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Whānau kōpepe: a culturally appropriate and family focused approach to support for young Māori (Indigenous) parents

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Indigenous knowledge • young parents • research approach

Abstract

Young indigenous parents resiliently raise children despite ill-founded stigmatisation. The problems arising from pregnancy while young, intertwine with culture and contribute to poor outcomes and hinder provision of appropriate support. The historical impacts of colonisation and urbanisation on family composition and intergenerational support and knowledge of childrearing, aid in the explanation of the current disadvantages associated with young indigenous parents. An exploration of Māori (indigenous to Aotearoa New Zealand) perspectives of procreation and concepts of whānau (family, to birth) and childrearing values provide a cultural understanding of childrearing. This paper proposes an approach to conducting research with young Māori parents that confronts the complex challenge of being Māori, being young and being a parent. Being able to understand the actual lived experiences, needs and aspirations of young Māori parents will be invaluable for informing policy, research, practice and services that enhance their health and wellbeing and that of their children.

INTRODUCTION

Young parenthood is understood as contributing to poor outcomes across a range of social and economic indices (Arai, 2009; Bissell, 2000; Boden, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2008; Breheny & Stephens, 2010; Duncan, 2007; Furstenburg, 2007; Hoffman & Maynard, 2008; SmithBattle, 2009). This dominant mainstream construction of early childbearing as a social or moral crisis has resulted in negative stigmatisation. Despite the problems of young parenthood, many indigenous peoples continue to have children while young (Cooke, 2013; Johnstone, 2011; Mann, 2013). Rather than reaffirming young parenthood as problematic, exploring indigenous

accounts of childrearing may lead to further understanding of early parenting for indigenous peoples. Young parenthood may contribute to a tradition of childrearing for some indigenous populations.

Although young parenthood reflects an accepted progression of roles in many indigenous cultures, the continuing effects of colonisation have negatively influenced the way that indigenous communities themselves have been able to support their young parents. People working with young indigenous parents, providing services, undertaking research, and creating policy have generally operated within mainstream institutions and reflected mainstream expectations (Breheny & Stephens, 2007). An approach to young Māori parents needs to resist these mainstream assumptions and the on-going effects of colonisation and address the complex and diverse cultural, social, and parental realities of young indigenous parenting.

PROBLEMATISATION OF EARLY PARENTING

The age of having babies became a contested issue in western societies in the 1980s when the preferred life course trajectory (for women) progressively expanded to include finishing education, leaving home, gaining employment, getting married, and then having children (Arai, 2009; Furstenberg, 2007; Patterson, Forbes, Peace, & Campbell, 2010). Becoming a parent before completing all of these milestones (but most importantly education and marriage) was constructed as a moral and economic crisis. Early parenting was considered immoral because it challenged the Christian construct of marriage and family and uneconomical because unmarried women were viewed as dependant on state welfare. Unmarried teen mothers led what would become a trend in rising non-marital pregnancy and thus became a burgeoning interest (Furstenberg, 2007).

Researchers have attempted to measure the supposed risk factors, negative impacts, and outcomes of parenthood for both young mothers and their children (Dickson, Sporle, Rimene, & Paul, 2000; Fergusson & Woodward, 2000; Woodward, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2001). This has included educational under-achievement, economic impacts, health risks, problematic parenting practices, and compromised child development that are so frequently associated with young parenthood.

Previous research, through defining "teenage pregnancy" as a poor outcome, has contributed to the stigmatisation of young parents as irresponsible and immature for becoming pregnant in the first place. Secondly, choosing to continue to full term and keeping their babies (although abortion is also depicted as immoral) was also viewed as irresponsible (Fonda, Eni, & Guimond, 2013). Young parents have generally been portrayed as incapable. Research has drawn attention to abusive and neglectful behaviours towards their children, cognitive under-development, morally

and socially corrupt behaviours, and a financial burden on society. Young parents have been made to feel as though they do not have the right to be a parent or raise a child simply because of their age, which assumes that "good parenting" is associated with older (white middle-class and married) men and women who have a "natural" ability to parent (Geronimus, 2003).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, which ranks among the top 3 OECD countries (along with the United States of America and Britain) for teen pregnancy, starting a family while young has been constructed as an indigenous issue or a "Māori problem" (Marie, Fergusson, & Boden, 2011; Pihama, 2010; Rawiri, 2007). Young Māori are five (5) times more likely than their non-Māori peers to become pregnant and keep their babies (Families Commission, 2011; Kaipuke Consultants, 2012).

