
10 Better Indigenous policies: an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective on the role of evaluation

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Abstract

Policy evaluation, particularly government-funded evaluation, tends to focus on high-level indicators or on those charged with implementing specific programs rather than on systems of transmission and the mix of policies and strategies across government. Māori providers come under particular scrutiny through evaluation. This has, however provided an opportunity for the development of ‘by Māori, for Māori’ evaluation, with the Kaupapa Māori paradigm providing a significant space for a wide range of Māori individuals and organisations to work from. What these approaches have achieved is the support and reinforcement of policies, such as Whanau Ora, which are premised on the right of and need for Māori to be involved through collaborative and consultative processes at all stages: from policy design to implementation to evaluation.

10.1 Introduction

The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the 1840 agreement between the tribes of New Zealand and the Crown provides a foundation for relationships, encompassing issues of ownership, control, equity, involvement and participation. The Treaty, developed in part as a response to concerns over Māori² health and wellbeing (Durie 1994, pp. 83–4; Health Promotion Forum 2002), is the overarching point of difference between policy and evaluation in Aotearoa New Zealand and in other contexts. Although subject to changing political and public positioning, the Treaty influences social policy and service provision and, in some cases, is included in social legislation (James 1997).

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Partnership, participation and protection have been identified as primary principles of the Treaty (Durie 1994) but definitions of these terms are diverse. However, tino rangatiratanga as guaranteed in Article Two of the Treaty encompasses the right to exercise Māori world views, authority and control as normal and legitimate processes and practices. Tino rangatiratanga relates to policy evaluation in terms of the development and nature of policy, how it is implemented and evaluated and what benefits accrue to what groups. Article Three of the Treaty supports equity and the need to provide resources and evaluate outcomes for Māori (Moewaka Barnes 2009), evoking the more vague principles of partnership, participation and protection.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, policy and evaluation have also been subject to international influences, particularly economic considerations and market forces. Political agendas strongly influence decisions and policy-making bodies and related systems are rarely scrutinised in relation to their overall approach to Māori, including the ways in which policies interact, and may even be at odds in what they aim to achieve. It is more common to focus on the implementation of policy through individual program evaluations. As well as changing political climates and government agendas (Durie 1995), evaluation has also had to grapple with addressing Treaty of Waitangi imperatives and Māori suspicion of research (Smith 1996a). Assuming a direct and consistent link between evaluation findings and policy would, therefore, be naive. However, significant context specific contributions have emerged, with varying degrees of influence.

Considerable scrutiny of Māori providers, through evaluation, provided an opportunity for the development of ‘by Māori, for Māori’ evaluation, with Kaupapa Māori theories and praxis providing a significant space to work from. These approaches have had significant impacts in relation to program development and implementation and evaluation practice, particularly at the level of program evaluation. This paper provides an overview of policy and evaluation shifts and developments, including Māori evaluation approaches, followed by a discussion of the relationship between evaluation and policy.

10.2 Overview of policy and evaluation

Establishing Crown governance

As part of establishing governance, the Crown passed the English Acts Act in New Zealand in 1854. This early example of public policy made all English laws applicable in New Zealand (Durie 1994). Other early strategies and policies in

relation to British governance and new settlers revolved around land acquisition and paternalistic protection (Te Ara 2012). The period from the 1860s to 1920s was one of conflict and compromise, with forced land sales policies leading to war between the Crown and Māori in parts of the North Island (Belich 1988; Te Ara 2012; Walker 2004). Following this, various governance and policy arrangements grappled with relationships between Māori and the Crown, conducted under the shadow of an on and off again assimilationist policy and a move towards providing for Māori within the government system (Te Ara 2012). Depression, war and urbanisation shaped the period from 1930 to 1960, with Māori Affairs Department policy being to ‘ease the path of Māori into urban life’ (Te Ara 2012, p. 4).

Māori renaissance and development

The period from the 1970s to the end of the century has been coined the ‘Māori renaissance’, shaped by growing calls for restitution and agency/tino rangatiratanga (Walker 1990). Māori–Crown relationships shifted somewhat from needs based towards rights based, influenced by national and international Indigenous activism (Lightfoot 2010). In the 1970s families ‘occupied a high priority in policy setting’ (Blaiklock et al. 2002, p. 10). Key to this period was the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal through the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, giving the tribunal the right to consider Māori claims of Treaty breaches through government actions and to make recommendations. In 1983 the tribunal recommended that an outfall planned to discharge sewage and waste near a traditional fishing ground should not proceed as it breached the Treaty. Following meetings with iwi (tribal) representatives and after initially announcing that the recommendations would be ignored, the recommendations were accepted:

This was the first time the Government had changed policy in response to a Tribunal recommendation. (Hague 1989, p. 16)

During the ‘Decade of Māori Development’ from 1984–1994 (Durie 1995), budgetary imperatives of economic policy drove social policy (Workman 1995). When Labour was elected in 1984 they followed Treasury advice for substantial reform (Blaiklock et al. 2002) and:

... reshaped the public sector in accordance with the demands of managerialism, public choice and agency theories ... (resulting in a) ... new managerial public sector environment ... (Gauld 2003, pp. 203–4)

The Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act followed in 1985, which:

