Reciprocal relationships: identity, tradition and food in the Kīngitanga Poukai

He Manaakitanga: o te tuakiri, o te tikanga me te kai ki te Poukai o te
Kīngitanga

Priscilla Wehi^{1,2} and Tom Roa³

¹ Te Pūnaha Matatini

² Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, Dunedin, New Zealand

³ Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

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Abstract	Rāpopotonga
<p><i>He kūaha whānui e pūare ana ki te puna kai, ki te puna tangata. (Tāwhiao 1894)</i></p> <p>‘A doorway opened wide to the bounty of foods, to the multitudes of people.’</p> <p>In 1884, the Kīngitanga (Māori King Movement) instituted its first <i>punakai</i> (uniting of food sources) to feed its people. At that time the country was ravaged by warfare, which rendered access to prime food and water scarce to followers of the Kīngitanga. King Tāwhiao, the second Māori King, established the <i>punakai</i> to feed the widowed, the orphaned, and the destitute, and all who mourned the loss of loved ones in the war. Later re-named <i>poukai</i>, this institution continues to this day. A series of annual gatherings take place at Kīngitanga <i>marae</i>, the gathering places of the extended family who belong to that place, and who are responsible for each</p>	<p>Nō te tau 1884 ka whakatūria ai e te Kīngitanga te <i>punakai</i> hei whāngai i ana iwi.</p> <p>Haehaetia ai te whenua ki te pakanga, ā, korepatia ai ngā iwi o te Kīngitanga atu i te ora o te wai me te makuru o te kai. Nā te Kīngi Māori tuarua nā Kīngi Tāwhiao te <i>punakai</i> i tūria ai hei whāngai i te pouaru, i te pani, i te rawakore; ā, hei whakaoraora i te hunga e auē ana i te tini o iwi, i te mano o tangata i hinga i te mura o te ahi. Nō muri mai ka tapā kē ki te <i>poukai</i>, he kaupapa haere tonu tae noa ki tēnei rā. Tūria ai tēnei taonga ki ētehi o ngā marae o te Kīngitanga i ia tau, whakahaeretia ai e ngā hau kāinga o aua wāhi. He mea kōhi e ngā whānau o aua</p>

<p><i>poukai</i>. <i>Marae</i> pool their food resources to host the Māori King and his family, and to feed the people. The <i>poukai</i> is now an institution in itself with food at its very centre. We provide examples of traditional pre-European foods, as well as foods introduced after the arrival of Europeans in New Zealand. We discuss the relationships between the <i>poukai</i>, food and identity, and identify some of the issues that <i>poukai marae</i> face, as well as events and trends that have impacted and caused change. In Māori culture, <i>mana</i> recognises the reciprocal relationships between people, and between people and place, asserting that each has a responsibility to each other. Control over resources, and provision of traditional foods at events such as the <i>poukai</i>, is essential to the <i>mana</i> of Māori. We discuss the cultural value that <i>marae</i> place on their <i>kai</i> and how these cultural values are impacted by change. Finally, we comment on the sustainability of these <i>poukai</i>, and how the <i>poukai</i> connect to a continuing vision of</p>	<p>takiwā ngā tūmomo kai hei manaaki i te Kīngi Māori, tana Whare Kāhui Ariki, ā, me ana manuwhiri. Ko ngā tūmomo kai kei te pokapū o te <i>poukai</i>. Ko tā māua he whakatauirā i ngā tūmomo kai nō mua kē o te taenga mai o te Pākehā ki Aotearoa, nō muri mai anō hoki. He whakaaro anō nā māua mō te pānga o te kai me te tuakiri ki te <i>poukai</i>; he whakawhitiwhitinga whakaaro hoki ki ētehi o ngā take e pā ana ki ngā <i>marae poukai</i> tae atu ana ki ngā takahanga me ngā ahunga kua tukituki mai, ā, he whakarerekētanga te hua. Ki te Ao Māori, he mea nui te mana o waenga o tēnā o tēnā, o tēnā me te wāhi, ka mutu, mā tēnā tēna e manaaki. Hei tikanga, hei ritenga tūturu ki te Ao Māori te mana o runga o ngā rawa, me te horahanga o ngā kai Māori ki te hui pēnei me te <i>poukai</i>. Ko tā māua he whakawhitiwhiti whakaaro ki te mana ā-ahurea o ngā marae ki runga o ā rātou kai, ā, mē te pānga o ngā whakarerekētanga mai. Ka mutu ka kōrerotia e māua te taea o te whakahaere tonutanga o ēnei <i>poukai</i>, me</p>
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revitalisation and self-determination for Tainui.	ngā whakakitenga ki te whakarauora me te mana motuhake o Tainui.
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Te kete rokiroki a Whakaotirangi

‘The storage basket of Whakaotirangi (physically small, metaphorically colossal).’

