MĀTAURANGA MĀORI: A CASE OF INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS MĀORI KNOWLEDGE IN A BUSINESS SCHOOL MINOR

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers the case of Auckland University of Technology, which developed a Māori Indigenous Business Minor in the Business School as a means of introducing traditional Māori knowledge into the curriculum. We offer this as an example of a strategy that contributes to decolonizing business and management studies. This is achieved through a complementary combination of factors, including strategic academic leadership, the engagement of specialized Māori Indigenous expertise, and the development of curriculum in consultation with target communities, to ensure the program validates Māori language and culture, enhances mātauranga, and supports aspirations for social change to address intergenerational disadvantage.

Keywords: Decolonization; Indigenous peoples; Māori; traditional knowledge; business school

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INTRODUCTION

This case draws on an initiative created by Auckland University of Technology, an option for Māori Indigenous studies within the Bachelor of Business Studies. This program, comprising four undergraduate courses, entitled the Māori Indigenous Business Minor, is available to all students enrolled in any undergraduate degrees across the university and to the general public wishing to undertake Māori business studies. This program contributes to decolonizing the business school curriculum by introducing traditional Māori knowledge (mātauranga) and incorporating traditional pedagogy (akonga) to challenge the over-arching hegemony of mainstream business school content and approaches.

The literature locates the drive for indigenizing management studies within a wider call for decolonization of business schools, so poignantly defined in the Keelie Manifesto, "Decolonization involves identifying colonial systems, structures, and relationships and working to challenge those systems" (Union & Keele Student, 2018, p. 97). The Manifesto argues that colonization has led to a Western-centric knowledge perspective, neglecting Indigenous forms of knowledge.

Analysis of the contextual issues that underpin aspirations for decolonizing business schools in Aotearoa, New Zealand, must begin with an understanding of Māori, the Indigenous people. This begins with an overview of Māori society and the negative experience of colonization, which are reflected in other settler states (Cornell, 2015). Some impacts have been ameliorated in Aotearoa through the revitalization of Māori language and culture in the latter part of the 20th century (Walker, 1990). This renaissance provided the impetus for increased respect for and acknowledgment of traditional knowledge (mātauranga), introducing that knowledge into education curricula. Another contextual factor relates to the individual engaged in developing and delivering the program, a Māori Indigenous woman who has researched and taught Māori development and business for over thirty years, alongside extensive community work, for, with, and by tribes and Māori enterprise around the country.

The case study provides insights into the development of this program, exploring the factors and processes that shaped the program, its contents, and teaching style, evolving out of a broader agenda to address grievances and compensate for losses and damage done due to colonization. These factors may also be replicated by other BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities engaged in strategies for social change and social justice, working in and with business schools to decolonize business and management.

DECOLONIZING THE CURRICULUM: INCORPORATING MĀORI KNOWLEDGE INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

The Open University (2019, p. 3) in the UK devoted an entire publication to this topic, stating from the outset that,

> A curriculum provides a way of identifying the knowledge we value. It structures the ways in which we are taught to think and talk about the world… Decolonizing learning prompts us to consider everything we study from new perspectives.

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On that point, Charles refers to decolonizing the curriculum as a phenomenon "of high currency in higher education in the UK. [where it] has been in currency since at least 2011. with its quest for non-Eurocentric paradigms" (Charles, 2019, p. 1). Naude discusses the ways that the Ubuntu culture offers an example for decolonizing Western knowledge based on their traditional values and ethics. He proposes this as an attempt to frame business ethics that are drawn from an alternative, non-Western theoretical framework. On this point, he states that "Eurocentrism is replaced by Afro-centrism. Mbembe… explains decolonization exactly as such a process of decentring" (Naude, 2019, p. 32).

Also coming from a distinctive, non-Western position, Jammulamadaka et al. (2021) contribute to our understanding of ongoing efforts to decolonize what they term Management and Organizational Knowledge (MOK). Jammulamadaka et al. (2021, p. 719) state that,

> Decolonial thought and practice inspired by anticolonial movements… However, decolonising is not a term which is necessarily used by those engaged in such struggles, such as Indigenous Peoples, landless farmers, workers or those who may already propose, enact and embody alternative and/or disruptive practices of their own.