... extended the jurisdiction of the Tribunal retrospectively to include consideration of unlawful confiscation of Māori land and resources from as far back as 1840, the year of the Treaty’s signing. The significance of this Act in the New Zealand political

environment cannot be underestimated. It was passed against the background of over one hundred years of complete neglect on the part of the government for the rights guaranteed to Māori under the Treaty. Furthermore, the decision to allow the Tribunal to review all acts of the Crown from as far back as 1840 effectively opened up the whole of New Zealand's history to scrutiny. This invited a multitude of claims by Māori, starting a legal and constitutional revolution that has continued until today. (Catalinac 2004, p. 6)

Social and economic policy shifted away from families, paralleling a decline in the proportion of children in the total population (Blaiklock et al. 2002). Liberalisation of the economy was rapid and state-owned enterprises became privatised (Blaiklock *et al.* 2002). The 1990 incoming National Government continued with the market-oriented agenda, applying it to social policy (Gauld 2003), and framing social assistance as meeting basic needs (Blaiklock et al. 2002). The 1990s was a time of ongoing reform of various social and economic sectors (Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare 2000). The Royal Commission on Social Policy provided something of a counterpoint and critique, with Barnes and Harris (2011, p. 5) arguing that it 'broadened the issue of what could be considered as social policy'. However, Easton criticised the reports for their sparse coverage of poverty (Easton, cited in Barnes and Harris 2011). Despite the Treaty of Waitangi, tino rangatiratanga, iwi development, economic self-reliance, social equity and cultural advancement being identified as central to the philosophy of the Decade of Māori Development (Durie 1995), the Royal Commission on Social Policy reported in 1988 that the Treaty did:

... not have a secure place in New Zealand's Statutes and Constitutional practices. Inequalities between Māori and non-Māori in work, education, income levels, home ownership and health reflect the lack of regard for the treaty in the development of social policies ... (Royal Commission on Social Policy, cited in Workman 1995, p. 5)

The deregulation and devolution approaches of 1984–94 saw restructured ministries having a greater focus on policy advice (Durie 1995), with the separation of policy from operations across the public sector (James 1997). Prior to the late 1980s, advisory roles within the state in relation to Māori or the Treaty has been negligible (James 1997). In 1989, two interim bodies had replaced the Department of Māori Affairs. Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) took over from these bodies in 1992 'to provide policy advice that promotes Māori economic development, and to liaise with and monitor the performance of government departments and agencies to ensure the adequacy of services provided to Māori' (National Party 2008, p. 1).

However, the State Services Commission (1999, p. 2) noted that:

... very few departments actually monitor, review or evaluate the extent to which the policy outputs they produce contribute to government strategic priorities.

The growth of Māori providers and evaluation

Workman (1995, p. 7) observed that ‘To a large extent, Māori policy has been relegated to addressing social disparity and disadvantage’. There was, however, an impetus for Māori solutions and a growing understanding and acceptance that a one size fits all approach was not likely to be effective for Māori (Gauld 2004). The 1993 health reforms in particular increased competition with a funder-purchaser-provider split, but they also presented an opportunity for Māori providers and approaches (James 1997; Kerr and Moewaka Barnes 2012). The stated aim of these changes was to more effectively target resources and improve Māori health (Te Puni Kōkiri 1999b). The 1996 election of a National-led coalition (first election under the mixed-member proportional (MMP) system) saw the market-led delivery of social services (Blaiklock *et al.* 2002). Many Māori providers took up opportunities to gain funding to deliver programs and services for Māori. The number of Māori providers contracted to deliver health services was particularly notable, with an increase from under 20 in 1993 to over 220 in 1997 (Te Puni Kōkiri 1999b); many Māori providers embedded these services within wider social service provision. Māori service providers and evaluators were able to conduct successful projects, working collaboratively not only with Māori but also with a broad range of stakeholders (e.g. Cram 1997; Moewaka Barnes 2000). Although many positive outcomes were reported in relation to service delivery at the community level, having no policy function this fell short of the philosophy of tino rangatiratanga (Durie 1995). Further critiques of the state were that it took a sectoral rather than holistic and integrated approach and that their intentions were suspect:

Māori suspected that they were implicitly being cast as agents of the Crown and that the disastrous effects of economic and state restructuring in terms of Māori unemployment were being masked by a semblance of economic recovery that simply did not extend to Māori households. Was Māori development intended to create a facade of positive recovery in the face of increasing disparities in unemployment, incomes and whanau (family) stress? Often it seemed so. (Durie 1995, p. 5)

The deregulatory state approach and economic reforms apparent at the time led to questions about Crown–Māori relationships; specifically, whether the devolved governance groups were Treaty partners and how Māori were to interact with, and participate in, these new reforms (Durie 1995). Another concern at the time related to the effects of urbanisation on Māori, particularly raising the notion of Māori alienated from iwi structures (Durie 1995) and from Māori culture in general. This discussion continues to the present day, with questions of ‘authenticity’, cultural connectedness and representation (Borell 2005; Moewaka Barnes 2008, 2010). The establishment of Māori Urban Authorities, initially in West Auckland (1984), then South Auckland (1985), provided a voice and represented the interests of urban Māori (Keiha and Moon 2008). In the 1990s these issues had risen to broad public

consciousness in relation to Treaty settlements; how, for example, fisheries claims could be negotiated and settled on behalf of all Māori (Durie 1995) and challenges about the nature of iwi and the status of urban authorities (Keiha and Moon 2008).

