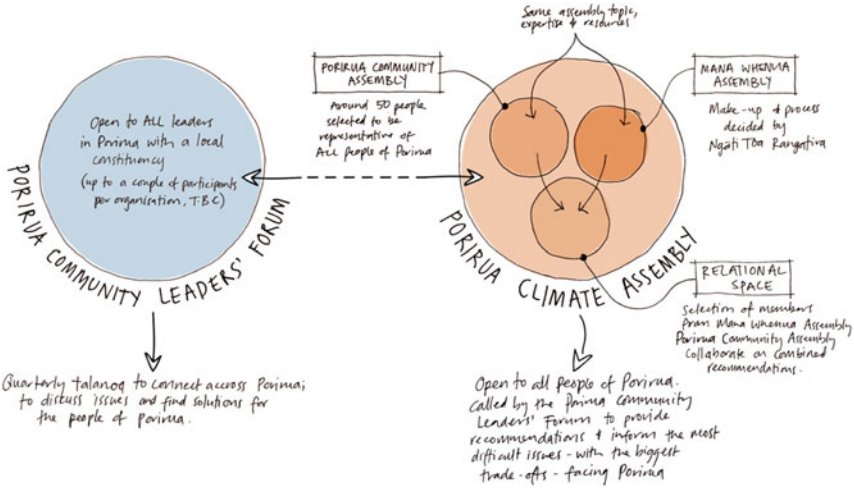

Figure 8. Proposed Structure Developed by Ngāti Toa rangatira and The People Speak, as of June 2023. Illustration by Cally O'Neill, used with permission. https://www.thepeoplespeak.nz/single-project

Rūnanga, the Community Leaders Forum, and TPS are currently working with community stakeholders to determine the assembly's question, and the climate assembly is scheduled for late 2024.

Experiments and Emerging Lessons

> *"Being Treaty [Tiriti] led is as simple as partnership…I think of a partnership—friendship, relationship, your family, business partnership…how would you treat them? Would you try and impose your views or way of doing things, even if it was clear they had some thoughts of their own? Would you steal resources, would you constantly have important meetings without them present? All those ways of behaving, in partnership, it's the same."*—The People Speak (TPS) member

The previous section detailed three innovations to the climate assembly that have emerged to date in order to honour Māori authority and protocols. Yet enacting Te Tiriti obligations in the context of ongoing colonization has implications for how parties work together as much as what they may create. In what follows, I sketch three features that distinguish how this group works in partnership with Ngāti Toa that have proven vital to being Te Tiriti-led, and thus in decolonizing the deliberative initiative: prioritization of relationships, collective orientation and particular ways of distributing power and labour.

Relationships over time, agenda or outputs

Deliberative evaluations focus almost wholly on design features, experience and outcomes, as if the *process* of design were less significant (Gastil et al. 2012; OECD 2021); this creation phase is typically also relatively short, with timeframes for delivery predetermined in relation to plans outlined at the outset to funders. One of the ways this group has distinguished itself from other deliberative projects is that it has consciously put aside cultural habits of short-termism or pre-given timelines. As one member observes,

> if we don't do it by end of this year, what's more important to us—having an assembly by a certain date or one with mana whenua partner that's Treaty based?….The big thing with being Tiriti-led is you can't do that without a partner, and all mana whenua are super stretched, and who are we, a ragtag group of Pākehā volunteers—why would a powerful iwi [nation] want to work with us? So that kind of trust in relationship we shouldn't expect to happen quickly. We decided early on to let go of timelines to be able to have relationship.

This group began in 2019, and the actual climate assembly is only now, in 2025, underway; in fact, over this time another non-Māori group has started and finished the country's first citizens' assembly.[7] And yet TPS are keenly aware that it was only by virtue of long-standing relationships and high trust that they were received by Ngāti Toa Rūnanga as they were, and that all of the truly remarkable events and

innovations that have already occurred are intimately connected to the group prioritizing relationships over time.