They propose an alternative epistemology of love, respect, life, caring, and connection as a foundation for decolonizing knowledge, histories, peoples, and societies. They write of a decolonizing workshop in Africa, where the participants taught the workshop organizers and each other the "most valuable lessons in the importance of decolonial praxis and affective engagement with epistemologies of love, hope and solidarity for decolonizing MOK beyond formal theory" (2019, p. 728).

Another decolonization writer in business studies, Banerjee (2016), asks what a decolonial research agenda for management and organization studies might entail, stating it must begin with a critical analysis of the colonial dimensions inherent in the theories that are the foundations of business studies. For Banerjee, the focus must be on a decolonization agenda for the whole world, for those people who are more likely to suffer the negative consequences of violence perpetuated by governments and the market. He refers to countries in Asia and Africa that are purportedly post-colonial because they have undergone a form of independence but are too often ruled by democratically elected governments that perpetuate the practices of the previous colonial rulers. On this point, Banerjee (2022a, p. 290) writes of settler colonies in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, where "Indigenous peoples who had survived genocide, forms of apartheid, and assimilation became interpellated into the modern democratic nation-state as second-class citizens in their own land."

Continuing in this vein, Banerjee refers to Indigenous views of land as being predicated on deep relationships with and connection to the physical environment. He notes a key feature of settler colonialism has been the transformation of property rights and land ownership, which he refers to as "a process that involved profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence" (Banerjee, 2022a, p. 291). Not only has land and the economic foundations of Indigenous peoples been systematically expropriated, but it has occurred alongside the diminution of

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culture, language, identity, and knowledge systems. Banerjee decries the lack of awareness of these historical facts when discussing business studies and curricula and the ways that the epistemic power of the dominant culture encourages the ethnocentric view that the dominant culture is universal. She states that "Culture as a body of knowledge is also a form of discursive power because it reproduces knowledge through practices that are made possible by the structural assumptions of that knowledge" (Banerjee, 2022b, p. 1075). Thus, she notes, the theories of the "Global North" become inculcated by the "Global South," whilst the producers of those theories of, or from, dominant cultures may ignore insights and critiques that emerge as part of the postcolonial discourse.

One of few papers by Māori around decolonizing business studies comes from Love and Hall (2022, p. 202), who focus on decolonizing the marketing academy, starting from the premise that,

> the marketing discipline and its institutions has no choice but to face up to its embeddedness in social issues it is therefore important and timely to consider how marketing in colonial states – in which indigenous lands were/are appropriated, cultures systematically discriminated against, and identities, language and generations stolen – acknowledges its past and confront its future.

They call for greater incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. They also call for universities and business schools that are sited on Indigenous lands to do more than "opening a meeting with greetings or formal introductions… they become little more than indigenous tokenism unless they are part of a wider journey of change and understanding" (Love & Hall, 2022, p. 202).

Māori scholars have also focused on decolonization as part of an ongoing process for addressing power imbalances and associated hierarchies of knowledge "that require critical self-reflection from those teaching in business schools today… As educators, if we are to take decolonizing seriously, we must create space for Indigenous Peoples to reconnect and engage with their own knowledge systems and ways of knowing" (Woods et al., 2022, p. 82). They conclude that indigenizing the academy and its classrooms converts them into sacred sites where Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples share experiences and explore new decolonized models of learning and understanding "in a spirit of hope, love and shared community" (Woods et al., 2022, p. 85).

This newfound site of decolonization privileges Indigenous voices and knowledge, thus allowing students to "express an indigenous spirit, experience or world view that honours their experience and understanding" (Woods et al., 2022, p. 94). Thus, colonization as a process of disconnection and dislocation is transformed by the process of Indigenous decolonization to one of heart-felt connection. This brief review of the small but growing field of interest in decolonizing business and management studies from an Indigenous perspective has thrown up issues that inform the analysis of the case study presented below. We know that colonization, as a process, emerged out of the imperial agendas of the Global North over hundreds of years. Many of the peoples that have been colonized are leading the move for decolonization as a part of the redress for past injustices and to restore their traditional cultures, values, and knowledge systems. Universities have an important role to play in decolonization as arbiters and instruments

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of knowledge production. One such case, from AUT, offers an insight into the rationale and process underpinning the introduction of Māori content into the mainstream business curriculum. However, the case study is prefaced with a discussion of the historical context.