As the reform process slowed in the mid-1990s (Blaiklock et al. 2002) the idea that outputs were the responsibility of departments with ministers responsible for outcomes, led to a lack of attention to the impacts of policy on society (State Services Commission 1999). There was bureaucratic and political reticence about increasing the focus on outcomes, with concerns that this could detract from performance management systems (State Services Commission 1999). The State Services Commission (1999) argued that policy agencies were responsible for policy advice and that conducting policy reviews and linking outputs and outcomes was part of their quality performance criteria. Evaluation was also described as providing an important way of linking outputs to outcomes (State Services Commission 1999).

As contracted service provision increased, so too did public sector interest in evaluation; this interest continued into the next century (Duignan 2002). Although social science was given little credibility, evaluation increasingly developed as a separate field of social research with a focus on government funded programs (Duignan 1997; Kerr and Moewaka Barnes 2012; Lunt 2003). Saville-Smith describes the growth of evaluation demand, arising from a need for credible evidence of effectiveness, as ‘an activity critical to transparent, accountable, effective and responsive government’ (Saville-Smith 2003, p. 17). However, with a strong focus on evaluating contracted services, it could be argued that it was also about accountability to the state through the evaluation of providers, with Māori providers being subject to considerable evaluation. While there were positives, there was a risk of disillusionment if evaluation capacity was not embedded across the social policy sector (Duignan 2002). As well as gaps in capability within the public service, a lack of competent evaluators was noted (State Services Commission 1999).

Some Māori evaluation capacity was developed within the state sector and a small number of Māori evaluation contractors worked directly with ministries. Considerable growth occurred through research groups within many of the major tertiary institutes that were able to grow Māori capacity through evaluation contracts; both non-Māori and Māori led, as well as partnership arrangements. Māori service delivery and evaluation practice drew on a range of Māori concepts and some were specific to particular iwi. Initially introduced in education in the 1990s, Kaupapa Māori theory became widely drawn on. Kaupapa Māori evaluation involved an analysis of cultural, political and social contexts and was predicated on by Māori, for Māori approaches (Smith 1996b). In the mid- to late-1990s, issues of

non-Māori capacity and capability had become increasingly discussed. In particular, non-Māori competencies in working with Māori were emerging as an area in need of development.

Questions of capacity and competency

The Labour coalition led government elected in 1999 put an ‘emphasis in public policy on the importance of social development, reducing inequalities and cross-sectoral policy-making’ (Gauld et al. 2006, p. 284) and a whole-of-government approach (Humpage 2005). Their campaign platform, ‘Closing the Gaps’ between Māori and non-Māori (Te Ara 2012) was followed by a strategy of capacity building as part of general social policy (Humpage 2005). Māori organisations were funded and supported to assess and address capacity, including their strategies, systems and structures (Humpage 2005).

Capacity and capability building continued to occur in the evaluation sector. The Social Policy Evaluation and Research (SPEaR) Committee was established by government in 2001, with one role being to promote best practice across government (SPEaR 2008). A number of organisations began to take on issues around non-Māori research and evaluation practice; some were considered inappropriate and even damaging. This led to debates around whether non-Māori should conduct evaluations of Māori programs. Cram et al. (no date, p. 5) describe some of the concerns:

Apart from problems created by research questions structured in terms foreign to the community it is the point at which the researcher is representing the community in their results that is problematic. Such representation is created within the researcher’s culture and this (alternative construction) is likely to be given priority over the community’s construction.

Various bodies developed guidelines to limit damage, increase participation and guide research and evaluation processes in ways more appropriate for Māori (for example, Health Research Council 1998; Ministry of Social Development 2004; Te Puni Kōkiri 1999a). As well as benefitting agencies and improving non-Māori practice, suggested benefits for Māori included more equitable arrangements and increased usefulness of research and evaluation to Māori (Health Research Council 2006; Moewaka Barnes 2003).

From rights to needs

After Closing the Gaps came under attack by Brash (2004), the then leader of the National Party, as ‘race-based’ rather than needs based (Te Ara 2012), it was

subject to a ‘political backlash’ (Humpage 2005, p. 53), which saw Māori framed predominantly as a people with needs, rather than rights (O’Sullivan 2008). In a climate of considerable media coverage, opinion polls showing increased National Party popularity and increasing criticism of Māori ‘special privileges’, the government backtracked on its policy and sought out largely Māori, but also other (for example, Pacific Islander) ‘race-based privilege’ (Moewaka Barnes, McCreanor and Huakau 2008). Despite a previous emphasis on evidence-based social policy (St John and Dale 2012), the government provided little defence of their strategies, but took up what appeared to be a popular cause and largely agreed with Brash (Moewaka Barnes, McCreanor and Huakau 2008). Ignoring evidence that a one size fits all approach had frequently failed Māori, cultural imperatives as well as rights were put aside in the invalid assumption that needs could be uniformly addressed across cultures (O’Sullivan 2008). From 2004, needs became a dominating discourse and TPK adopted a Māori Potential approach (Te Ara 2012).

Changes to Closing the Gaps led to confusion over the capacity-building strategy. Although TPK’s role was to monitor the effectiveness of Closing the Gaps, it was not clear who had been in charge and whether capacity building was dropped along with Closing the Gaps. TPK was not commissioned to develop an evaluation framework for capacity building until 2002; however, most investment was in relatively small-scale local activities and services (Humpage 2005). Humpage (2005) suggests the confusion in policy and responsibility for policy was due to the ‘on the run’ nature of the development of capacity building.