GOVERNMENT APPROACHES TO SUPPORTING YOUNG MĀORI PARENTS

The approach taken by government has a significant effect and generally influences the resources dedicated towards supporting young parents. Since the arrival of European settlers and commencement of colonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand, past government policies have heavily affected the ability of Māori communities to support their young people (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002; Mikaere, 2002).

Worldwide colonisation has had devastating effects on indigenous cultures and languages (Durie, 2003; Loomis, 2000). For Māori, it has included the active suppression of people, cultural practices, and methodologies by institutions of the Crown, the conversion to Christianity, and its accompanying repudiation of culture, (mis)education, and urbanisation (Durie, 2003; Mead, 2003; Royal, 2002). The colonisation strategies that targeted culture and language, education and children were most influential in affecting Māori childrearing practices and supporting young Māori parents.

Colonisation was premised on the belief that progress and development meant the rejection of Māori perspectives and the imposition of "proper" knowledge based on western frameworks (Mead, 2003). Crown policies of assimilation enforced the view that culture and language were irrelevant; Māori practices were actively discouraged and discarded and Māori ideologies were no longer perceived as valid (Durie, 2003; Mead, 2003). For example, the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907[1] prohibited traditional healing practitioners who were also the principle repositories of cultural knowledge and practices (Durie, 2003). This outlawing of tribal repositories meant that Māori ways of teaching, learning, and transmitting knowledge were heavily restricted, including knowledge about pregnancy, birth, and parenting.

1 The Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 was a prohibition of traditional healers. This legislation also made it an offence to practice traditional healing.

The mission stations set up throughout New Zealand from the early nineteenth century were another major influence on Māori childrearing. As part of their objectives to "civilise" Māori, missionaries targeted child-rearing practices (such as introducing physical punishment) and aimed to adapt the behaviour of both children and their parents. A system of primary schools (initially called native schools and later renamed Māori schools) for rural Māori set up by the state in 1867 only officially permitted English language (Higgins & Meredith, 2013) displacing the Māori language.

During the mid-twentieth century large-scale Māori migration from rural to urban areas further disrupted traditional patterns of child-rearing and family support (Higgins & Meredith, 2013; Rimene, Hassan, & Broughton, 1998; Walker, 1990). Māori relocated from kāinga (traditional Māori communal living) to live far away in urban areas with more employment opportunities, often leaving behind their extended family and cultural institutions (Rimene et al., 1998; Walker, 1990). This resulted in a breakdown of culture and identity, difficulties with mainstream institutions, widespread alienation of land, a weakening of tribal structures, and a loss of language, culture, and support systems that were once based within whānau and around marae (traditional cultural centre) (Mikaere, 2002).

Parents of young children found themselves dislocated from their relatives, living in unfamiliar and often cramped urban surroundings and facing new social expectations from mainly non-Māori neighbours and landlords (Higgins & Meredith, 2013). The extended whānau construct (generally made up of some 3 generations descended from a common ancestor) that had provided social and economic support was no longer the greatest social influence for many Māori (Durie, 2005). In these difficult circumstances, many traditional child-rearing practices and support systems either disappeared or were greatly adapted. However, despite these attempts to colonise Māori childrearing, there is still a strong tradition of Māori having babies at a younger age and having larger families than their non-Māori peers.