HISTORY FROM AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE: MĀORI CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Māori discovered Aotearoa, as part of the Austronesian Diaspora (Chambers & Edinur, 2015; Soares et al., 2011) who traversed and populated the South Pacific for thousands of years. We begin by recognizing that "Polynesian peoples of the Pacific Ocean" is itself a colonial construct. However, for the purposes of brevity, these terms are applied to the analysis of the culture and history of the Māori people.

Archaeological and linguistic evidence points to seafaring voyagers originating from Taiwan some 4,000 years ago who first ventured into the South Pacific approximately three thousand years ago. The Austronesian language group is found from Taiwan, throughout Southeast Asia, into the Pacific, and as far afield as Madagascar in the Indian Ocean (Soares et al., 2011). This suggests these people were curious, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial, who saw the ocean and its horizon as a challenge to be met rather than a harbinger of doom.

The earliest arrivals to Fiji are estimated at 3,000 years ago, and to Aotearoa around 1,000 years ago. These hardy voyagers crossed the most expansive ocean on the planet, using knowledge of astronomy, winds, weather, and the migratory patterns of birds and sea life to navigate. This knowledge was passed on through oral traditions, without recourse to written texts or mathematical equations, aboard sturdy outrigger canoes (Irwin & Flay, 2015). Alongside a common language, Lapita pottery, named after the village in New Caledonia, can be found throughout Melanesia, Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga (McNiven et al., 2011). These Lapita patterns are remarkably similar to those that continue to be seen across all Māori art forms.

The exact date of arrival by Māori to Aotearoa is unknown and not relevant to this case. Tribal groups were often named for the waka-canoe upon which they arrived, and these continue to underpin the whakapapa/genealogy that links contemporary Māori to tribal homelands, eponymous ancestors, and voyaging waka. Though Māori brought with them an existing language and culture, over the centuries, both these were adapted to the new environment (Wilson, 2013).

Traditional society was founded on a political economy, which Mauss (1990) describes as one of gift exchange and reciprocity. More recent work from Henare (2022) has given us greater insight into that economy. Henare (2001) found that the ancient Māori cosmology determined economic and social relations, identifying cultural concepts that bound traditional society together through shared values and ethics, handed down from generation to generation, as a moral and social code. At the heart of the belief system is the critical importance of kinship and community, solidarity, spirituality, and genealogical connection to the metaphysical, as well as the responsibilities of stewardship for all that is precious. These ancestral linkages to the gods, from whom humanity originated, and the intrinsic

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sacredness of all things animate and inanimate, are at the core of this belief system. Thus, if all things are sacred and all things are connected, then one's relationship with them must be underpinned by obligations of respect and care (Henare, 2001).

Kaupapa Māori is a term used by Māori to describe these values and beliefs (that which is *tika*, or true) and the associated social practices and protocols (*tikanga*) that maintain social cohesion. For example, the importance of collective identity is exemplified by *whanaungatanga*, which means kinship, and is practiced as a set of tikanga protocols to enhance relationships. The recitation of genealogy, or whakapapa, articulates connection to human ancestors, but also the lands, mountains, rivers, and sea to which one is related through ancestral ties (Henare, 2001).

The interdependence between and among all living things is expressed as *kōtahitanga*, which means solidarity and which is manifest in *tikanga* to enhance unity and solidarity. This can be seen in the protocols around welcome (*pōwhiri)*, farewell (*poroporoaki),* and death *(tangi)* because solidarity with and connection to ancestors transcends death. This intimate relationship with the spiritual realm is reflected in *wairuatanga*, spirituality, and spiritual practice. This is expressed in a wide range of *tikanga*, including *karakia* (prayer or communion) and acknowledgment of *wāhi tapu* (spiritually significant and sacred places). These and other similar values (*tika*) and protocols (*tikanga*), shaped Māori beliefs and behavior in traditional society and continue to resonate in contemporary society (Henare, 2001).