The production of food is central to society, whether ancient or modern. From production to consumption and managing waste, food systems are part of human political, cultural and economic institutions (Whyte 2017). When the ancestors of the indigenous Māori people voyaged to Aotearoa in around 1280 AD, Whakaotirangi brought her *kete rokiroki*, a basket of seeds and plants, from the homeland Hawaiki with the deliberate intention of planting, growing and nurturing plants these in the new land. Whakaotirangi and others from the Tainui *waka*, a double hulled voyaging vessel, landed at Kāwhia; there, she trialled different gardening sites in the area before building a garden at Aotea (Figure 1). She tested the effective growth of her plants and cultivated her plantations to provide a sustainable source of food and medicine. Her method of growing *kūmara* (*Ipomoea batatas*) is still used today. The soil is especially prepared so that the *kūmara* can be grown in well incubated, raised mounds. The root of the *kūmara* is curled and placed carefully into a planned space. *Karakia* incantations are chanted, retelling the method and this history.

Whakaotirangi needed to prepare the soil, work out the best seasons for different activities such as planting, and the soil mix and conditions for optimal growth. Her garden, named Hawaikinui, thrived, and remains famous amongst the Tainui people of the North Island. *Kūmara* is a celebrated food that is still processed and cooked at many Māori gatherings and events, although the varieties that are now often used have changed. *Kūmara*, *taro* (*Colocasia esculenta*), *waikōwhitiwhiti* or native watercress (*Rorippa* spp.), introduced watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and other valued food plants still grow wild at Hawaiki although it has long been alienated from tribal ownership.

Figure 1. The Waikato-Tainui district of New Zealand with the aukati line of 1884.

Whakaotirangi's horticultural expertise is of such importance to the story of Tainui that it is detailed in written histories of the Tainui people (Kelly 1949; Jones 2010) and told and retold at tribal events and in particular at *poukai*. The foods brought by the new settlers – *kūmara*, *taro*, and *hue* (*Lagenaria sicarenia*) – are named in these histories, and details on their plantings included. The significance of food as more than just physical sustenance is captured in Jones's words:

*Te taenga atu ki runga ake i te kāinga o Whakaotirangi, ka kite iho i te mara kumara.
Ko te tangihanga o Hoturoa ki nga kai o Hawaiki.*

When Whakaotirangi's husband Hoturoa ... [captain of the Tainui *waka*] ... came to see her gardens, he wept at the sight of food from Hawaiki.

(Jones 2010 pp.54-55)

The commentary also captures the importance of ritual and the spiritual dimensions of traditional cropping, for example, in the purification ceremony from Hoturoa (Jones 2010, p.54) and the use of a *mauri* stone (Jones 2010, p.56), as well as the sharing of seed.

Together, the perspectives presented in these histories are consistent with what Huambachano (2015) describes as an indigenous Māori philosophy of food production of “Te Atanoho” [*te āta noho*] or the concept of the “good life” as a guiding philosophy.

Māori values around food resonate in the oral traditions passed down inter-generationally, in stories, songs, genealogical networks and histories, and sayings. The nuances of skills and knowledge associated with these valued foods are also revealed in place names that are still used today. Many understand that Piopio, a tiny settlement in the King Country, got its name from a small native bird (*Turnagra tanagra*), but others from Tainui

assert that its name commemorates the way Whakaotirangi prepared a particular kind of *kūmara* that preserves well if left in certain kinds of frost for a certain length of time. When eaten it has the same effect as those sweets that when placed in the mouth are initially terribly sour, so that people purse their lips because of the sourness, but then suddenly change to become sweet. Hence the name Piopio, meaning to purse the lips.

Whakaotirangi's story highlights some key points in Tainui relationships with food. Food sovereignty has been described informally as “our ability to sustain ourselves as First Nations people based on our Indigenous pathways” by Six Nations chef Rich Francis. (Francis and Rice, Interview CBC News 2019). More formally, through the Declaration of Nyéléni (La Via Campesina 2007), it embeds concepts of self-determination and relationships of indigenous people with non-human kin (also see, for example, Daigle 2017). Food injustice can therefore be described as a violation of collective self-determination over food systems (Whyte 2016). As such, food sovereignty supports indigenous peoples’ worldviews, rights and self-determination to produce food in a sustainable manner for today, and for subsequent generations. From a traditional Tainui view, and within the context of *poukai*, we have a relationship with food which asserts a responsibility to each other. *Mana* is at the heart of this reciprocal relationship. That *mana* isn’t about sovereignty or power. *Mana* is a recognition of the reciprocity in relationships, between peoples, and between peoples and places. Each has a responsibility to one another. *Mana* today is often misconstrued as a manifestation of power, as sovereignty. Instead, we argue that there is an onus and expectation within the relationship that the relationship itself is acknowledged, nurtured; maintained. That we look after the land, and the land looks after us. In this way, *mana* connects to ‘*te āta noho*’, encouraging and enhancing wellbeing.