What does it mean to prioritize relationships? For Ngāti Toa rangatira (leaders), it means at the outset considering "whether or not the other partner even wants to be in the partnership in the first place." It also means allowing a process to take as long as it takes to build trust and shared understanding; as Modlik reflects,

> people who talk to us are usually in a hurry…to get somewhere and deliver something…but when it comes to people and relationships, and particularly partnerships, then that's the wrong frame…I've seen a few times that *the long way is the short way*…when there's an adequate degree of proximity in terms of shared values, understandings as human beings, and what you're trying to accomplish, etc, you've drunk enough cups of tea, then you can start talking about the business and where it all goes. That's one of the most common mistakes, [a] transactional framing for relationships…We've been around in this location for about 200 years and in this land for 700, 800 years—so that's the framing for us talking to people.

For TPS's cultural adviser, centring relationships means focusing not on solving a problem, but "how we relate to each other;" and in order to answer that, knowing "who are you, who are your people, what…you (and they) stand for, and what…you have to offer." For some in TPS, it has meant changing how they work with others: learning to be more patient, curtailing urges to interact transactionally through so many to-do lists, learning to be guided not by preconceived agenda but by "letting the energy in the room dictate what we do." In the group's protocols, it means regularly sharing food at meetings and deliberately making time to connect socially both before and outside meetings. These points of difference are signs to the group's cultural adviser that "they are people who know how relationships are built, formed and maintained."

Care for relationships has done more than facilitate better relationships with Ngāti Toa and enable the project to happen and continue; it has "helped keep [TPS] together." And for all the Western cultural propensity to sacrifice the relational in the name of efficiency, particularly with the urgency surrounding climate action, one TPS member observes they have found that "actually, when you succeed in the relationship you make up that time." Modlik notes this is a constant feature in Māori decision-making processes: investment in relationship, understanding and consensus building makes for far more efficiently implemented and effective outcomes.

There is the ongoing risk of Pākehā (European-descent New Zealander) cultural habits of outputs-focus, efficiency and thus transactional ways of working being prioritized at the cost to the people or relationships involved, particularly at peak or difficult moments. This happened prior to the first planned talanoa, when the group persisted in plans to meet in person during a COVID surge despite one rangatira's voiced concerns about health implications for Māori communities, leading this leader to feel unheard and "ready to wipe my hands of" the project. With strong relationships and the ultimate shift to online, both the project and relationships were able to weather this moment of difficulty. In the words of one TPS

member, all of this has crystallized that "rather than structures interacting with structures, or committees with committees, it's human beings interacting and talking. I think we've got a powerful base that's essential to making this work."

Yet several collaborators, both Māori and non-Māori, emphasized that being in relationship was not to be confused with being a single entity: they have deliberately remained two groups, and like the signatories of Te Tiriti are "two people respecting each other's mana [authority or power] and ability to be in control of their own destiny," and remain "open to having very different objectives." Moreover quality, high-trust relationships will entail real moments of strife and discomfort. In fact, a Ngāti Toa rangatira (leader) involved in the co-design noted that such conflictual or uncomfortable moments are "part of wānanga [deep dialogue], it's not always agreeing and not always a pretty picture. It can sometimes take a little while for us to understand where we're all coming from. And if we want a Tiriti-based thing that's what's required."

Collective vs individual

Deliberative processes are sites where "ordinary" citizens participate in decision making. Part of their legitimacy stems from being representative of the broader community in demographic terms, yet participants are seen to contribute as individuals rather than as advocates or members of particular groups. Indeed, key deliberative aims of inclusion, autonomy and equality are evaluated through the balance of individual voices, and key virtues of deliberation often lauded by scholars are its capacity to transform private interests into the language of public problems, and foster a sense of civicness beyond (a presumed starting point of) individualism (Gastil et al., 2012; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Lafont, 2015; Young, 2000). This stands in contrast to TPS' collective, indeed intergenerational sensibility, no doubt connected to their driving concern for climate action but also highlighted as crucial for working in a Te Tiriti relationship with Māori. As the group's cultural adviser emphasized,

> You cannot be just a bunch of individuals…this is the problem with English speakers, they use "I" all the time, "I think"…it's not about what you think, what's going on in your community. Māori automatically start talking about "we," inclusive…Whoever is involved in this work needs to come from a community.