From this cosmology originates the political economy, which Henare describes as an "economy of affection." Within this economy, one affects and is affected by all things corporeal and spiritual. These "affects" determine one's sense of place, identity, ownership and kinship bonds. The "economy of affection" is in opposition to the "economy of exploitation" that informs contemporary Western capitalist society, which was introduced as part of the colonial process (Henare, 2022).

However, much of traditional society and knowledge was systematically unraveled when the country was formally annexed by the British on February 6th, 1840. A gathering of Chiefs signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi with William Hobson, representing the British Crown (Walker, 1990). The Treaty came about after seventy years of mutually beneficial interaction and trade with Europeans since the arrival of Captain Cook in 1769. It also followed the signing of Te Wakaputanga (Declaration of Independence), which declared the country a sovereign nation in 1835. This document clearly enunciated the sovereignty of the Māori Chiefs as a confederation, who together ruled the nation-state of Nu Tirani, the name given to the islands after a visit by Abel Tasman in 1640. The declaration and the Māori flag were recognized by the British Parliament in 1836, thereby ensuring Māori vessels would receive protection from the Royal Navy when trading in international waters (Henry, 2012).

Since Cook's arrival, trade had become increasingly important to Māori. Petrie (2013) noted significant trade to Australia and farther afield from the 1820s, carried by Māori-owned ships, delivering goods manufactured in Aotearoa. This trade spawned a rise in the migration of European traders, seafarers, and early settlers, whose behavior in the coastal towns of the north sparked concerns from local chiefs (Orange, 2015). Thus, in 1840, a delegation arrived from Britain seeking a treaty with the natives (Henry, 2012).

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Different versions of the Treaty traveled the country. However, there were significant differences between the English and te reo versions. In te reo, the first clause gives kawanatanga (the right to govern their lands) to the British Queen. The second clause ensures the Queen will protect the chiefs in the exercise of their chieftainship and all the things Māori consider tāonga, or precious; in return, Māori give the Crown rights of pre-emption over land sales. The third clause confers the rights of British citizenship on all Māori. The English version varied significantly. This ceded absolute sovereignty, as opposed to the right to govern, to the British Crown (Orange, 2015). These different versions of the Treaty have caused enormous conflict between Māori and, first, the British and then settler governments (after the New Zealand Constitution Act of 1852 came into being, giving parliamentary rights to the settler government). The conflict resulted in open warfare from the 1850s, which in turn resulted in large tracts of Māori land being confiscated by the Crown for the ever-insatiable needs of new settlers (Belich, 2002).

Between 1840 and 1900, Māori went from being chiefs of their own lands, owning 60 million acres to less than 6 million, and that was reduced to less than 3 million by the middle of the 20th century. Alongside this loss of land, a raft of legislation was enacted that destroyed Māori sovereignty, decimated the Māori economy, and reduced Māori people to poverty and alienation in their own country (King, 2003). This tragic tale of colonization has been replicated in other settler countries. However, the Māori have maintained a population and level of political participation that has ensured some protection from the worst excesses of colonial rule. By the 1960s, a significant proportion of Māori relocated to cities as part of an urban drift toward work in the Post-War industrial boom. Alongside this urban drift, a growing number of younger folk exploited opportunities for higher education. They were exposed to the truth of a history that had been anonymized by the notion of racial harmony perpetuated in the myths of the colonizer, emerging out of sanitized histories from the late 19th century. Thus, was borne a generation of activism, culminating in what is now referred to as the Māori Renaissance since the 1970s (Walker, 1990). Protests and political lobbying in that decade saw the creation of the Waitangi Tribunal, "a commission of inquiry to make recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to Crown actions which breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi" (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.).