Focus on practice

Within this challenging environment, Māori providers continued to deliver programs and, despite around two decades of considerable focus, concerns continued about best practice within non-Māori and mainstream services. A case study evaluation of a 2007 Kaupapa Māori Participatory Action Research project found that:

... service providers, policy makers, planners, funders and politicians were more in control of what happened in many programmes delivered to Māori, than Māori were. Further, that despite their best efforts, many Pākehā working to provide services to Māori had little idea of how to do that appropriately. It was encouraging to see that during the action research process, some underwent painful revelations of their own culturally determined blind spots, assumptions and prejudices and then were able to move past these to learn how to work more effectively with Māori. (Kerr-Brown 2011, pp. 18–19)

The participatory processes of this and other collaborative evaluations contributed to and supported initiatives at local and community levels (Kerr et al. 2010).

However, these approaches require time. A growing emphasis on quick turnaround from contract start to reporting had implications, not only for methods but also for who was prepared and able to work in this way (Nunns 2009). Short-term projects also present challenges in relation to the Kaupapa Māori approaches described below and to many of the principles and practices outlined in various best practice guidelines.

In 2008, SPEaR developed guidelines primarily for government agency officials, but with relevance to social policy research and evaluation more broadly. Building on principles of respect, integrity, responsiveness, competency and reciprocity the guidelines were located within a partnership approach. This was in order to reflect the government context whereby the majority culture determines the topic, but the methods and processes need to suit a range of interests (SPEaR 2008).

Commonly, best practice and ethics are developed within dominant paradigms and adapted for appropriateness and responsiveness to Māori and other ethnicities or cultural groups. Culture is rarely examined except when addressing issues of working with ‘other’ cultures; the underlying assumption being that these guides are non-cultural and universal (Moewaka Barnes et al. 2009). This led to a suggestion that, in order to pursue Māori advancement, non-Māori development needed to occur; one strategy being that researchers and evaluators explicitly examine and understand their own culture, world views and practices before embarking on understanding or working with other cultures (Moewaka Barnes 2008). Māori had been doing this for over 160 years.

It is notable therefore that the SPEaR guidelines used principles developed at the Best Practice Māori Guidelines Hui (SPEaR Bulletin 2007) and applied them more generically. The result was ‘complex and demanding material’ (Roorda and Peace 2009, p. 87) particularly in relation to working with Māori and Pacific peoples. In relation to the guidelines, Roorda and Peace (2009) argue that evaluators often fall short of best practice: Māori participation is limited by predetermined evaluation parameters; resources may be inadequate to meet recommended Māori participation and engagement levels; and evaluators may not carry out some of the recommended activities or be held to account for these shortcomings.

Recent developments

In the current climate, Gluckman (2011, p. 15) suggests that there may be risks when contracts are overly ambitious for the funding offered ‘rather than defining the project by its objectives and then costing for quality’. He argues this might result in cheaper ‘consultancy’ research or research that is unable to inform policy

options because it does not reduce uncertainty. As well as quick turnaround short-term projects (Nunns 2009), from observing the field (particularly GETS: Government Electronic Tenders Service) there is an apparent increase in evaluations with narrow or even predetermined parameters with less iwi and Māori community engagement required. An observed tendency to describe the required research or evaluation through micro-level questions rather than by objectives reinforces Gluckman's concerns.

Whanau Ora (broadly referring to family wellbeing) provides some departure from this, having gained political support as part of the Māori Party's coalition deal with National. The Whanau Ora Taskforce was established (2009–2010) signalling an intended shift of health and welfare policies and programs for Māori away from individuals towards whanau (Kiro, von Randow and Sporle 2010). Whanau Ora is intended, in part, to provide improved support to Māori whanau in need (Whanau Ora Taskforce 2009), particularly through phase 1, a targeted strategy funding the integration of service delivery to whanau (Tahana and Collins 2012a). Multiple provider collectives are currently funded through TPK, with a significant action research component running alongside delivery. The second phase focuses on empowerment. The future of the scheme will 'hang on its results' (Davison 2012, p. 1); however, the attacks have already begun (Tahana and Collins 2012b; Winston Peters 2012).

10.3 Evaluation approaches and Māori

Māori models, theories and methodologies

Māori evaluation developed in parallel with Māori models of wellbeing. Early influential models include *Te Wheke* (Pere 1988), which conceptualises the tentacles of the octopus as dimensions of wellbeing and the body as whanau unity. The intertwining of the tentacles reflects the interconnectedness of each dimension. *Nga Pou Mana* describes four supports as the foundation for social policies and wellbeing: Family; cultural heritage; physical environment; and turangawaewae (Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1989, cited in Durie 1994). *Te Whare Tapa Wha* (Durie 1994) conceptualises wellbeing as the four walls of a whare (house): Taha wairua, taha tinana, taha hinengaro and taha whanau (spirit, body, mind and family).

There are multiple descriptions and definitions of Māori evaluation theories, approaches and methods. They include culturally responsible evaluation, culturally appropriate evaluation, culturally sensitive evaluation, Māori-relevant evaluation,

Māori-focused evaluation, Māori centred evaluation, Kaupapa Māori theory, Māori evaluation tools, Māori frameworks, Māori paradigms, and Indigenous protocols for evaluation.