Despite a sectoral government approach to address the resulting socio-economic disadvantage experienced by Māori today (Cram, 2012), there remains a lack of a dedicated and appropriate approach, funding, and resources to support young Māori parents. The lack of dedicated resources allocated for research is a key limitation. A deficit approach to Māori, youth and young parents has also constrained a broad and meaningful investigation of young Māori parenting. A consequence of the lack of in-depth research in this area has been that policy developments in relation to support for whānau Māori and teen pregnancy have been grounded upon a Western construct of the nuclear family unit within western social, cultural, political, and economic determinations (Green, 2011; Morehu, 2005).

The support that does exist for young Māori parents generally seeks to do three things. Firstly, it focuses on the prevention of pregnancy (with sexual health promotion, contraceptive information, and abortion and adoption options), secondly, this support seeks to enforce "good parenting" practices (through a return to education, employment or training, attendance at parenting classes, and enrolment in childcare and health services), and thirdly to discipline and penalize young parents for deviating from the preferred norm of having children later in life through compliance and welafer assistance requirements. These approaches address only one aspect of the needs of young Māori whānau. Support and services for young parents in New Zealand is fragmented. Support has to be accessed through a wide range of agencies and services resulting in many young parents not receiving the care they need.

Most support does not take into consideration a Māori perspective of procreation, sexuality or teenage pregnancy, the importance of whānau in raising children, the actual lived experiences of young Māori parents, and the holistic needs and aspirations of the whole whānau. Where successful initiatives have occurred, they are generally community-based, under resourced and under-funded, and lack long-term sustainable support from the government. There are few services that are culturally appropriate, age specific, holistic, and value the role of young Māori as parents. The following approach to research on the experiences of young Māori parents attempts to address these needs.

WHĀNAU KŌPEPE: A CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE AND FAMILY FOCUSED APPROACH TO SUPPORT FOR YOUNG MĀORI (INDIGENOUS) PARENTS

Research and researchers have an important role in the production of knowledge and in shaping dominant social attitudes, social policy, service provision, and practices that shape the experience of young Māori parenthood (Cherrington & Breheny 2005). Researchers have been criticised for undertaking research using their own agenda (Arai, 2009) (predominantly white, middle-aged, middle-class with no personal experience of teen parenthood or indigeneity). They have also been criticized for using (western) research methods which have a deficit approach and do not take account of the importance of culture, a young person's perspective or parenting, and further problematises adolescent motherhood in particular.

Research with young Māori parents comes under the wider research agendas of Māori and of indigenous peoples. Indigenous struggle to maintain control over research emphasises that research needs to be initiated and controlled by indigenous peoples, conducted according to their cultural practices, and seen as beneficial (Smith, 1999). Research approaches have been established in Aotearoa New Zealand that take into account Māori knowledge and people (Smith, 1999). Māori cultural preferences, practices, and aspirations are central in the method, practice, and organisation of

these research approaches (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). Māori research approaches challenge the hegemony of the dominant discourse of western research by addressing notions of critique (of western constructions), resistance, and struggle (Smith, 1999). They reclaim space for Māori in the research paradigm by locating Māori people and experiences as the focus of the research and acknowledging the diverse realities of Māori (Cram, 2001; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003; Smith, 1999).

A Māori approach to research addresses the research issue from a uniquely Māori perspective and uses a wide range of methodologies, methods, and analysis tools (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). The approach is culturally appropriate and meaningful and should focus on producing useful outcomes for the participants involved. Research of youth has also recently undergone a similar change in focus to concentrate on the relevance, meaning, and benefits of the research to participants.

There is a need now to gather better information about factors affecting young Māori people's health and positive development to effectively address the issues and challenges faced by them. Young people require specific research methodologies that set out to privilege youth voice and provide opportunities for participation and development through design, methodology, and organisation (McLaren, 2002; MoYA, 2002). Essentially, when seeking the views of young people, research needs to give consideration to understanding their experience and realities, celebrating diversity, an affirmative approach, setting achievable goals, your own positioning as a researcher, and relationship building (Borell, 2005; Keelan, 2001; Ormond, 2004; Smith et al., 2002; Tipene-Clark, 2005; Walsh-Tapiata, Webster, Metuamate, & Nolan-Davis, 2004; Webster, Walsh-Tapiata, Warren, & Kiriona, 2005).