One group member echoes this view that working with a collective sensibility both runs against the grain of Pākehā ways of working and is utterly crucial to being able to work in a Te Tiriti-led way:

> if you're able to get your brain around that then start behaving like that, then you're halfway to working in a Treaty way. Because Māori, it's intergenerational in everything they do…their values, their beliefs, their behaviours, their speech…. That's quite a fundamental of our group.

They also reflect that it has been beneficial in generating high-trust relationships with "anyone we work with," whether Māori or not. TPS' cultural adviser links

this collective orientation back to the grounds for making genuine relationships, for those questions, anyone must be able to answer as a starting point for meeting—who you are, what you stand for and what you offer—are meant to be answered *as* a collective, whether one works in a given project as an individual or a group. Indeed, a deeper sense of collective beyond one's immediate group such as TPS is being called for here, connecting and drawing from the broader communities, histories and generations that lie behind a given group in the present.

This collective orientation is clear in the group's cognizance of the positionalities they hold as at once "a ragtag group of volunteers" who nonetheless "as Pākehā [are] going to have more money and access to funding often" and have much responsibility, learning and change ahead given "how entrenched colonization is in this country." This has informed how they approach sharing resources and labour, as well as their own practices of ongoing capacity building, detailed below. Yet even with this commitment to collective orientation, the individualism of Pākehā culture still continues to be expressed in the propensity of these members to speak as individuals in planning meetings, leading to an overrepresentation of Pākehā voices and "internal exclusion" of others (Young, 2000). One Ngāti Toa rangatira (leader) reflected that in meetings with TPS often:

> there's too much talking…because everybody's trying to be respectful to everybody else, and give them time to speak…coming from where I'm coming from…there's not this privilege I have that I have the right to stand there [in the marae] and speak…. really effective decision making is happening in the marae without this turntable business…Ones on my team [will] be looking at those [TPS] people and then you and the Pacific community leaders and think, how come these people are allowed to speak in the same forum as others.

This challenges deliberative practitioners and scholars to explore how individualism and lack of relationality within demographic approaches to "representativeness" are culturally specific. It also troubles preconceptions regarding the right to speak reflective of this cultural ground and implications for the balance of voices within contexts of both co-design and public deliberation. A relational or collective orientation attuned to the communities and histories that come into the room with us would both better reflect, and thus respond to non-Western norms and codes of public dialogue. It would also bring voices into greater balance by curtailing the Pākehā "democratic" impulse to voice one's personal view disproportionately to other speakers based on an unquestioned right to do so.

Power sharing

Equality of participation is a core deliberative norm, yet recent scholars have emphasized that this is achieved through *equity* or differential treatment to redress deeply unequal conditions. For example, deliberations may overrepresent underrepresented groups through purposive or random stratified sampling or make extra efforts to ensure minority views are heard (Beauvais, 2018). Yet power sharing goes well beyond the balance of voices in a deliberative forum, and has implications for the whole design process. How power and labour are shared between TPS and

Ngāti Toa has major implications for how deliberations might be co-designed elsewhere.

Te Tiriti commits two peoples to an equal partnership and yet is inevitably sought in deeply unequal conditions of ongoing settler-colonization. It is telling that TPS is *the very first Pākehā group* to come to Ngāti Toa before a project had been fully formed. TPS' commitment to co-design from the beginning has also meant the group presumes no design features of the climate assembly and makes no big decisions without Ngāti Toa. Enacting equality between Treaty partners has also meant actively sharing any resources or funding secured, and seeking to establish paid roles with both groups as much as possible. Inequalities in staffing and time, particularly given how stretched, like many Māori organizations, the Rūnanga is across numerous urgent projects and obligations, have meant the aim to have a Māori evaluator as my counterpart, as well as a focused coordination role within the Rūnanga have been difficult to realize to date. One Ngāti Toa member of the co-design team reflects that the one thing they would change is to have "five more of myself…and more rangatahi [youth] to drive certain parts of it," and sometimes the sheer numbers of TPS members who have the capacity to contribute compared to those from Ngāti Toa in the "doing space" such as the initial online community dialogue can make it feel "like it's their thing and not ours."