In the tribal stories, the foods brought by Whakaotirangi (and grown on tribal lands) are strongly connected to identity and kinship as well as the communal systems of planting,

nurturing, harvesting, preparing, and sharing that have existed within Tainui, and other tribal groups, for centuries. Her gardens were substantive, hence the name *Hawaiki nui* (where *nui* refers to the size of the plantation). Encapsulated here is first the idea that her *mana* is enhanced: she was able to create gardens to feed her people. Second, using a Māori philosophical framework that incorporates central principles such as *kaitiakitanga* or customary guardianship, it becomes clear that *mana* encompasses wild natural resources and cultivated foods, is connected to place and genealogical relationships, and includes both native and introduced species within its realm. These *kaitiakitanga* relationships require reciprocity, or two-way interactions between people and the land, with harvesting a central component of this relationship for both wild and cultivated foods. Third, Whakaotirangi's story highlights the contexts in which we might consider the land itself. We live in contemporary landscapes that remain biocultural, yet where lack of control of resources is a barrier to traditional values. When indigenous peoples are excluded from traditional lands or access is limited, or when foods are scarce, this impacts on *mana*. Whakaotirangi's famous garden at Hawaiki is currently held in private ownership, although efforts are being made to declare these a Heritage Site. Finally, we note that the foods that Whakaotirangi brought are classified as introduced (and cultivated) species, and as such sometimes fall outside the context of species or ecosystem conservation plans. However, they have immense cultural value, and are considered by her descendants to be gifts from the gods. In short, *mana* features heavily in Whakaotirangi's story. Her story leads to questions about the place and value of introduced species in landscapes, and best practice management of species, ecosystems, and landscapes.

Access to and control over food sources supports indigenous peoples' worldviews, rights and self-determination to produce food in a sustainable manner for their times, and for subsequent generations. Wittman et al. (2010) asserts that this includes food markets,

production modes, food cultures and environment; Brooke Rice (Katsi'tsaronkwasi in the Mohawk language) described food sovereignty as “the ability to go into your backyard, have your garden, have access to the fish in the waters, any animals in the woods without any restrictions and legal limitations” (Francis and Rice, Interview CBC News 2019). In other words, foundational notions of food sovereignty include the right of people to produce their own food, encouraging sustainable systems, and supporting community control over land and resources (Nyéléni 2007; Ritchie 2016). Such local food systems and markets have flow-on effects for income, nutrition, ecology and culture (Pinstrup-Andersen 2009; Pimbert 2009). In this context, concepts such as food sovereignty and food scarcity, and the role of food to look after both kin and guests, resound throughout Polynesia.

Within Polynesia, food scarcity was a central cause leading to the migration through the Pacific. According to Te Rangi Hiroa, competition for food was a prime reason for migration from Hawaiki to Aotearoa, as illustrated in the story of one famous ancestor, Tamatekapua (Hiroa 1925 p.23; Alpers 1996). With population growth, people were stressed for foods, and their gardens did not produce as well as they should. Tamatekapua is remembered for his attempts to steal food. While in Hawaiki, Tamatekapua and his co-conspirator brother Whakaturia decided to raid Uenuku's garden. However, Tamatekapua realised that if they walked into the garden, their footsteps would be recognised, much as a fingerprint can be recognised today. He came up with an ingenious solution: to use stilts so that they could gain access to the desired breadfruit in the trees. Despite this ingeniousness, Tamatekapua and his brother were discovered, and a short time later, Tamatekapua left Hawaiki and migrated to Aotearoa. The story highlights the qualities valued in Tamatekapua: that he was clever, innovative, resourceful, cunning. He was a *nanakia*, a lateral thinker. All these characteristics are helpful on arrival in a new land, and relevant to concerns about food security. These kinds of qualities, of cleverness and innovation, can also be seen in the story

of Whakaotirangi. She came from Hawaiki heading to a new world and demonstrated the capacity to explore and experiment. Her forethought reaped rewards. We applaud her model as one that is fitting in the contexts we find ourselves today.

In Polynesia, food knowledge has been transmitted and developed inter-generationally through time and space (see also Altieri 1995; Berkes 2012). The successful movement of physical entities such as seeds, uses of plant relatives, and the transfer of plant names and ecological knowledge that recall knowledge systems with Pacific origins all point to clear relationships with environmental landscapes. Despite this, understanding indigenous knowledge of food systems, the relationship of this knowledge to food security, and the values embedded in sustaining communities with indigenous foods remains an under-explored space. Gorjestani (2000) and Sen (2005) argue that indigenous knowledge can make a substantial contribution to food security, and indigenous knowledge is also closely linked to sustainable use of resources that in turn support the maintenance of healthy ecosystems (Huambachano 2015). In this chapter, we focus on an institution that is central to the identity of descendants of the Tainui tribal confederation within New Zealand and supports notions of food sovereignty in a contemporary context; the *poukai*.

