

'Indigenising the Corporation' - Indigenous Organisation Design: The Dynamics of Three Contemporary Indigenous Organisations.

Date: Tuesday 14 October 2014
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Location: Room 208, Level 2, Te Ao Marama Building, UC Campus

Abstract:

This research outlines a contemporary issue concerning iwi development. When corporate structures are developed to manage Treaty of Waitangi settlements and collective assets they are developed in a unique indigenous context bound by cultural expectations and values that should fundamentally dictate the way these institutions operate. Indigenous organisations inhabit different realities requiring differing competencies from mainstream Western organisations. Post-settlement critiques have observed that tribal corporate structures have come to resemble Western companies and reflect Western values. This research investigates the contemporary phenomenon of indigenous organisations to build an understanding of their design, their organisational features, and definitions of success and how all of these are influenced by cultural values.

The research is situated within the literature of Organisation Theory and shall utilise an indigenous theoretical perspective, specifically Tribal Critical Theory, as a lens to view and interpret data. The research is comprised of a multiple case study of three indigenous organisations, Kamehameha Schools of Hawaii, the Sealaska Corporation of Alaska and the iwi corporation Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu of New Zealand. The three cases will build an understanding of the commonality of features and contexts of current indigenous organisations and thereby contribute new indigenous organisation theory. The study will relate these findings back to Western organisation theory to examine how indigenous organisations are different, or perhaps not.

Biography:

Eruera Tarena (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) is a PhD Candidate in the School of Management and is supported by the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre's Doctoral Scholarship Programme. Eruera's academic background is in Māori studies and his previous M.A. research focused on the dynamics of change in South Island Māori oral traditions. His employment background has seen him work in a variety of roles across Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu's divisions and subsidiary companies and stimulated his interest in the design and evolution of indigenous organisations. In 2011, Eruera was a fellow of the Ngāi Tahu research Centres First Nations Futures Programme at Stanford University, where he was first exposed to organisation design theory. This experience also introduced him to leadership from Nativae Alaskan and Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) organisations prompting his research into contemporary indigenous organisation design. His doctoral research aims to build understanding of the features of indigenous organisations and how they and their definitions of success are influenced by indigenous cultural values. In 2013 Eruera was the recipient of the Fullbright/Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Indigenous Scholar Award and spent four months in the United States at Arizona State University, the University of Hawai'i and collected data for his two case studies, the Sealaska Regional Corporation and Kamehameha Schools. Eruera is nearing the final stages of his research.