This touches on another crucial distinction in this group: while the waka hourua (double-hulled canoe) envisions partnership, in Modlik's words, by "all kaihoe [rowers with] equity of resources and power and strength," different resources each group brings as well as profound inequalities in the present mean distributing labours differently. For example, while TPS might be able to resource funding, time or staffing that can be stretched for Māori organizations, they are utterly indebted to all the authority and expertise Ngāti Toa bring as mana whenua (those with territorial authority) and kaitiaki (guardians) of the area. As a result, they do not try "to do everything half and half."

> A partnership isn't about being equal, it's about being equivalent. Just like any partnership, work out your strengths…it's about filling for in each other's gaps. Ngāti Toa fill in our gaps massively, we would never have gotten where we are without them… Behave in a way that's not equal, it's equivalent. And don't count, don't keep a ledger…because it's about different values of what we do.

TPS has also sought to "do the legwork" and "make it easy…recognizing that we have time and energy, they have the mana and expertise," so that those from Ngāti Toa can contribute where it is most strategic to do so. Even as they may spend more time on the project, TPS ensure all important decisions are made with Ngāti Toa. In one member's words, "we actively try to do as much of the work as we can, but with permission first," and "without determining what it looks like."

Though they refuse to make decisions without Ngāti Toa, TPS are still part of decision making. One member observed that their way of working seeks to break with two opposing and unconstructive habits among settlers working with Māori, of either "cultural cringe that says 'tell me what to do and I'll do it,' or

arrogant ignoring of Māori views." The group operates with an aim to "do the work that needs to be done…but not to close off options and to enter into a genuine dialogue about what those options are." Where there are key forks in the road, these are shared decisions. In this group, there is not a textbook answer to the question of how power is distributed; rather, as one co-design team member from Ngāti Toa observes, "It's listening, and figuring it out and that to me is a treaty-based approach."

There is one word of caution in this context. While trying to do as much of the legwork as possible can distribute labour more equitably, the Pākehā cultural habit of planning in great detail, along with greater time to do so, can mean Pākehā partners inadvertently put extra strain on Māori partners who are already stretched and inadvertently take up more space in or overly influence deliberative processes. This has been an issue to date, from how community leaders were selected and invited for the Community Leaders Forum to strictly regimenting time or agenda. Limited understanding of Māori protocols also still affects collaboration, from planning without consideration of the Māori calendar to ongoing clashes in norms regarding the right to speak. All of this indicates how vital it is that Māori or Pasifika co-design deliberations and lead delivery and that Pākehā, who are in greater numbers, look to assist in notetaking or other "legwork" roles to ensure they do not predominate in front-facing roles. Both of these features to address ongoing risks and realities of settler dominance are increasingly part of the project. Since Ngāti Toa rangatira have been hosting and leading the Community Leaders Forum since mid-2022, and Modlik has committed to continuing this convening role, there has undoubtedly been greater assurance and perceived legitimacy from participants. Yet this is a complex challenge that is not easily solved, given it stems from still chronic inequalities in capacity between groups, and perhaps above all, needs to remain an ongoing consideration by settler groups who wish to carry more of the labour.

Finally, the group works to redistribute power by tempering long histories and habits of "silenc[ing] and sidelin[ing]" Māori by committing to learning about Te Tiriti, Māori values, and colonial habits and logics that must be unlearned:

> otherwise you constantly screw things up and not understand. Like the value of manaakitanga [generosity, hospitality], why you bring food to a meeting, why you value someone's time, why you say a prayer at the beginning and end of meetings—and [that] it's not a religious prayer… Kiwis are really good at not being dickheads when they go to other countries…view a partnership with Māori in the same way.