Mō te pani, te pouaru, te rawakore

For the orphaned, the widowed, the destitute

Poukai address the responsibility that those who are better off have for those in need, through the provision of food, and beneath that, food security from the land's resources.

Poukai origins link back to a time more than 150 years ago when the tribal peoples of Ngāti

Maniapoto and Ngāti Hikairo cared for the Waikato people. We may drive through the King Country district of New Zealand today and see the rolling farmlands and dairy cows that began to dominate the landscape in the 19th and 20th centuries after European arrival, but there is another cultural landscape which is less visible to the casual observer.

The King Movement or Kīngitanga was instigated in 1857 to provide strong Māori leadership at a time when Māori were recognising the challenges of a government that was seeking to gain land and benefit for new European settlement, while Māori leadership was under pressure and becoming fragmented. Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, the leading chief of Waikato, of Tainui, was anointed King in 1858 by Waikato and by other tribal groupings. In 1860 he was succeeded by his son, who became King Tāwhiao. This leadership was critical during the land confiscations and conflict that marked the mid-19th century, particularly in the Waikato region. Waikato tribal lands were fertile and rich, and during the first half of the 19th century Māori in the Waikato area produced a large portion of New Zealand's foods (Petrie 2006, pp. 261-274). Van Meijl (2009) has discussed the intertwining of the origin of the *poukai* with this history of land confiscations by the New Zealand government, who intended for European colonists to settle on these lands despite the opposition of Waikato people to sale. This conflict escalated into war, and Waikato were forcibly removed from their lands by government troops with the 'battle' of Orākau, and other conflicts in 1864/5 (Belich 1986). Waikato took refuge with other tribal groups from Tainui, both on the coast at Kāwhia and further inland with Ngāti Hikairo and Ngāti Maniapoto. An *aukati*, a border that excluded Europeans from entering these places, was established in 1865 (see Ballara 1996 for further details). Almost overnight, population numbers in these districts practically doubled, and this situation continued for 20 years. Through war, around 1.2 million acres of tribal land was confiscated, including the lower Waikato district (Ballara 1996).

Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāti Maniapoto, Raukawa and Waikato all suffered in the land confiscations. Many important leaders were killed, and the surviving leadership recognised a responsibility for the widows, orphans, and the destitute. In 1884, Tāwhiao travelled to England to petition for the return of all confiscated lands, asserting *mana Māori motuhake*, home rule. He was unsuccessful. According to Ngāti Hikairo, when Tāwhiao came back from England, he saw the plight of the people and instigated the *punakai* that later became the *poukai*:

Kua whakatūria e hau tēnei taonga hei āwhina i te pani, i te pouaru, i te rawakore.

He kūaha whānui e pūare ana ki te puna tangata ki te punakai

I have instituted this gathering to feed the widowed, the bereaved and the destitute, a doorway open to the multitudes of people and the bounty of food

The vision was caring for each other, recognising Ngāti Hikairo and Ngāti Maniapoto's largesse and their support for their relations, many in desperate need.

It is generally accepted that the first *punakai*, or *poukai*, was at Whatiwhatihoe, south of Pirongia in 1885, evolving from a number of earlier gatherings that were held to feed the people. The people at Whatiwhatihoe built a bridge across the Waipā river so that people could get to the *poukai*. The bridge was named Te Tāwhara-kai-atua, and the connections between food (*kai*) and the gods (*atua*) are embedded within this name. *Tāwhara* (*Freycinetia banksii*), is a liane that grows in the forest; its fruits are a delicacy of the region, reserved for the highest born leaders or *ariki*. The name of the bridge thus calls the people to share and enjoy the luxury previously reserved for the *ariki*. This is part of the philosophy of the *poukai* today – food for the king is food for all. As well, when people partake of the food

together at *poukai*, they provide a gift of money which is collected by the elderly ladies of the *marae* at the door to the dining room. Of this, a share is given to the *Kīngitanga* on the *poukai* day, and announced as the ‘*rau kai atua*’, recalling the leaves of the *tāwhara*, the bounty of food, and the metaphor of the *tāwhara-kai-atua*. On every *poukai* day, the morning is dedicated to widows, bereaved families, and all others who have suffered bereavement, to acknowledge those who have died. The people are thus fed spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Control of, and access to, food resources to do this are therefore at the very heart of the *poukai*.