For the first ten years of its existence, the Waitangi Tribunal could only look at contemporary grievances, but the 1984 Labor Government extended that authority, giving the Tribunal "retrospective power to investigate claims from the date of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840" (Derby, 2012). However, the Tribunal can only make non-binding recommendations, so the government is not required to accept these judgments. Since 1985, more than 2000 claims have been lodged, citing grievances including invasion, massacre, deception, expropriation, and inaction on the part of the Crown, resulting in the loss of land, life, and cultural well-being for the tribes (Durie, 1998). The Office of Treaty Settlements, which sits under the Ministry of Justice, is charged with negotiating the settlement of these claims. Whilst some of the larger claims incorporate many tribes and thousands of acres of land (Kawharu, 1998; Orange, 2015), there are still over a thousand claims to be heard in the 2020s.

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These Treaty settlements have resulted in the growth of tribal wealth, with the Māori economy estimated to be worth around $70 billion in 2022. It has been recognized that tribal investment strategies differ in many ways from traditional Western models and more frequently mirror traditional Māori values of shared, intergeneration wealth, kinship, and connection (Henry & Poyser, 2022). This economic change has occurred besides the ongoing revitalization of the Māori language and culture. Whilst te reo was expected to die out (Benton, 1989) and was actively legislated against (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011), the birth of Māori-language nests (kōhanga reo) in the 1980s has seen the language come from the brink of extinction (King, 2001), to an increasingly valuable cultural artifact for more than just Māori New Zealanders (O'Toole, 2020). The resurgence of economic and political strength and the growing uptake of te reo Māori by the wider population has seen an increased focus on a better understanding of Māori people, culture, and history in education, with proposed curriculum changes, to teach "an authentic history of Aotearoa New Zealand" (Jones, 2022). This has flowed on to tertiary education, with growing calls from Māori scholars to ensure mātauranga is being offered across a range of courses and programmes (Jones et al., 2020; Ruru & Nikora, 2021; Stewart, 2022).

Thus, Kaupapa Māori, embracing traditional beliefs whilst incorporating contemporary resistance strategies that embody the drive for "*tino rangatiratanga*," self-determination and empowerment for Māori people, as opposed to the subjugation wrought by the colonial experience, has been growing in interest since the late 20th century. Since then, there has been a proliferation of educational programs founded on mātauranga Māori, ancient and contemporary Māori knowledge. This is happening alongside growing calls around the world for decolonization of education in general and business education in particular.

ETHNOGRAPHY: A PERSONAL HISTORY

Hammersley (2017) refers to ethnography as a naturalistic study that captures social meaning and involves the researcher as a participant. Thus, I write as an active participant in the development of this case, with a distinct history and connection to the Kaupapa Māori agenda. I began my academic career later than usual. In 1986, a Māori woman, who had left school aged 15 and enrolled at 31, a single parent, the first in her family to attend university, hailing from tribes in the rural north, but brought to the city as a child in 1960, by parents hoping to escape grinding poverty, only to be caught in the struggling working class of the Māori urban drift.

I knew very little of the acrimonious and traumatic history of my people and my country when I first entered university, having been raised on the myth of racial harmony in this country (Mikaere, 2004). The history of the worst excesses of colonization was not something I was taught. As I have learned the truth of our colonial past over the last forty years, I moved from rage to recognition that changing the system from the inside is as important as rallying against it from the outside.

Over the last 35 years, I have devoted my career to researching and teaching Māori history and culture, particularly within the business school. For my MPhil thesis, I focused on Māori women and leadership. At that time, I was employed by

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the University of Auckland to investigate a potential course in Māori business. In 1991, this was unheard of, but for six months, I canvassed widely, calling on a wide range of Māori leaders in community and business. My recommendations were to create a separate program rather than adding one course to the existing BCom electives. When I presented the findings to the faculty, the response was underwhelming until the visionary Dean of Commerce, Professor Alistair McCormack, declared his absolute support for the idea. Thus, in 1993, the Postgraduate Diploma in Business (Māori Development) was offered. I taught on the Diploma while completing my Master's (Henry, 1995) until leaving that university in 2001, but I remain immensely proud of its success and longevity. It was the first of its kind in Aotearoa and continues to be offered and held in high regard (Ratana, 2023).