TPS' cultural adviser notes the group is a microcosm for the nation in knowing "very little" about te ao Māori (the Māori world). Members share their learning with one another informally and have a culture of gently educating or correcting one another where needed, from correcting pronunciation or neglect of Māori protocols they have committed to using, to tempering impulses to push for something that Ngāti Toa have declined or to discuss design features "that we can't possibly know the answer to if we're being Te Tiriti-led." There continue to be cultural habits or blank spots that remain invisible to members and can get in the way—for

instance, strict timekeeping in community dialogues early on, that have gone against tikanga (Māori protocols) and have been difficult for non-Pākehā involved. As one member acknowledges, "we all have so much work to do in that domain… because of how entrenched colonization is in this country, it gets in the way all the time." But the group continues to experiment with ways to keep learning and holding each other accountable in the context of that learning. Recently, they have integrated in their weekly meetings a visionary question about the project, explicitly not to design but rather "expose our own colonization…[and] become more open to whatever ideas others have and stretch our capacity to think about how things could work, in preparation to be more open to Ngāti Toa and how they envision it." There is a long way yet to go—for all Pākehā—and there continues to be, in the words of one member, "the real risk that we're stuck in our existing paradigms" and inadvertently dominating the process, but the group is actively working to "become more aware of where we can be more Te Tiriti-led." Ngāti Toa leaders observe that they can see most TPS members, to varying extents, have "moved through their own journey to at least partially decolonize their own minds [so] they're conscious of their bias, and are authentic in a desire to remedy that and engage us in a partnered way."

Implications for Deliberative Design

As the collaboration shifts to the procedural design of the climate assembly, this risk of imposing Pākehā paradigms lingers. One way The People Speak (TPS) seeks to counter this is by focusing on deliberative principles and aims rather than specific features. This has set the group apart from other—always Pākehā—groups studying, running and advocating for deliberation in the country, who have, in the words of one TPS member, "very fixed views of how you do and don't do things" that have "felt like a new elitism." The innovation of the assembly's tricameral model has also helped overcome the impasse created by the clash of sortition with more relational approaches to selecting a representative group for the assembly. And yet Western protocols still, at times, get in the way of enacting Māori and Pasifika forms of deliberation. The inclusion of external facilitators for the first talanoa ran against Pasifika protocols, where there is collective responsibility for the process without explicit facilitation. As a Ngāti Toa co-design team member observed, "you just let that space organize their own people to be their own people." Since Ngāti Toa have increasingly taken convening roles in subsequent Community Leaders Forums, small group facilitators have been replaced with a model of collective responsibility through shared norms and protocols. Likewise, the Pākehā tendency to plan dialogue structure in advance or limit time according to a schedule can, from a Māori or Pasifika perspective, inhibit the quality of dialogue, the discovery of surprising "gems," as well as participants' sense of being able to contribute or say what needs to be said. As one Ngāti Toa rangatira (leader) reflected,

> Pacific people, Māori people, we're really good at just doing stuff. They don't always have to be planned, and that's where the magic happens…sometimes the structure can silence some really good whakaaro [thought] because there's

> no opportunity for it to be shared. That's kind of what wānanga is…it's really a shared learning space.

Extensive time was dedicated in early Community Leaders Forums to establish who was in the room, the core question according to Pasifika protocols, over and above the why, what or how of deliberations.[8] Yet the project has yet to reflect many of the other features Pasifika leaders have emphasized are core to "talanoa," and this will be crucial going forward for perceived legitimacy and participation by Pasifika leadership. And yet Pasifika leaders also clarified that with the question of *who* being paramount in their deliberative contexts, respected leadership has the ability to make and change protocols to suit the context, and Ngāti Toa's hosting and facilitation to date has given the deliberations and their emerging protocols authority for those in attendance.

