INDIGENOUS INSIGHTS
INTO HUMAN NEEDS
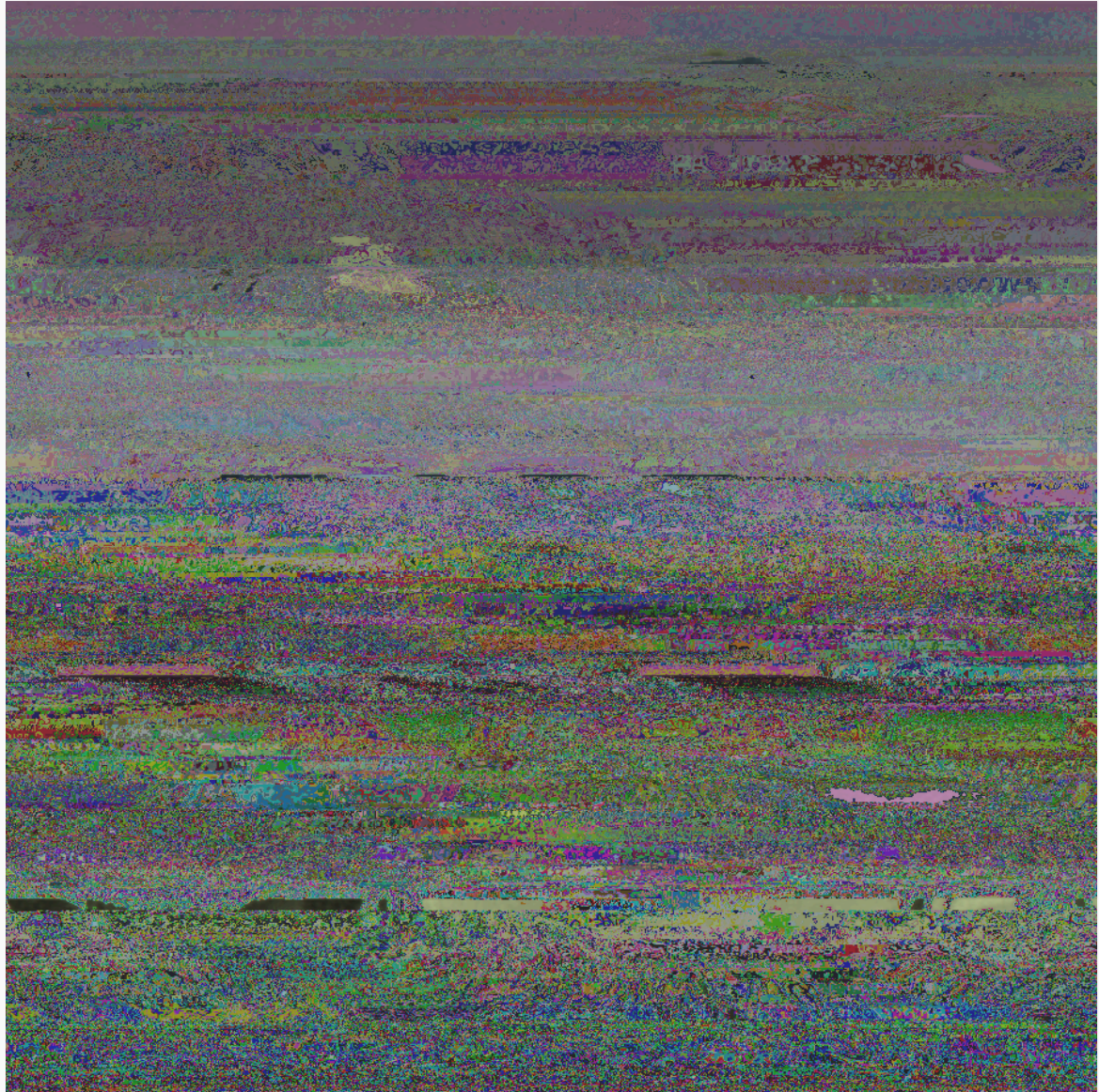
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Introduction