More recently, research studies have developed methodologies that address previous limitations, go beyond the focus on disadvantage and age in accounting for poor outcomes (Collins, 2010; Dickinson, Carroll, Keats, & Myers, 2010) and focus on the actual lived realities of young Māori parents (Lawton et al., 2013; Rawiri, 2007). This small but burgeoning field of research suggests that assumptions about the negative outcomes of teen pregnancy are ill-founded and only problematise and further hinder provision of appropriate support and services for young parents (Arai, 2009; Cherrington & Breheny, 2005; Wilson, & Huntington, 2006). Furthermore, these new research projects have an affirmative approach to youth, culture, and parenting and address structures which have stigmatized and excluded young parents from participating fully in society (Cardinal, Cardinal, Waugh, & Baddour, 2013; Larkins et al., 2011; Lawton et al., 2013; Quinless, 2013; Salusky, 2013).

For my doctoral research on the experiences of support for young Māori parents, it was therefore important that I consider the needs of my participants as Māori (Indigenous to New Zealand), as young people, and as young parents. Such an approach needed to be culturally appropriate and create a safe space to enable young

Māori parents to express themselves comfortably in their own diverse way. It needed to reflect and affirm the participants' Māori culture and practices (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003; Smith, 1999), privilege their unique youth voice and practices, (Borell, 2005; Keelan, 2001; McLaren, 2002; MoYA, 2002; Ormond, 2004; Smith et al., 2002; Tipene-Clark, 2005; Webster et al., 2005) and value their role as parents (Lawton et al., 2013; Rawiri, 2007). This approach was a further development of the research methodology utilised in my Masters research on Māori youth development (Ware, 2009). It has been tailored to research with young parents by being located within a Māori perspective of procreation, childrearing, and whānau support.

AN INDIGENOUS ACCOUNT OF PROCREATION: RANGINUI RĀUA KO PAPATŪĀNUKU

Creation narratives provide an explanation of the foundations of culture, social interaction, values, and customary practices (Royal, 2005). They are accounts of significant (historical) happenings that explain the worldview and subsequent key concepts for the people who continue to recite and re-enact these narratives to future generations. For Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, the narrative of the creation of the world and the primal family (Ranginui and Papatūānuku) provides a cultural perspective of procreation (Jenkins & Harte, 2011; Kiro, 2012; Morehu, 2005; Palmer, 2002; Tupara, 2011). Through our understanding of the narrative of creation we can better understand the ways that family patterns and practices are enacted among young people today.

Accounts of creation[2] usually begin with Te Kore (nothingness, chaos, the void, without sound, light or movement, where there was potential but as yet no life), the first of three phases of existence. It then proceeds with Te Pō (the nights), the second stage which is the celestial realm and domain of the gods and the source of mana (prestige) and tapu (sacredness). Te Pō is also a symbolic gathering place of the dead and is frequently referred to in whaikōrero (formal speech). From the darkness came the primal parents Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother (provider, nurturer) and Ranginui, the Sky Father (protector) locked in a firm, loving embrace producing some seventy children. The children had to move between their parents in eternal darkness and ignorance and soon they yearned for space, light and knowledge. The children (except for Tāwhirimātea) plotted to separate Papatūānuku and Ranginui. All failed until the task literally fell upon the shoulders of Tānemāhuta, (god of the forests, humankind, birds, insects, and animals) who successfully pushed his parents apart with his legs letting in light and initiating the next and final stage of creation Te Ao Mārama (the world of light and abode of human beings). After Ranginui

2 There are many tribal variations.

and Papatūānuku were parted the universe was created. The children remained with Papatūānuku (Buck, 1949). An analysis of this creation narrative highlights some key tikanga (cultural values) relevant to childrearing and provides an example of the basic social unit of Māori society, the whānau.