Strong representation of Māori and Pasifika members in the design team, as well as tempering Pākehā overrepresentation of voice within design collaboration, are recent changes that will likely help catch crucial and often missed differences between Western and Indigenous deliberative approaches. It will be vital to build capacity in TPS regarding Māori and Pasifika frameworks, norms and practises. This is because even perceptions of fairness or equality in a process may be based, as one Ngāti Toa rangatira notes, on common Pākehā misunderstandings of meanings, relations or roles in Māori contexts, as has been the case in misreading gendered roles in formal contexts as indication of gender inequality in Māori society. There are implications here also regarding the design of the educative phase of the deliberation itself, so that all participants, especially Pākehā, are sufficiently aware of deliberative protocols and norms that may be culturally foreign and often missing or misinterpreted, from the meaning of silence to who one represents when speaking. Greater time in this first phase of the assembly is also required to reflect core features of prioritizing relationship building and collective orientation, each integral to a Māori worldview and Te Tiriti-led deliberation. Finally, the "disconnect" one Ngāti Toa member observed between mainstream/Pākehā and Māori or Pasifika understandings of the climate crisis also means a much more extensive educative phase, as well as careful labour to gather and frame Indigenous expertise to enable participants to hear across profound, even ontological differences regarding the issue upon which they deliberate.

Ultimately, the gift and also obligation in turning to Māori and Pasifika terms for the citizens' assembly is that, as TPS' cultural adviser reflects, "the world we perceive is different because of the language we use." Foundations, orientations and frameworks for how the climate deliberation is held have been opened up in powerful ways, and the resonance, enthusiasm and response that using this language has provoked for Māori and Pasifika communities alike has been tangible. One Pasifika leader reflected that while the word "democracy" can cause Indigenous peoples to retreat, the description of deliberation sounds entirely familiar—in fact sounded to him like Indigenous ways of making collective decisions are catching on elsewhere. In order to do justice to these powerful, resonant, yet—across Māori and Pasifika, Pākehā and Māori, Pākehā and Pasifika lines—far from understood forms of deliberation, there is a great deal of risk and work ahead. As one member observes,

> I'm fully aware of how this could go badly and either be a kind of botched assembly that nobody would take seriously, or something that's seen as having Māori superficial elements but not really be something that took te ao Māori seriously. We could well fall into one of those traps. But I'm constantly strengthened by the goodwill and intelligence of the players.

In this moment, too, relationships remain crucial. Modlik notes he is not concerned that Western deliberative designs will overtake Indigenous ones in this work ahead,

> for this reason….we're able to engage respectfully, to say what we think, and if it's going too far or it's missing a point, we can do that….you can figure out together the best [or] right place to land. It doesn't have to be our idea or their idea, that's one of the great benefits of a genuinely trusted, partnered relationship.

Concluding Remarks on a Work in Progress

The next phase of the project will be a significant one, as the group turns to questions of the assembly's specific design as well as uptake and implementation once recommendations are in hand. It is far from clear how this phase itself should be designed, or the work and roles allocated between these two groups and others in the broader Porirua community. But, as various TPS members observe, *committing to not knowing* where it is going and the shape it will ultimately take *is core to doing this work well*, as Te Tiriti and co-design partners. Indeed, they expect "in this context not to look like anything we're familiar with" or "could have imagined." This has been affirmed by the fact that "the things that feel Tiriti-led" such as the innovation to create a standing Community Leaders Forum "are things we couldn't have envisaged." There will inevitably continue to be blank spots for this settler group, given the broader context of "settler common sense" and Pākehā dominance. While being cautious not to overtax their Māori partners, this means it will also be important to check in with them at key moments of change or action regarding the Tiriti relationship. In this case, Modlik's enthusiasm for the project and quality of relationships with all Ngāti Toa involved remain key signs to the group that, as Modlik says, "this is right—it's mucky, it's ill-formed, I really don't know what it's going to look like at the end of the day, but it's right."