However, by 2001, I felt the need to be more immersed in Māori education, so I took the position of Head of the School of Māori Education at UNITEC for two years until returning to my homelands, taking up a role as negotiator for the Treaty Claim taken by my tribe. The call of the city remained strong, as it provided better educational opportunities for my young family, and I returned to Auckland to take on a role as a television presenter for a show on the newly minted Māori Television Service in 2004, set up as a Treaty partnership between Māori and Government, part of settlement for the Māori Broadcasting Claim (Henry, 2012; Smith, 2016). This continued for three years, cementing my interest in Māori screen production. When the show was canceled in 2007, I returned to academia, to the Faculty of Māori Development, where I completed a PhD in 2012, focusing on Māori entrepreneurship in screen production (Henry, 2012).

Along the way, I have been actively involved in research and work with tribal and business groups, acting as chief negotiator for the Treaty Claim (WAI116) on behalf of my tribe, finally concluding that role when we settled a claim lodged in 1987, finally culminating in 2017. Throughout my academic career, my research and publications have encompassed a wide range of topics related to Māori development, including leadership, management, governance, entrepreneurship, careers, culture and society, gender and politics, and Kaupapa Māori Research, a research paradigm founded on Māori culture, values and aspirations (Henry & Foley, 2018). Alongside my research and teaching, I remain actively involved in Māori development, I have been instrumental in setting up a community organization in Māori media and screen production (Henry & Wikaire, 2013). It is this overarching commitment and passion that drives my work, incorporating traditional knowledge into contemporary learning and applying that philosophy as a strategy for the decolonization of the business school at AUT.

DECOLONIZING THE CURRICULUM: THE MĀORI INDIGENOUS BUSINESS MINOR

Four Māori Indigenous Business courses are offered as an elective Minor at AUT, the newest university in the country, opening in 2000. It was initially Auckland Technical School, formed in 1895, then became Auckland Technical College in 1906. It is in close proximity to the University of Auckland. These two institutions

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have served the city of Auckland for over one hundred years. Writing in 2013, Wilson compared AUT and UOA, stating,

> AUT, the country's newest university and right over the road from UOA, is a pretty interesting place. While Auckland [university] works on its elite model and tries to reduce its student numbers, AUT… is the fastest-growing university in the country.

AUT is also known as Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makaurau.[1] The bestowing of Māori-language identities to New Zealand enterprises is recognized and increasingly common. According to Stock (2021), "adopting a te reo name could send a message to the community that an organisation had a willingness to serve the whole community" but he warns that it also it "had to be accompanied with action. Organisations had to ask themselves what they were going to do to better ground themselves in Aotearoa and represent the whole community." Thus, all of the universities and polytechnics in the country have a Māori language name alongside their English-language one. These naming conventions attest to a social climate where te reo, once banned from use in educational environments, is now more commonly used, not only as a language of delivery but as a meaningful way to identify organizations and their aspirations. The Higher Education Times states that, "AUT creates graduates who are world ready, not just career ready…. AUT is proudly and uniquely Kiwi with a firmly global perspective" (THE, 2023). Furthermore, the core values of AUT are expressed as aroha, pono, tika, which are glossed as integrity, respect, and compassion, "at the heart of everything we do" (AUT website).

The AUT Business Faculty incorporates the schools of business, economics, and law. It is within in this setting that the Māori Indigenous Business courses began being developed. This began with the appointment of a new role, the Director of Māori Advancement, through secondment of a senior Māōri scholar from the Faculty of Māori Indigenous Development in 2019. I accepted the offer of secondment, open to coming back into a business school.

Early in 2020, before the world was struck by the global pandemic, the AUT Business School employed the highest number of Māori scholars in business, and I was excited to join them. These scholars, 10 in number, were located across the faculty in management, marketing, entrepreneurship, finance, and law. They were complemented by research and teaching assistants and two professional staff. Taken together, we comprised a cohort of 15. Therefore, as the newly appointed Director of Māori Advancement, I moved into an existing community of Māori scholars, who were only infrequently brought together as Māori. This was the first such role in the Business School, though other Faculties at AUT have Māori scholars in equally senior roles. It was assumed that new innovations around support for Māori staff and students and curricula development would flow from my appointment.