In a climate of increasing research and evaluation involving Māori and debates around practice and philosophy, Kaupapa Māori was drawn on by a range of theorists and practitioners; other international indigenous evaluation philosophies and practices also contributed to shared learnings (Kawakami et al. 2007). Cram et al. (no date) and Cram (2009) outline aspects of Kaupapa Māori methodology and tikanga, including cultural values and researcher guidelines, covering: A respect for people; he kanohi kitea (importance of meeting with people face to face); titiro, whakarongo...korero (look and listen to develop understanding from which to speak); manaaki ki te tangata (collaboration and reciprocity); kia tupato (be politically astute and culturally safe); kua e takahia te mana o te tangata (don't trample the mana of the people); and kia ngakau mahaki (be humble in your approach). Below are some points likely to characterise Kaupapa Māori evaluation and Māori evaluation more broadly:

- It is controlled and owned by Māori.
- It is conducted for the benefit of Māori (although it may benefit others).
- It is carried out within a Māori world view, which is likely to question the dominant culture and norms.
- It aims to make a positive difference for Māori (Moewaka Barnes 2000; Smith 1999).

Evaluation increasingly became something Māori collaborated in rather than had done to them; it became a shared journey, a hikoi (Moewaka Barnes 2009). Relationships and processes are a key part of evaluation in general and are often discussed in relation to Māori evaluation. Whakapapa (linkages, including genealogical links), identity, accountabilities, trust, reciprocity, participation, power-sharing arrangements and the need for flexibility and reflection are common themes. Either in parallel with, or explicitly drawing on, developments in Kaupapa Māori theory and practice, the effective application of a range of frameworks and concepts contributed to Māori engagement, acceptance and use of evaluation. Some of these are described below.

Whakapapa is a fundamental aspect of a Māori world view (Rangihau, cited in Smith 1996a) and a way of thinking, learning, storing and debating knowledge (Smith 1987, cited in Smith 1996a). This includes where researchers are placed through whanau, location and organisational affiliation (e.g. university) and what

position and accountabilities evaluators work within (Moewaka Barnes and Stanley 1999).

Whanau was used by Kathie Irwin as an embracing concept for her research study on first year Māori secondary teachers. This concept she described as ‘aroha, co-operation, collective responsibility’; she wanted to work within these relationships (Irwin 1994). Smith (1996a) described whanau as providing a support structure that was significant ‘as a way of organising and supervising research’.

Key to these approaches are ethics and ethical relationships; with *tikanga* being a Māori frame for exploring these relational processes. Ethics and power in evaluation are complex; they cannot be dealt with solely in terms of relatively straightforward questions common to many ethics committee forms and processes, but are inextricably linked to relationships (Moewaka Barnes et al. 2009).

Methods and Māori

Although Kaupapa Māori research and evaluation has characteristics based on Māori world views and aspirations (Smith 1996a), practitioners draw on a range of theories, methodologies and methods. Feminist critiques of research, grounded theory and critical theory are some of the more closely aligned paradigms. Utilisation focused, formative evaluation and community action provide useful approaches alongside Māori capacity building and development (Kerr and Moewaka Barnes 2012). Māori concerns about power relationships, ownership and the use of research and evaluation have also seen alignments with participatory action research (PAR), with variations of the term Kaupapa Māori Action Research used in a number of evaluations. However, in an attempt to define or describe Māori and other Indigenous approaches, the focus often falls on what is seen as specific and distinct from non-indigenous approaches.

PASE (Policy Analysis and System Evaluation Department at the Kamehameha Schools and Kohala Centre) suggests that Hawaiian-focused evaluation could be defined as ‘frameworks, measures, and procedures that most fairly represent the experiences of Hawaiian peoples and that yield information most useful to them.’ The challenge would then become identifying what — concretely and specifically — is unique to the Hawaiian experience, history, and culture that would make good evaluation practice within the Hawaiian community distinct from good evaluation in any other community. (PASE 2003)

In some framings the imperative to be distinct, unique and ‘authentic’ situates quantitative methods as less Māori and less acceptable to Māori. This is, in part, because numerical traditions have become relegated and seen as aligned with positivistic western science practices (Moewaka Barnes 2006). In line with early

feminist theory, qualitative methods can be seen as giving voice to people and as resonating with descriptions of Māori culture as oral, holistic and relationship-based (Moewaka Barnes 2006). For example, *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face) is sometimes described as appropriate in contrast to telephone or postal data collection methods, which may be seen as inappropriate for Māori generally. However, quantitative data may have a greater influence in some policy settings and, if the evaluation intention is to be influential across a range of settings, then methods and approaches need to suit the purpose for which they are being used. For this reason many argue that there is no standardised or defined set of methods or tools that make up Māori evaluation (Kerr-Brown 2011; Moewaka Barnes 2006; Moewaka Barnes et al. 2011).

Evaluation and monitoring: data and approaches

Quantitative approaches are widely used in policy monitoring approaches. The examination of many policies and reforms related to, for example, families, youth, poverty, unemployment and housing either explicitly or implicitly address impacts on Māori, with Māori over-represented in negative statistics and having a relatively youthful population (Blaiklock et al. 2002; Blakely, Tobias and Atkinson 2008; Moewaka Barnes et al. 2012). Disparities in health have been the focus of some monitoring and policy research and evaluation; for example, cohort studies examining inequalities in mortality during and after restructuring of the New Zealand economy (Blakely, Tobias and Atkinson 2008) found disparities in mortality increased between income groups (with Māori over-represented in lower income groups). However, drawing causal links with the reforms was difficult. Blaiklock et al. (2002) examined impacts on the wellbeing of children as a result of social and economic reforms since the mid-1980s, finding widening inequality between ethnic and income groups, with some advances made when the reform process slowed in the mid-1990s. They argue that the sweeping reforms were not systematically monitored by government.