Other foods are also used as symbols of *mana* within the King movement: in the coat of arms for the Kings commissioned by Tāwhiao, the *mamaku* (*Cyathea medullaris*) and the *para* (*Ptisana salicinia*) are represented, emblematic of Māori foods. The *mamaku* is an edible tree fern that was an important food in many areas of New Zealand (Leach and Stowe 2005). *Para*, also called king fern, has a large starchy, edible tuber and has been a delicacy in the Waikato and elsewhere (Cheeseman 1879; Wehi and Wehi 2010). In Taranaki, *para* was managed and cultivated, and grown in vegetable plots near homes right through to the 1920s (Roskrige 2007). *Para* is still plentiful in the Waikato district although it is now rarely eaten. The Kaipara harbour in Northland is named for the *para* as a source of sustenance obtained by Te Uri o Hau tribal group (Northland Regional Council 2017).

Hauanga, horahanga, o te kai

The spread in the gathering of food

Both land and sea were important for the gathering of traditional foods. *Hauanga kai* is the term used within Waikato-Tainui to refer to customary and contemporary gathering and use of naturally occurring and cultivated foods. In this context, Māori have strong cultural links with wetlands, inland waterways and harbours (Harmsworth and Awatere 2013). These are the habitats and spawning grounds for many species, including *tuna* or eels (*Anguilla* spp.), the young whitebait called *inanga* (*Galaxias* spp.), the *pātiki* or flatfish (*Rhombosolea plebeia*), and many kinds of shellfish. Wetlands are often referred to as *pātaka kai*, or living storehouses of food, but they are also under severe threat in modern New Zealand, with only 8% of wetlands remaining compared to pre-European times (McGlone 2009). In other words, more than 90% of wetlands existing at the time of European arrival have since been drained, largely for farming, and Tainui wetlands have been no exception.

Māori were aquaculturists in these wetlands, as well as farmers. Ngāti Apakura, for example, lived on floating island settlements in the immense Lake Ngaroto waterways and deliberately cultivated waterfowl and fishes there. The ancient lake was created through river dams. Ngāti Apakura built eel weirs, seeded freshwater mussels (*Echyridella menziesi*), and prepared spaces in the swamp where birds might preferentially nest, to protect them during the nesting period. Activities and cultivations were rotated within the swamp, to allow areas to regenerate. These freshwater foods were sought as part of the food gathering cycle of people moving inland from coastal areas such as Kāwhia and Aotea, who traversed the district to fish seasonally. A newspaper article (King Country Chronicle 1907) touched on the food value of the 6000 acre Te Kawa swamp between Te Awamutu and Otorohanga: “from the earliest times in local history. . . portions of it have contributed largely to the Maori food supply”, before noting that food procurement methods had changed considerably. Jones (2010, p.228) defined some of the change underway after European settlement in around 1800 AD, when he commented that

In ancient times the lakes, leisurely streams and the Waikato river never failed as sources of food and fish for the numerous tribes in the area, and the fertile lands yielded bountiful harvests of *kūmara*, *taro* and *hue*. . . But today the hue has given way to the pumpkin, marrow, onion and other introduced vegetables of the European.

Waikato-Tainui successfully experimented with introduced crop species on a large scale after European arrival, selling the excess. For example, the settlement of Rangiaōwhia was known as the ‘fruit bowl of the Waikato’ with hectares of peach (*Prunus persica*) groves, fruit orchards, vegetable produce, and fields of corn or maize (*Zea mays*), in addition to a flour mill (Hohaia 2019). These, and other extensive potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) and wheat (*Triticum* spp.) harvests in the mid-19th century are well documented in 19th century newspapers, and other sources (see, for example, Featon 1923, p.14). These crops were shipped to markets in Auckland, Sydney and elsewhere. Writers such as Featon noted the luxuriant plantations of the crops, including pumpkins (*Cucurbita* spp.) and *kūmara*, and the availability of wild pigs and cattle.

This was, however, a period of rapid change. In the late 1800’s and early 1900s, many of the leading chiefs of wartime died, notably King Tāwhiao, Wahanui, Taonui, and Manga (Rewi Maniapoto). This resulted in something of a leadership vacuum, which the new King Mahuta, his brother Te Wherowhero, and others endeavoured to plug. The explosion in Māori land alienation resulted in many large meetings convened in Waikato-Maniapoto focused on the questions of how to care for the people and to keep the land. Use of introduced foods can be seen in descriptions of events in this time period. Foods served at large events were sometimes described in detail in the newspapers of the time; at Hangatiki, for example, one reporter (King Country Chronicle 1910) wrote

“It is impossible for me to describe the excitement. . . the teams hauling firewood, and the old ladies gracefully cooking food on heaps of hot stones. A pleasant odour of cooked shark and Maori tobacco was wafted by whispering zephyrs to the nostrils of the pakehas [people of European descent]. It was in all respects a success. At no meeting for years has there been so much food. During the three or four days that the meeting lasted three bullocks per diem were sacrificed”.