In 2020, I developed a Māori advancement strategy, adopted by the faculty despite the impacts of COVID-19, which cut a swathe through New Zealand, with devastating and life-threatening impacts for many. However, the country was amongst the first to take a hard line on shutting down and closing borders as a means of protecting the population. The exclusion of international students has proven to have a devastating impact on all New Zealand universities, which has resulted in painful financial recovery strategies. For AUT, it has meant laying off

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hundreds of staff (Hendry-Tennant, 2022), which has caused deep distress for many across the institution. It slowed the development of Māori advancement strategies, though others have managed to reach fruition:

- Piki Ake Kaipakihi Māori: The Māori Advancement Strategy, adopted by the Faculty in early 2020, which includes the Tuakana (big sister) – Teina (little sister) peer tutoring program for Māori students across BEL, based on Māori protocols of mentoring and support;
- The Māori Caucus, a committee of all Māori staff, academic and professional, in the Faculty, who meet regularly to plan activities and receive support;
- Creation of a website to promote and celebrate the achievements of Māori in the faculty (www.pakm.aut.ac.nz)
- Development of curriculum focusing on Māori knowledge, which eventuated in the Māori Indigenous Business Minor.

The Māori "Minor," a suite of courses available as electives, was developed with the approval of the Faculty Executive and through collaboration with the Māori Caucus to ensure the subjects would be founded on Māori knowledge and values and taught by Māori academics. The process began in 2020, but formal accreditation was not completed until late 2022. The Minor comprises the following courses and academic staff and includes their tribal affiliation:

- FINA504: Introductory Financial Management for Māori Business, taught by Professor Aaron Gilbert (Tainui), HOD Finance;
- MGMT604: Māori Indigenous Management & Marketing, to be taught by Dr Nimbus Staniland (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe) from Management (who left late in 2023), and Dr Megan Phillips (Ngāti Hape) from Marketing (who went on maternity leave in 2024;
- ENTR601: Māori Indigenous Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation, taught by Ella Henry;
- BUSS730: A Māori Indigenous Business Project, in which students would undertake individual research and/or practical projects relevant to their area of business interest. I coordinate the course, and, where appropriate, organize supervisors from amongst the other Māori scholars in the Faculty.

The courses are delivered in wānanga, day-long workshops that immerse the students in a cooperative learning environment. In the Māori world, a wānanga fosters networking, collaboration (whanaungatanga), and group decision-making, thereby reflecting a Māori pedagogy. The courses are taught on weekends so that the wānanga do not interfere with the students' existing lecture schedule. It also facilitates the enrollment of students who are not currently engaged in an AUT course of study. Consultation with the Māori business community found that this program would be attractive to those currently working in or with Māori organizations and who wanted to deepen their understanding of the field.

Whilst these plans are laudable, there has been no budget set aside for marketing the program externally, so enrollments to date have relied on internal

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communications to existing students. The first cohort of students joined the program in March 2023, the beginning of Semester One. The course being taught was Māori Indigenous Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation. The plans to offer the Introductory Financial Management for Māori Business course were postponed because of a lack of enrollments. In all fourteen students enrolled. Of those, only seven were Māori, and all but one of the others were from a range of BIPoC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) ethnic groups. During introductions, it was found that the non-Māori had enrolled in this course out of interest and because they wanted to study something that was not necessarily Western or Eurocentric. There was one non-Māori New Zealander of European descent (known as Pākehā in Aotearoa) who enrolled out of interest in the topic. The course progressed well, and 80% of students passed, with three dropping out for a variety of reasons, including work commitments and health issues. In Semester 1, 2024, the entrepreneurship course attracted 17 students, again only half being Māori students. The Management and Finance papers have smaller enrollments of those who completed the entrepreneurship course in 2023 and want to finish their Minor to complete their degrees in 2024.

Overall, these are disappointing results for the Minor, and there will need to be an extensive review, perhaps amendments to the courses and the content, as well as availability of teaching staff. Whilst this adds additional pressure, the Māori indigenous Business Minor continues to be extolled as an example of the commitment of the Business School to Māori knowledge and business, particularly for international accreditations, such as EQUIS.