Tikanga are commonly interpreted as principles or values that determine a culturally appropriate approach (Durie, 1998; Durie, 2003; Mead, 2003; Royal, 2005; Williams, 2000). This definition is based upon the meaning of the base word tika as "correct" or "right" (Mead, 2003; Royal, 2005; Williams, 2000). Essentially, tikanga denote the Māori way of doing things - from the ordinary to the most sacred or important fields of human endeavour (Williams, 2000). They are a means of social control which help to organise behaviour and provide some predictability in how certain activities are carried out (Mead, 2003). Tikanga such as Aroha (unconditional compassion), Mana (prestige), Tapu (sacredness), and Noa (mundane) are illustrated in the Māori procreation narrative.

Aroha means unconditional love, affectionate regard and compassion (Williams, 2004, p.16). Love and commitment were the fundamental messages of Ranginui and Papatūānuku as parents (Jenkins & Harte, 2011; Kiro, 2012; Tupara, 2011). Even in their unwanted separation, they did not reprimand their children. The aroha and valued bond between mother and child is also illustrated in the whakataukī (proverb) "he aroha whaereere, he pōtiki piri poho" (a mother's love, a breast-clinging child) (Taonui, 2010, p. 192).

Aroha is most important when a child has tested the boundaries. For example, the whakataukī "Ko te mahi a te tamariki, he wāwāhi tahā" (the activities of children break calabashes) reminds us that the nature of children is to explore their world and the objects in it (Taonui, 2010, p. 193). It is the responsibility of those responsible for raising the child to teach and not to respond to inquisitiveness with anger or punishment (Higgins & Meredith, 2013, p. 1). An early European visitor to Aotearoa New Zealand noted the unconditional love he observed between fathers and their children in particular and the lack of punishment:

> The New Zealand father is devotedly fond of his children, they are his pride, his boast, and peculiar delight…The children are seldom or never punished…The father performs the duty of a nurse; and any foul action the embryo warrior may be guilty of, causes rather a smile than a tear from the devoted parent. The obstinacy of the children exceeds belief; the son of a chief is never chastised by his parent. (Polack, 1840 as cited in Taonui, 2010, p. 194)

Early observers of Māori society took particular note of what they perceived to be

different childrearing practices to that of the western Christian concept of the child being an object of their parents to be seen and not heard and disciplined as required. Aroha, as the ability to be empathetic is closely linked with a person's own sense of prestige or mana. Mana is the influence, authority, prestige, integrity, and power attributed to a person (Williams, 2004, p. 172). The children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, although embraced in a loving environment, still felt a need to assert their mana in order to develop. Without this determination to explore their full potential, the next stage of creation would not have been initiated and we would not have the world we live in today (Jenkins & Harte, 2011).

While every individual inherits some form of mana at birth, it is also possible to increase a person's mana by virtue of their actions and how they are regarded by others as contributing to the collective over time (Mead, 2003). Personal and group relationships are mediated and guided by the high value placed on mana (Barlow, 1991; Mead, 2003; Royal, 2005). Actions that diminish mana will have negative effects. For example an unhappy child is perceived as diminishing the mana of the parents in the whakataukī "He tangi tō te tamariki, he whakamā tō te pakeke" (When the (naughty) child cries, the elder blushes) (Jenkins & Harte, 2011, p. 24). On the other hand, mana can also be described as the creative and dynamic force that motivates the individual to do better for the greater good of the collective. For example, parents and those who were involved in raising children were motivated to teach and nurture the potential within children rather than punish and subdue them.