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation lies within departments, from agencies charged with across-department functions such as SPEaR (Social Policy Research and Evaluation Committee) and TPK (policy advice and monitoring in relation to Māori) and from external evaluation and monitoring, particularly contracted studies of outcomes and program effectiveness. Given that the social ministries; namely, 'Social Development, Building and Housing, Justice, Education, Health, Corrections and Te Puni Kōkiri, amongst others have a marked commonality and overlap in terms of both problems and solutions' (Gluckman 2011, p. 10), evaluation looking at the mix of policies and strategies across ministries could provide a more integrated approach to considering the relationship between policy

and outcomes. This, along with an examination of the ways policies are developed and transmitted, could contribute contextual and broader evidence to complement evaluations of program implementation, effectiveness and outcomes. Another suggestion is that, rather than focusing on the implementation of programs or interventions, more evaluation could examine both individual and collective contributions of initiatives to an overall policy or strategic priority (Wehipeihana and Davidson 2010; State Services Commission 1999).

In addition to providing only one part of the picture through focusing on individual interventions if evaluation only concerns itself with the specific objectives of those interventions, the ability to examine effectiveness in relation to overall strategic directions may be compromised. For example, if the Working For Families policy, which provides tax credits against paid employment is evaluated against limited criteria it might ignore larger questions and strategic intentions in relation to all children living in poverty (St John and Dale 2012).

Issues with data quality for Māori have been raised, including inadequate sample sizes and under-reporting by Māori ethnicity (Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare 2000). Te Puni Kōkiri (Parliamentary Library 2000, p. 1) found that ‘variable quality and ad-hoc reporting of the relevant statistics in the past’ meant that it would be difficult to track some trends. Some steps have been taken to improve data collection and analysis and presentation. Towards the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s there were a number of official reports, including reports on Māori, that went ‘some way towards addressing the need for statistically disaggregated information’ (Blaiklock et al. 2002, pp. 6–7). Later in the decade a series of discussion papers, funded by the Ministry of Health, reviewed the quality of ethnicity data and the impacts on measuring health disparities. Changes to official ethnicity data policies and practices and developments in ethnicity definitions were discussed; the census ethnicity question changed several times and there were issues around the introduction of a ‘New Zealander’ code following the 2006 Census (Cormack and Harris 2009).

Usefulness of evaluation

A number of circumstances impact on the usefulness of evaluation and its ability to provide evidence of effectiveness. Programs may not always be at a point where evaluation is useful, particularly in relation to outcome/impact requirements (Nunns 2009), and the methods required to provide the type of evaluation evidence preferred by stakeholders may not be feasible (Nunns 2009). Evaluations may not produce definitive answers and causality is difficult to establish in complex and dynamic social settings. However, limitations and difficulties should not stop

evaluation from being attempted (State Services Commission 1999). Although limitations need to be acknowledged, reasonable arguments of effectiveness may provide the information needed on which to base decisions (State Services Commission 1999). Insufficient quality or certainty should not stop decisions from being made, nor should decisions be made in the face of evidence (Gluckman 2011).

Evaluation planned for at the outset can force explicit statements about the outcomes ministers wish to achieve (State Services Commission 1999). Gluckman (2011) echoes this with a call for more consideration to be given to impacts and effectiveness when designing policies and programs. Gluckman (2011, p. 9) argues that chief executives need to identify the type of information required and ‘have systems in place to ensure unbiased advice in a “co-production” model’. It could be argued, however, that a lack of bias is difficult, if not impossible, and that it may be more important to have a range of sources of evidence and to understand the biases, limitations and strengths of each. Funder and practitioner world views and agendas influence all stages of evaluation, from the information sought, to methods, processes, analysis and interpretation (Moewaka Barnes 2003). The way in which practitioners frame findings affects the findings’ interpretation and acceptability to different audiences. A Treaty of Waitangi framing, for example, monitors disparities as a way of assessing Crown performance in relation to equitable outcomes for Māori and non-Māori and as signatories to various international conventions (Cormack and Harris 2009, p. 7).

Evaluation criteria and evidence

Durie (2006) argues that measures also need to reflect Māori world views, acknowledging that this presents challenges:

... the evaluation of Māori health projects using Māori criteria will present problems to most health bodies and researchers who lack adequate understanding of whenua, whanaungatanga and mauri. It will fall to Māori authorities to determine whether a given project has relevance to Māori people. How does it relate to the land? Does it strengthen whanaungatanga? Will it nurture the mauri? There are many factors that can be used to gauge the effectiveness and value of a community health project. If the project purports to be relevant to Māori people, then Māori criteria must be used. (Durie 1985)

However, there are difficulties in determining what Māori criteria are, who defines them and how they relate practically to the program that is the focus of the evaluation and to state policies and agendas. It may be that the funder is not interested or not seen as interested in less tangible aspects of a project or in ‘evidence’ that is outside their knowledge system. Ministries may also be reporting

to ministers with different agendas and who want brief, succinct evidence of effectiveness with a perceived degree of certainty rather than complexity. However, if no attempt is made to present these aspects then the richness of what has happened will be invisible (Moewaka Barnes 2000). The funders and others will not have the opportunity to consider these factors or to see them as valid approaches and Māori will not have the opportunity to build evidence.