Food at another gathering in the nearby upper Mokau valley (King Country Chronicle 1913) was described in detail, with “the meat and potatoes in the *hāngi* [an earth oven method of cooking], while the eels were roasted before a large fire in long strings”. A notable feature is that while bullocks and cattle are often recorded at these feasts, so too are traditional delicacies such as sharks (e.g. *Isurus oxyrinchus*) and eels, indicating that *mana* associated with food was upheld through both abundance, and the provision of traditional delicacies.

Extensive cultivations were commonplace. Another newspaper description of the past cultivations around the political and cultural stronghold of Te Kuiti, for example, stated that “the food for a resident four or five thousand, together with supplies for the large gatherings that were often held, was all produced within a very short distance of Te Kuiti, and practically all the hillsides not in bush were under cultivation fifty years ago” (King Country Chronicle, 1911). Until very recently, many people cultivated *taro*, *kūmara*, and other traditional as well as introduced foods for the *poukai* in their gardens, or in communal vegetable plots associated with the *marae*. These systems of communal contribution have been threatened by the rural to urban shift, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

Tunu i te kai, whāngai i te kai

Preparing food for consumption

Technological innovation in preparation and cooking methods, as well as the foods themselves, is a continuing part of our relationship with food, from Whakaotirangi's *kūmara* to new ways of cooking *hāngi*. *Hāngi* is a favourite method of cooking at *poukai* and many other gatherings. It is particularly labour-intensive and, as such, is highly valued as another way of socialising the *whānau* or extended family, enabling the aspiration for those able to care for those less able. First, a hot fire burns in a specially dug pit in the soil, heating large river stones (or in modern times, metal bars or even railway sleepers). Once the fire has died down, the ashes are removed leaving the red- most often white-hot stones or bars. Food which has been prepared in special baskets is placed on those stones or bars, covered with large edible leaves (e.g. *taro*), and/or sterilised sacking, buried beneath the heaped, replaced soil, and steamed for three to four hours, giving the cooked food a distinctive smoky, earthy, taste. Reference to *hāngi* can be seen in the quoted passages. As suggested there, the contents of the *hāngi* are frequently foods introduced by Europeans – pumpkin, corn, chicken, beef, pork, cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata*), potato - as well as traditional introduced foods like *kūmara* and *taro*. Records of large gatherings as far back as the 19th century mention 'new' foods such as bullocks and pigs. In this case the cooking method remains important, but the foods change. Nonetheless, innovation in tradition continues with contemporary experiments in above ground '*hāngi*' and cooking in metal steamers.

As well as the introduced foods found in *hāngi*, a range of foods that have ingredients from elsewhere are now staples at many gatherings (Rush et al. 2010), including 'boil-up', which typically includes pork bones and introduced plants such as watercress, *pūhā* (*Sonchus*

asper), and even sometimes dandelion or *tohetaka* (*Taraxacum officinale*) and deadly nightshade or *poroporo* (*Solanum aviculare*) leaves. Similarly, different types of breads such as *rewena*, *takakau*, and *parāoa parai* are now regarded as traditional by many (Rush et al. 2010), although flour from wheat was not available prior to the arrival of Europeans. This clearly displays the adoption and innovation of new foods within traditional contexts.

Toroi is another innovative food often seen at Kāwhia and other coastal areas of Tainui, relished by many visitors to the area. *Toroi* is a combination of boiled wild green plants and raw mussels (*Perna canaliculus*) that are bottled, and once opened are kept in the refrigerator <http://www.maoritelevision.com/tv/shows/kai-time-road/recipes/mussel-toroi> , and served without further processing (Dixon et al. 2008). Cooks frequently combine native and introduced foods. Thus, locally collected mussels or shellfish may be combined with native *tī* (*Cordyline australis*) hearts, but most commonly, introduced watercress or *pūhā* now replace *tī*. In this dish, cooks use hurdle technology, a combination of existing and novel preservation techniques to kill microorganisms (Leistner 2000). Many traditional foods globally use hurdle technology in their preparation, from cheese to salami. Fermented maize or *kānga pirau*, a popular food today at *poukai*, uses hurdle technology that likely evolved from knowledge of fermentation processes with native species such as *kōura* (*Paranephrops planifrons*) and *pāua* (*Haliotis iris*).