> ... with Māori a parent is seldom seen to chastise his child … freedom given children, made them bold, brave and independent in thought and act ... curbing the will of the child by harsh means was thought to tame his spirit, and to check the free development of his natural bravery. (Edward Shortland, 1980; 156 as cited in Taonui, 2010, p. 195)

A person's mana is integral to their sense of sanctity or tapu. Tapu refers to the sacred nature of an object or process (Williams, 2004, p. 385). It manifests as the spiritual effect of an object or process and provides caution and protection through a system of prohibitory controls. A person's tapu, like mana, is inherited at birth through their parents, which is ultimately derived from the divine Ranginui and Papatūānuku (Jenkins & Harte, 2011). Everyone was required to protect their own tapu and respect the tapu of others.

To balance the effects of tapu, there is noa. Noa means ordinary, common or free from restriction or the rules of tapu (Williams, 2004, p. 222). Often ceremonies and karakia (ritual incantation) were carried out to imbue an object with tapu, remove it or invoke changes in an object, people or the environment (Mead, 2003).

In the Māori world, virtually every activity, ceremonial or otherwise, has a link with the maintenance of and enhancement of mana and tapu. It is central to the integrity of the person and the group. Ranginui as the celestial realm is often perceived as the embodiment of tapu while Papatūānuku provides physical nourishment in the form of food often used to render something noa.

Giving birth is considered tapu (Rimene et al., 1998) due to its re-enactment of the first act of procreation. Karakia were commonly performed by tohunga during child birth to ensure a safe outcome. After child birth a ceremony was performed which helped to reinforce the association between people and nurturer, Papatūānuku (the land). The umbilical cord and afterbirth were returned to a place of significance, fixing the newborn to that place. The land then provided a tūrangawaewae (a place to stand) part of tribal identity (Higgins & Meredith, 2013; Rimene et al., 1998).

The procreation narrative of Ranginui, Papatūānuku and their tamariki exemplify whānau. Whānau (to be born or family group) is the basic unit of Māori society into which an individual is born and socialised (Williams, 2004, p. 483). The associated noun whanaunga is a blood relative (Mead, 2003, p. 371). The whānau is a simple illustration of whakapapa (genealogy or the process of establishing kin-relationships). Whakapapa originates with the primal parents Ranginui and Papatūānuku and their tamariki and establishes a kinship system that relates all living things (both animate and inanimate) to one another and to the past, present, and future (Mead, 2003). Whakapapa is inherited by the child through their parents and provides them access to, membership of and determines one's role and responsibilities within the whānau, hapū (subtribe), iwi (tribe), and community. Whakapapa also defines time and space as significant people and events are associated with generations and locations. The different levels of social groupings in whakapapa also reflect the procreation process (Rimene et al., 1998). Iwi is used to mean tribe but more literally translates as bones or people. Hapū is used to mean subtribe but also means to be pregnant. Whānau refers to the family but also means to give birth and whenua means both land and placenta/afterbirth.

Within whānau there are some significant roles and relationships such as male and female, tuakana and teina (senior and junior descent lines/siblings), mataamua and pōtiki (oldest and youngest), tīpuna and mokopuna (grandparent and grandchild), and whāngai (adoption). All have some degree of interdependancy and reciprocity within their whānau.

Men's and women's roles were differentiated although both were integral in the raising of children. The different roles are evident in the whakataukī "He puta taua ki te tane, he whānau tamariki ki te wahine" (The battlefield for man, childbirth for women) (Rimene et al., 1998, p. 28). Women are considered important as they are the bearers of all humans. The female womb is called "Te Whare Tangata" (The

house of mankind) (Rimene et al., 1998, p. 29). Women's primary role was to raise their child until they grew to maturity and independence (Barlow, 1991). Men were the protectors and providers and played an integral role in raising boys in particular once they were weaned from their mothers. Mātua refers to both parents (mother and father) (Williams, 2004, p. 5985) but there is no word or concept of parenting in the Māori language. There are many terms which can be used to describe childrearing such as to guard, keep, care for, nurse, look after and so forth but they do not necessarily assume or specify that the person involved in raising the child is a parent. Interestingly, the many terms for mother are also used to refer to aunties and are terms of respect and endearment to any older women who fulfils a nurturing role. Similarly, the many terms for father are also used to refer to uncles and are terms of respect and endearment to any older man who fulfils a nurturing role.