Time will tell if the reduced staffing, and lack of a concerted marketing strategy, will continue to impact the program and its ultimate sustainability. There will need to be in-depth reflection and planning, and a bringing together of resources, human and intellectual, from senior executives in the Faculty to Māori academic staff delivering these courses, as critical components to support and build the program moving forward. What has started out with great bravura is encountering issues that will impact its future sustainability, including adequate Māori staffing, commitment to marketing, and decreasing numbers of domestic students enrolling in universities around the country (Gerritsen, 2024).

CONCLUSION

According to Banerjee (2020), decolonizing the business school and its curricula is more than merely ticking a few boxes to show respect for diversity; it must involve what he calls concrete actions, and he offers the following strategies:

- Including theory and case studies that amplify the voices that have been left out of business and management teaching and research;
- Changing hiring and promotion practices to address the underrepresentation of BIPoC;
- Supporting and engaging with communities of BIPoC who are already doing decolonizing work in or with business schools.

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Drawing on the above criteria, based on this case study, we can attest that the Māori Indigenous Business Minor offered by Auckland University of Technology is a genuine effort to include a Māori voice in business studies and the teaching of management subjects and research. Furthermore, it has involved bringing into the Faculty a Māori scholar who has published extensively in the fields of Māori and Indigenous business, management, and decolonization. This appointment is at a senior level, with a broad brief to support the Faculty, to better reflect the values of AUT values, tika, pono, and aroha, as well as to advise on and deliver curricula that are more meaningful for, by, and with Māori. This has involved engaging with the Māori community, inside and outside the university, in the development of the Minor. This was to be the first step in a process that would see the courses become a stand-alone Certificate in Māori Business. Adding a dissertation or extended research project could see the creation of a Diploma in Māori Business, both of which could be offered to non-traditional university students, e.g., Māori leaders, elders, or those involved in community development, with no previous tertiary studies. Those plans must be put on hold as the future sustainability of the Minor is assessed within a broader context. After the elections in 2023, a new right-wing government is fostering a political environment that is not so supportive of Māori language or programmes (Craymer, 2023).

Other challenges include the AUT Financial Recovery Plan, initiated in 2022, resulting in more than one hundred job losses in 2023. This was a traumatic process for many, no doubt leading to stress and demotivation. In turn, this may have been the reason why a number of Māori resigned from the Business School in 2023, with numbers halving in that year. Furthermore, the lack of a cohesive marketing strategy and associated resources may be the reason that enrollments were lower than expected. Taken together, these issues can be overcome with continued support and resources from the senior executive team in the Business School. It is hoped by all involved with the Office of Māori Advancement in the Business School at Auckland University of Technology that the steps toward developing more Māori knowledge curriculum, programs, and research will continue to make a significant contribution to decolonizing the school and the university.

The key lessons taken from this case are that if:

- There is a commitment to decolonization from senior management in the university;
- Indigenous scholars are recruited and adequately supported to develop and deliver decolonized curricula;
- There is a critical mass of Indigenous scholars across the faculty to facilitate the delivery of decolonized curricula;
- There is an appetite for learning about, incorporating, and acknowledging Indigenous history, culture, and knowledge in the wider society.
- There is a political environment that supports Māori initiatives.

Then, decolonization of the curriculum and the faculty delivering such curriculum might flourish.

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In the context of Aotearoa, New Zealand, that means that greater awareness of traditional and contemporary Indigenous knowledge, mātauranga Māori, will continue to be incorporated into the mainstream business curriculum, thereby contributing to the further decolonization of the business school and its curricula. However, in Aotearoa, the wider political context has changed significantly since late 2023, with the election of a coalition government, which has, in its first few months, enacted policies that some have argued are anti-Māori (Watson, 2023). These include dissolving the Māori Health Authority, rolling back the use of the Māori language, and ending the country's limit on tobacco sales (despite high Māori lung cancer rates). Thus, positive affirmations from universities may not be enough to countervail an aggressively anti-Māori government. Only time will tell if these positive changes, for the greater incorporation of Māori knowledge and greater respect for Māori ways of knowing, being, and doing business and management, will continue to flourish.

NOTE

1. Te Wānanga Aronui, literally means university of higher learning, Tāmaki Makaurau is the traditional Māori name for Auckland

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