Despite the central role of food at *poukai*, there are few hard data on changing patterns of consumption. Rush et al. (2010) led a 2006 initiative in the Waikato and Ngāti Tūwharetoa districts to identify frequently consumed ‘traditional’ foods at Māori gatherings, as part of a larger health study on diabetes. Many Māori households now appear to eat few traditional foods on a daily basis, although participants reported more than 160 different foods that they chose to eat at gatherings, with seafood amongst the most frequent choices, especially at coastal *marae* (Rush et al. 2010, and references therein). Other traditional foods

that participants identified as part of their choices at these gatherings were *pūhā* and watercress, breads, *kūmara*, and mussels. Delicacies such as *toroi*, *kina* (sea eggs; *Evechinus chloroticus*), *kānga pīrau*, eels, *tītī* (sooty shearwater chicks; *Puffinus griseus*) and *pikopiko* (fern shoots, such as *Asplenium bulberifum*) were all mentioned by participants in small numbers (<10%). Although there is some bias in this study, because it excluded all households with diabetes sufferers, this study remains one of the few data sources of traditional foods eaten by Māori in contemporary times.

From the descriptions above, it is clear that many of the foods served at large meetings, including *poukai*, are from both introduced and cultivated sources. The role and importance of introduced species in indigenous food systems reflects global voyaging patterns, adaptation to changing circumstances including loss of forested areas, wetlands, and damage to marine ecosystems, and adoption of new ideas. Introduced species such as *kūmara* have been part of the cultural histories of Maori from the migration stories onward. The celebration and cherishing of species such as *kūmara* and *taro*, the discovery of native and then new introduced species as food, and development and application of new technologies are all vital elements of ongoing change within traditional contexts.

Hei kai mā te hinangaro

Food for thought

Even as traditional foods hold meaning beyond that of physical sustenance, so too the ability to provide them is more than a pragmatic problem. In 2010, Māori owned only about 6% or 1.5 million ha of New Zealand's lands in contrast to nearly 100% in 1840

(Harmsworth and Awatere 2013). Māori land ownership today is fragmented, and much of the current legislation alienates Māori from land and water resources. It is difficult to maintain reciprocal relationships with traditionally used plants and animals; in the western Waikato district, for example, Māori report harvesting plants from roadsides or public spaces such as urban parks (Wehi and Wehi 2010). Many wetlands and rivers are contaminated, resulting in restrictions on what can be taken (Collier et al. 2017). Access to many traditional foods is lost, as has been the case for indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world (see, for example, Whyte 2017). The loss of traditional foods from events such as the *poukai* has ramifications beyond material concerns such as cost or unhealthy eating, reflecting land alienation and loss of *mana*.

Within a Māori cultural framework, *mana* has specific meanings. The elders of Waikato and Ngāti Maniapoto talk about *mana rangatiratanga*, which focuses on satisfying *mana*, rather than sovereignty as expressed in the phrase *tinō rangatiratanga* which is heard elsewhere in New Zealand. The underlying understanding is that *mana* doesn't reside in just one person. Thus, the Kīngitanga is not about the King, it is about the responsibilities of the people to the King, and those of the King to the people, so that *mana* is both recognised and reciprocated. The provision of delicacies at *poukai*, and other major tribal events, is a critical element of *mana*. Each event, each *poukai* has *mana* and the tribal group hosting the *poukai* aspire to the ability to fulfil expectations in that *mana*. Much of this expectation is around food, its abundance, and the particular emblematic or 'signature' foods that are cooked and served. If this expectation is unfulfilled, the hosts feel the loss of *mana*. For example, the ancestor Ngawaero's people were famous for eeling, and celebrated *mana* with the different varieties of eel in their domain. When Ngawaero married the first Māori King, Pōtatau, it was noted that the visitors were not treated to these particular delicacies. Ngawaero was

embarrassed, and wrote a song still famous, still sung today, almost 200 years later (Jones 2010).

There are signature foods on every *marae* in the country that are strongly associated with that place and those peoples (see, for example, Timoti et al. 2017). Some foods are selected for certain types of guests, such as older people, or pregnant women. The host people take great pride in being able to provide their guests with the delicacies of the region on the table. At a coastal *marae* such as Okapu, shark liver is a particular delicacy, and *pātiki* another. At inland *marae* such as Pūrekireki, eels are trapped and prepared in particular ways for major events such as the *poukai*.