Tuakana refers to an older sibling or cousin of the same sex in an elder branch of the family (Williams, 2004, p. 445) but has evolved to include a more senior person or generation in terms of status, knowledge, or experience. Teina refers to a younger sibling or cousin of the same sex in a junior branch of the family (Williams, 2004, p. 410) and has also evolved to include a more junior person or generation in terms of status, knowledge, or experience. The concept of tuakana and teina refers to the mentoring or role modelling nature of relationships and encapsulates a sharing of knowledge and guidance within a symbiotic relationship (Mead, 2003).

Pōtiki is the last or youngest sibling (Williams, 2004, p. 9027) and is often indulged and expected to rebel. Mātāmua refers to the first, oldest, or elder sibling (Williams, 2004, p. 5753) and often infers responsibility (for their younger siblings) and some authority. Tīpuna or grandparents (Williams, 2004, p. 13659) or those of that generation would often whāngai (raise) the first grandchild (mātāmua), whose first-born status made it important that they be versed in tribal traditions and genealogies (Higgins & Meredith, 2013). This enabled the parents to work and provide for the family. As a result of this nurturing, grandparents were the first educators of the children, and in particular were responsible for imparting traditional knowledge to them.

Whāngai is often translated as to adopt or an adoptee (Higgins & Meredith, 2013). It involves the giving of a child to another member of the family (often to those who could not have children, or who wanted more children) to raise. Traditionally the child may have been chosen by the relatives (an honour and privilege) and were raised to learn a particular body of knowledge that the relative is responsible for. In some cases children were given to strengthen family ties. Whāngai maintained relationships with their biological (whakapapa) whānau as well as their whāngai (adopted) whānau.

As illustrated by these many significant roles and relationships, the members within a whānau and their wellbeing were interdependent with the collective. Children were seen as belonging to, and being the responsibility of, the wider collective. The natural parents were not the sole caregivers – child-raising involved grandparents, great-uncles, great-aunts, uncles, aunts, and older siblings and cousins.

> Their love and attachment to children was very great, and that not merely to their own immediate offspring. They very commonly adopted children; indeed no man having a large family was ever allowed to bring them all up himself— uncles, aunts and cousins claimed and took them, often whether the parents were willing or not. (William Colenso, 1868; p. 30 as cited in Taonui, 2010, p. 195)

This collective responsibility and these kinship ties ensured the safety and welfare of children, who were seen as representing the future heritage of the people.

There are many whakataukī that illustrate the role of the wider whānau or community in raising their young. "Matua pou whare rokohia ana; matua tangata e kore e rokohia" (while the carved figures of the ancestral house are found, the human parent may not be) (Mead & Grove, 2007, p. 288) means the tribe as symbolized by the carved figures of ancestors will always look after the child, even if the parent cannot be found. Parents were, however, to provide initial welfare such as breastfeeding and the other members the refining skills for life "nāu i whatu te kahu, he tāniko tāku" (you the parents wove the cloak; I/we provide the fine border) (Mead & Grove, 2007, p. 319). "Te parahako o te koekoeā" (like the egg of the long-tailed cuckoo which is placed in the nest of other birds to be raised), "ka mahi koe, e te tamariki moe pori" (well done, children who sleep near their relatives) and finally "matua rautia" (a child nurtured by many) reinforced the benefits of shared responsibility for raising children such as multiple positive attachments and a range of expertise (Mead & Grove, 2007, pp. 391, 164, 288).

These values for raising children are also demonstrated in oriori or specific songs composed just for children and recited by whānau (Higgins & Meredith, 2013; Jenkins & Harte, 2011). They explain the love (aroha) for the child, the child's connection with the whānau, hapū and iwi (whakapapa) and ask that the baby be protected (by tapu) and have its special qualities and potential (mana) developed.