Evaluation enables strategies to be tested in a planned way and can, over time, build new knowledge about what may or may not work and under what conditions. The issue of what constitutes evidence is complex: different groups and individuals operate within different world views and with differing values, needs and agendas all contributing to what constitutes evidence. Rather than trying to describe programs in terms that are accepted and largely legitimated in non-Māori research, evaluations within a Māori world view might, for example, show how a program led to strengthening marae (gathering places based on Māori infrastructures and protocols) and iwi structures and why this is evidence of effectiveness (Moewaka Barnes et al. 1998). Usually, it is necessary to demonstrate effectiveness across a range of criteria or to show how Māori world views might link to other more accepted forms of evidence. In the above example this can be done by linking marae and iwi structures to notions of capacity building and community development. The difficulty here is about what gets lost in translation; evidence in non-Māori terms does not encompass the full depth and understanding of Māori evidence when it is taken out of a Māori world view and context.

In the research and evaluation field published literature holds a higher level of legitimacy than non-peer reviewed outputs. Although an important quality control mechanism (Gluckman 2011), this may put Māori and other Indigenous groups at a disadvantage in terms of contributing to building and sharing evidence.

Māori were busy doing evaluation and had little time or inclination to write about what we were doing, for an academic audience — and writing for that audience is what creates legitimacy in the academy. (Kerr-Brown 2011, p. 16)

An explicit aim of a number of evaluations is to build ‘the evidence base and academic credibility of research and evaluation approaches that fully involve Māori communities in evaluating service provision and generating ideas for improvement’ (Kerr-Brown 2011, p. 81). This may involve activities outside refereed journal publications, including meetings with providers, funders, communities and other stakeholders as well as written reports and presentations for various audiences. However, peer-reviewed papers reach further audiences, offer opportunities for international dialogue and are a key way of providing legitimacy for evaluation approaches and findings. They are also one avenue for influencing policy decisions; however, influencing policy through evidence is not a straightforward matter.

10.4 Influencing policy

The rapid rate of policy change can leave policy analysts with limited time to access evidence and for evaluators to contribute to policy and the implementation of policy (Nunns 2009). Gauld (2003) describes the parliamentary system in New Zealand as facilitating ‘fast law’. Combined with an adversarial, three-year electoral cycle, this ‘means policy is often driven by party ideology rather than evidence or demonstrated need’ (Gauld 2003, p. 202). In addition, mismatches between electoral and budgetary cycles may impact on the ability to secure program funding (Nunns 2009).

Evaluation findings can be overshadowed by more immediate demands (State Services Commission 1999). Catalinac (2004, p. 6) suggests that the ‘prominence of an item on the agenda’ is influenced by the government’s political climate and public receptivity. Kingdon (cited in Catalinac 2004) found that academic specialists are more hidden than visible and, as such, tend to have a role in the process of generating alternatives and narrowing down options, rather than in setting government agendas.

Single loop models portraying relationships between policy and evaluation as cyclical, fail to grapple with the complex and multiple ways that evaluation can interact with policy (Gluckman 2011) and with program design and delivery (McKegg, cited in Nunns 2009). Although a decisionist model acknowledges that science can assist with implementation processes, the ability to inform a range of policy options is largely ignored (Gluckman 2011). The technocratic model is a more linear approach, with evidence determining policy goals; strategies are then devised based on public acceptability. Both rely on trust in science, the belief that it produces facts and the separation of advice and policy judgement. Gluckman (2011) argues that there has been an increase in working more iteratively — the ‘co-production’ model — with a move to more negotiated relationships between policy makers, advisors and society. However, the history of policy making, including recent history, suggests that all three models and variations operate at different times and in different ways; for example, it could be argued that the turnaround on Closing the Gaps was about political ideology and perceptions of public acceptability rather than scientific advice. At other times political ideology may drive policy, sometimes finding itself stalled by public opposition.

Although the Treaty of Waitangi and related Māori rights are central to public policy, considerable shifts occur with changing national and international climates. Māori–Crown relationships are subject to political will (Maaka and Fleras, cited in O’Sullivan 2008), perceptions of international scrutiny and Indigenous people’s movements, including international learnings and linkages (Lightfoot 2010).

Humpage (2005, p. 59) describes ‘selective incorporation of indigenous thinking into policy’ and a failure to devolve decision making power to enable Māori to make decisions about Māori communities.

Some suggest that a better understanding of policy processes might enable researchers to be more effective (Carroll, Blewden and Witten cited in Moewaka Barnes et al. 2011) and provide more policy relevant research (Social Sciences Reference Group 2005). However, evaluation is only one of many potential influences on policy formation, and funders, communities and providers can have different ideas of what they want from evaluation. Māori providers may want to focus on what is needed to run the best possible program, while funders may want to know if they received value for money and if they are purchasing the best strategies. Māori may also want to influence agendas rather than provide information that meets identified needs in relation to others’ agendas (Moewaka Barnes et al. 2011). If the evaluators cannot negotiate these expectations at the outset, the evaluation runs the risk of not meeting the funder’s requirements or the findings being rejected by the program provider. It is therefore important to understand and address different agendas and information needs, while still maintaining the feasibility and credibility of the evaluation.

Social impact evaluations can be politically embarrassing (State Services Commission 1999); the findings may not be politically palatable or may point to a lack of success. For a range of reasons, not all programs demonstrate effectiveness, from initial assumptions the program is based on, to resourcing, design, implementation and what happens when the program competes with complex and entrenched issues. As Gluckman (2011) argues in relation to research about society and human behaviour, evaluation in complex contexts rarely produces absolute answers. It can, however ‘elucidate interactions and reduce uncertainties’ (Gluckman 2011, p. 7). Evaluators need to respond to these complexities, in terms of evaluation design, processes and findings and in relationships and communication with stakeholders. For Māori programs, the scrutiny related to being Māori means that these issues can require delicate navigation.