Apakura is the founding ancestor of the tribe at Pūrekireki, and the tribe take her name as Ngāti Apakura. The provision of eel, or *tuna*, connects back to the stories, the *pūrākau*, of her descendants; Apakura is carved on the *poumua* of the meeting house, an eel, Tunanui, above her. Apakura was known for her ability to sing to attract eels who would come to her on the bank. If there is a special occasion and no eels or *tuna* for guests to eat, the host people feel the loss of *mana* deeply. In recent times, Ngāti Apakura has had to buy eels, because of commercial over-fishing in traditional fishing grounds. What then, does it mean if there are no longer eels in the rivers to catch? The social significance and cultural meanings of food are damaged by the inability to provide such foods; these traditional foods connect the living to ancestral relationships, tribal identity, and cultural values that promote guardianship of the local landscape and all within it. The dynamic of those *tikanga*, or customary practices, and the *mana* of the people and of the place is most adversely affected. There is a deep dilemma here. To buy food from the shop (rather than providing food harvested and prepared by your own hands) is undesirable, but, undesirable as it is that your largesse is 'bought in', it is worse still to not be able to *manaaki*, or lay food on the tables as sustenance for guests!

In many indigenous communities, there is growing impetus, and often urgency, to revitalise the cultivation and use of traditional foods, especially in light of the epidemic of unhealthy eating that has hit many developed nations, including New Zealand (Rush et al. 2010). The struggle for collective self-determination over food systems, and its connection to protection and harvesting of particular foods and resources is found in many parts of the world (Donlin 2015; Hoover 2016). If food sovereignty is indeed to go into your backyard, to have your garden, and to have access to the fish in the waters, and animals in the woods, then ecological knowledge lies at the base of food sovereignty, and emerges from experience of the land over many generations. Direct reciprocal relationships with local ecosystems affirm core cultural values (Berkes et al. 2000; Wehi and Wehi 2010; Frank 2012; Turner 2014; Timoti et al. 2017). Within this context, impacts on natural resources from external sources are a major concern. Many Māori are concerned about contaminants in wild foods that are harvested, including organochlorides, heavy metals and other toxins, leading to research that brings together scientific and cultural knowledge and values (Ogilvie et al. 2006, 2010; Stewart et al. 2011; Dolamore et al. 2017). Ensuring waterways are healthy is another aspect of reciprocity, and one which is currently receiving a great deal of attention. Degradation of harbours and waterways through contaminant, nutrient and sediment inputs has severe impacts on traditional food gathering (Collier et al. 2017). The ability to procure and produce food within local territories and ecologies increases self-reliance and facilitates self-determination. These principles lie at the heart of the *poukai* and are of major concern to Tainui *marae* in maintaining *mana* from the past, today, and into the future.

For Tainui, the *poukai* cements the relationships between community and Kīngitanga, and has a social purpose that draws extended families together. McDonald's (2016) conceptual happiness framework emphasises meaningful existence through *mana atua*, a connection and commitment to the larger universe; *mana tūpuna*, strengthened genealogical

relationships; *mana tangata*, the realisation of human potential; and *mana whenua*, harmonious integration and unity with the environment. One of the key ways these values are expressed and manifested interpersonally is symbolically through the meaning and use of food. Food is similarly a key component in the conceptualisation of Native Hawaiian identity, as a way to express and access love, compassion, and comfort (Kuratini 2015). Notably, conceptualizations of well-being extend beyond the individual to include the reciprocity within family, community, social, political and historical issues and structures.

Despite the concerns outlined here that impact the vitality of the *poukai*, and of Tainui, there is also reason to hope. Many Māori children are surrounded by their Māori community, a community that reinforces their identity from before their first breath! At *kōhanga reo*, or pre-school Māori language nests, elders feed our children delicacies such as *penupenu* (mashed *pūhā*) and fish heads, foods gathered and given by the community. This history of community, food and identity continue today. The original concept of Tāwhiao was to feed the people, and to provide emotional, spiritual and physical sustenance at the *poukai*. *Poukai* are a powerful indigenous movement to heal the community and its needs through food, and through reciprocal relationships. Even when not all can attend *poukai* in our busy contemporary world, the reciprocal relationships of food, *mana* and identity continue to live in our communities, and the *poukai* stand testament to the *mana* of the Kīngitanga.

In the *poukai*, access to and control over natural and cultivated food sources enables, supports and renews indigenous identity and visions for the future. Yet traditions evolve, and the food is not the same as it was when the *poukai* began. In a recording of the 100th *poukai* at Okapu marae on the shores of Aotea harbour, Ngāti Te Wehi elder Wiremu Mahara recounted the history of the first *poukai* there, in 1897 (Te Waka Huia, 1997). Throughout, the expression of *mana* through food is compelling, and the foods on the table recall the spiritual, cultural, genealogical as well as physical links that the people of the *marae* have

with the flora and fauna of the area, and that place. For the *poukai* to continue sustainably, it is critical that reciprocity practices continue to be supported within communities, from cultivation, through harvesting, to preparation and the sharing with the community and, in particular, with visitors. As Ngawaero asserted in her song:

E kore au e aro iho ... he kaitata tonu i te huanui ...

I will not turn aside ... there is plenty of food (Te Hurinui 1959)

He mihi.

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