In summary, an understanding of Māori childrearing can be found in the creation narrative of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. Within this narrative, cultural values relevant to childrearing are illustrated. Children are by whakapapa (genealogy) an embodiment of all those who have gone before them from whom they inherit tapu and mana. Children are treated with aroha in order to protect their tapu and develop

their mana. Children belong to and are the responsibility of the community as well as parents and therefore everyone has a role in contributing to the development and well-being of the young.

DISCUSSION

An indigenous account of procreation helps to explain four issues currently associated with early parenthood for indigenous peoples. Firstly, a prevention approach to any procreation such as teen pregnancy may not be effective if early parenthood and kin relationships are considered part of a continued tradition of childrearing and procreation. Secondly, providing socio-economic support to young indigenous people after they have had children will not prevent early childbearing nor improve the on-going effects of colonisation and disadvantage experienced by indigenous peoples. Thirdly, compliance with welfare assistance requirements further penalises young parents and disregards their right to have a child and stay at home and raise their child. Thirdly, the assumption that western-based institutions (such as education systems, parenting programmes, childcare and healthcare services) are able to adequately provide for indigenous peoples ignores the history of colonisation and the role of the wider family in providing support and the intergenerational transmission of childrearing knowledge and practices. Fourthly, the fragmented and sectoral approach taken by government to support young parents is in contrast to an indigenous holistic approach to wellbeing.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori childrearing traditions and tikanga must be the foundation of any approach to support for young Māori parents if they are to be effective (Herbert, 2001). This would include reflecting Māori realities and privileging Māori voices in the development of such an approach. This approach is culturally appropriate, family centred, and privileges the voices of the participants. It achieves this by being based on a Māori account of procreation and tikanga (Māori cultural values) relevant to Māori childrearing. Locating the importance of whānau as central to the research approach acknowledged the parental role of the participants as well as their interdependence within their wider whānau. It also acknowledged the role of the wider whānau in childrearing. Relevant tikanga formed the basis for all aspects of the project - being applied as a set of guiding values. For example, implementing the tikanga aroha facilitated relationships between the researcher and participants based on empathy and a common understanding of the love between a child and their parents regardless of their age. Mana acknowledged the participants rights to be a parent, to have access to appropriate support and care, to determine their and their child's future. Tapu ensured that all information was kept confidential and that sensitive issues were dealt with respectfully. Seeking the actual lived experiences of young Māori parent's ensured that it reflected their needs and aspirations and would produce beneficial outcomes for them.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of continued attempts to colonise indigenous childrearing practices, deficit approaches to prevent teen pregnancy and the mainstream dominant western construction of regarding early childbearing as problematic, indigenous people continue to have a strong tradition of early childbearing and larger families. This does not mean that there are not challenges for indigenous young parents. Colonisation continues to affect the social structures that traditionally supported early childrearing. The low socio-economic status of indigenous peoples has been shown to contribute to a range of negative health outcomes for both mother and child. The problematisation of early parenting as an indigenous phenomenon continues to marginalise young indigenous parents, hinders support for young indigenous parents and excludes them from participating fully in their communities and in society.

Nevertheless, an understanding of traditional childrearing provides an explanation for why early childbearing may not be perceived as a problem for indigenous peoples and why indigenous peoples continue to have babies much younger than their non-indigenous peers. Traditional roles and responsibilities within the extended family provided significant support structures that enabled early childbearing and larger families. This paper has proposed a culturally appropriate and family-centred approach that facilitates support for young indigenous parents in New Zealand. This approach challenges the dominant mainstream assumptions about early childbearing and highlights the on-going effects of colonisation as further hindering the provision of appropriate support. Furthermore, it discusses an indigenous account of procreation and proposes some cultural concepts relevant to Māori childrearing. Such an approach based on traditional Māori concepts will be useful for developing effective policy, research, and services that support young Māori parents.

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