Working from and most accountable to the specific context of Ngāti Toa territory, this project nonetheless offers powerful provocations for any deliberative process in a settler-colonial context. All three design innovations for both the deliberative process and the broader structure in which it sits meaningfully centre Indigenous authority and modes of deliberation. Key reorientations of this settler group to move at the speed of relationships, authentically co-design and respect Indigenous authority have tempered Anglo-European cultural norms of short time frames, predetermined designs and individualism that, in other deliberations, can reinforce settler dominance. It has also committed the group to ongoing learning and to ceding control and certainty, in an ever-iterative design process that is firmly grounded in and reflective of the specific context of Ngāti Toa territory. Over and above the project's many design innovations, these features to the project

resonate with decolonization scholarship more broadly (Mikaere, 2004; Mackey, 2014) and offer crucial provocation for deliberative practitioners and scholars. Beyond any particular design feature, are we who are settlers on unceded Indigenous territory oriented to this context in which all deliberations take place? Is this reflected in our own commitments to respect Indigenous authority through both deliberative design and material redistribution of power and resources more broadly? Is it reflected in an increasing capacity to notice deliberation's cultural difference and to bring this explicitly into dialogue with non-Western forms? What Richard Day observed about liberal multiculturalism in settler-colonial societies may also be said for deliberation: "in order to become what it says it wants to be, it will have to sacrifice much of what it has always been" (2001: 195). The more "settler common sense" is unsettled in deliberative practice and scholarship to enable awareness of structural and historical context and decentre Western approaches, the more fully we realize deliberative aims of greater equality, inclusion and genuine reflection by an informed demos. Finding rightful relationships and restoring balance between settlers and Indigenous communities is not only the bigger challenge within which our democracy and particular deliberations sit; it is the only sure path to realizing democracy's promise.

Modlik notes there are many dimensions and potentials of this project to date that have value for his people, from making something uniquely local and "ours" for making collective decisions and "finally having a true set of mechanisms and channels for the voices of our people to be heard," to shifting the centre of gravity in local governance structures. But he says this project also addresses one of the most perplexing and unanswered questions in relation to enacting Te Tiriti relationships: "that waka hourua [double-hulled canoe] model, we can do us, our rangatiratanga thing, and the Tangata Tiriti kāwanatanga on the other side—[but] we haven't been able to date figure out how we co-exist, [how] to lash our wakas together." This project has already begun to offer new resources for this, as well as other ongoing questions regarding how to enact a Te Tiriti relationship in translating a Western form of deliberation into a context that is at once one of ongoing Māori authority and settler-colonialism. In doing so, it realizes another of its bold aspirations: to offer an example for other deliberative initiatives across Aotearoa and beyond, not as a template to be abstracted and generalized, as this too is a Western and colonial trait in need of tempering, but as inspiration, provocation and support for other projects that by necessity will work through specificities of their own lands, territorial authorities and relationships, to chart their own path.

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Competing interests. The author declares none.

Notes

1 An expression in English of the text in te reo, taken from Network Waitangi, *The Treaty of Waitangi: Questions and Answers* (2016: 54).

2 List of government breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi: https://trc.org.nz/sites/trc.org.nz/files/Treaty-education-resources/2019%20Govt%20Breaches.pdf

3 These translations are shorthand of the most common or least contested translations, but should not be interpreted as full and final meanings; each of these terms in te reo Māori (the Māori language) entails complex associations, including with one another, and connect to core tikanga (protocols and laws) that are grounded in a relational worldview (between generations, between the physical and spiritual, between the human and nonhuman world, as well as regarding human relationships) (Mikaere, 2013).
4 All quotations not otherwise accredited are from personal interviews.
5 Non-Māori from the South Pacific Islands.
6 Modlik defined mana motuhake as "the closest we've got to sovereignty in our language, the freedom and substantive ability, power, resourcing, capability to do what we want to do."
7 https://www.watercare.co.nz/About-us/Information-Hub/Community-engagement-hub/citizens-assembly-project
8 I am grateful to Jason Ataera, a Pasifika community leader who has been part of efforts to clarify "talanoa" for Ngāti Toa and TPS, who made this point when we met to discuss these differences together.

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