An emphasis on outcomes, rather than process, can hinder collaborative relationships between government and Māori (Humpage 2005, p. 61). There is also considerable reliance on reporting at the end of a contract rather than on integrating ongoing advice into policy to inform future directions. This means that opportunities to apply evidence learned from one context or multiple contexts over the years are limited. Resourcing needed to do this is not always considered:

There is increasing managerial resistance to informal arrangements that rely on the goodwill of scientists to meet the costs of providing advice out of local funding. (Gluckman 2011, p. 12)

For Māori evaluators, strategies to inform policies at the state level do not necessarily involve direct relationships with state agencies. Providers may have their own budget and decide how the information will be used. Tensions about representing evaluation information in forms other than those agreed at the outset might also arise; for Māori this is often tied up with issues of ownership, negative experiences and the suspicions of research and state agendas described earlier. The connections may be through working with Māori organisations that have decision-making roles and responsibilities locally as well as the ability to influence agendas at a national level (Moewaka Barnes et al. 2011). Working in collaboration with Māori providers, communities and other stakeholders can impact on the acceptability and promotion of particular policies and strategies and contribute to the capability and drive of these groups to input into policies at local and national levels.

Describing state points of contact as unclear, a lack of consistency and difficulties in identifying and accessing the breadth of research available, Gluckman (2011) suggests that people charged with knowledge translation roles may be required in departments. He points to the United Kingdom as an example of ‘the most advanced use of scientific advice ... Here in every department of State other than the Treasury there is now a Departmental Science Advisor ... very senior, many being Fellows of the Royal Society’ (Gluckman 2011, pp. 13–14). One role of the Chief Science Advisor in the United Kingdom is to encourage a semi-formal science and engineering community within government. Gluckman (2011, p. 12) further argues that ‘a structured community of science advisors ... would create a clear point of contact’ for interactions between agencies and externally. However, there may be both benefits and drawbacks to such approaches. Knowledge transfer can assist in uptake of evidence, but it can also involve the limitation of knowledge and be subject to issues of knowledge avoidance, albeit that, as Gluckman (2011, p. 5) argues:

Researchers, like all others, have their own beliefs and values; however, science has processes to minimise the ability of these human factors to bias the conclusions reached.

For Māori, a more structured system may mean a more closed system with less space to develop and advance diverse scientific paradigms — unless issues of diverse contexts, power and hierarchies of knowledge are explicitly addressed.

10.5 Discussion

International contexts have strongly shaped Aotearoa New Zealand policy and evaluation environments; however, internal contexts such as the Treaty of Waitangi

and the development of partnership, Kaupapa Māori and related approaches have contributed local challenges and solutions. Local developments have, in turn, contributed internationally. In relation to the role of evaluation in policy development and implementation, the Treaty provides an overarching framework of rights and a number of associated principles in relation to practice. However, these operate within rapidly changing political and social environments, where competing voices, interests and agendas lead to complex relationships between policy and evaluation. A more complex understanding of the relationship between evaluation and policy is suggested, in line with the development of less linear and more iterative processes.

Rather than dealing only with ministries and state policy makers, Māori evaluators also work with Māori organisations and others with local decision-making roles. Working with Māori communities and providers can have direct benefits in terms of increased service effectiveness, as well as contributing to state agendas and to an important ingredient in policy development and implementation — public acceptability.

Overlaps in both the problems and solutions encountered by social ministries along with a lack of the systematic integration of knowledge into policy development have led to ideas for improving knowledge uptake at the state level. These include increased knowledge translation roles within ministries and more structured and systematic arrangements across sectors. However, power imbalances and assumed cultural norms mean that Māori approaches and knowledge systems may not be equally heard or validated. Issues include the development and constitution of evidence, the interpretation of information and the biases and selectivity that may occur when translating knowledge from one paradigm to another.

Monitoring and evaluation at the macro level in particular has met with challenges in relation to the consistency and quality of data. An ongoing commitment to consistent quality data and sufficient sample sizes for Māori is needed. However, this should not privilege one methodology or method over another. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are needed, depending on the context and feasibility of approaches. As well as the ability to access data from routinely available datasets, we need to validate the development of criteria using Māori world views and ensure that interpretation of data also provides for Māori voices and rights, using the Treaty of Waitangi as an overarching framework.

The Aotearoa New Zealand evaluation sector has demonstrated a considerable interest in best practice, both in the development of methods and methodologies and in research practice in relation to Māori. Kaupapa Māori in particular has been widely drawn on and provides a space for Māori practitioners to theorise, debate

and practice Māori evaluation approaches. These developments have contributed to the ongoing successes of Māori organisations in the development and delivery of services and interventions. However, a current climate of quick turnaround, short-term projects with narrow parameters carries potential threats to the capacity and capability of the sector, as well as to the quality and depth of evaluation.

Māori initiatives work within broader determinants and in the context of multiple policies and strategies. The focus on what we do well — program evaluation at the level of implementation — has not been met with equal development in evaluating the mix of initiatives that contribute to overall strategic goals, or in evaluating overall policies in relation to Māori; particularly where policies may overlap or even compete with each other. Reliance on program monitoring and evaluation provides only one part of the picture. Without scrutiny of the processes of policy development and transmission through governance systems the risk is that responsibility and blame for apparent failure or lack of success will be placed on Māori providers and participants and we will be no closer to better Indigenous policies.

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