The human needs of indigenous peoples in settler states are not being met. In New Zealand and across the world, they are overrepresented in the negative statistics (Kukutai 2010; UN, 2014). Much work is being done to try to meet these needs both by indigenous communities and the states themselves. Despite years of effort, many issues across health, justice, education, and employment have not improved greatly and some are getting worse. One of the reasons for this, we contend, is due to the different worldviews of indigenous peoples and the settler states they live in. To explore this, first we chronicle the development of the western human needs model, showing how this was actually adapted from a First Nation tribe's cultural knowledge, we then explain contemporary human needs theory, after which we examine the state of indigenous peoples' pre-contact human needs, with particular reference to M ori, arguing that in general most indigenous peoples' needs were better met before colonization because their cultural 'operating principles' had been 'contextually calibrated' because of their animistic worldview to ensure this outcome. Then we outline the physical and psychological consequences of colonization, explaining how it resulted in not just the loss of resources but also in a severe disruption of the very cultural identity and worldview that helped them meet their needs. Finally, we argue that the human need of 'identity' can act as a shortcut for meeting indigenous needs as indigenous identity has both the operating principles and the drive to contextually calibrate these to suit current conditions.

Maslow and the 'discovery' of human needs

While others had begun examining human needs in a piecemeal manner in the decades before (Dover 2010), it was Abraham Maslow's 1943 paper 'A Theory of Human Motivation' and his following work that presented them in a comprehensive fashion, making them one of the most "cognitively contagious ideas in the behavioral sciences" (Kenrick et al. 2010, 292). Maslow introduced what he called a 'hierarchy of human needs', arguing that not only are there a universal set of needs all individuals have but they can be ranked, with a path that leads from the fundamental physiological needs, through to safety, then belonging and love, followed by esteem, then self-actualization, and, finally, self-transcendence (Maslow 1943).

After a chaotic and violent childhood, Maslow was driven by the desire to discover why some people were good human beings so he could help others reach this benchmark (Valiunas, 2011). This was his life's work and his mechanism for achieving this goal was science, in which he had a "boundless confidence" (Valiunas, 2011). It was in pursuit of his goal that he went to study the Blackfoot First Nation in 1938 (Valiunas, 2011). Before this, Maslow had been a cultural relativist

but during his time with the Blackfoot he became a universalist, writing that "my Indians were first human beings and *secondly* Blackfoot Indians" (quoted in Cullen 2010, 185). He was amazed by the remarkably high level of emotional security across the Blackfoot people and he believed that the reason for this was that "their culture did not erode their fundamental humanity", which led him to conclude that "Cultural relativism had to go. What all people shared in the best of their nature overrode even the differences between races, classes, or civilizations" (Valiunas 2011).

In sum, when faced with a non-western culture that showed greater emotional security, Maslow assumed that it must be because their culture did not erode the universal good innate within humanity to the same degree rather than the more obvious assumption: that their culture was better at encouraging and developing emotional security. What makes this even more incredible is that while he was studying the Blackfoot, Maslow came to realize that "many of the ideas believed to be universal in psychology... were irrelevant at best in the Blackfoot traditional cosmos" (Rouse 2014, 150). In other words, his change to a universalist view occurred when he discovered that many of the universal beliefs of psychology were in fact wrong.

Cullen (2010, 185) writes that it was this change from relativist to universalist that "led him to the univt (i 6 (f) 1

which in turn separates them, with the individual moving up each step in the hierarchy (Cross in Blackstock 2008). Certainly, "Maslow emphasized the interconnection of needs, [but] he also believed that some human needs were more foundational than others and that both the identified needs and hierarchal importance of those needs were valid across cultures" (Blackstock 2011). Another key difference is that the Blackfoots emphasized multi-generational community

studies (Akers et al., 2008; Bruer, 1999; DeBellis et al., 1999; DeBellis, 2005; Eluvathingal et al., 2006; Perry, 2000; Shonkoff, 2009; Teicher , 2000; Teicher et al., 2004) have shown that a poverty of love and safety results in adverse brain development, leading to "altered emotional, behavioral, cognitive, social and physical functioning" (Teicher et al., 2004). Neglect and violence in childhood causes physical damage to the brain with cascading negative effects on virtually every aspect of that individual's life, drastically impeding their ability to meet any of their human needs.

This research emphasizes how important it is to ensure that all human needs are being met as they are all interrelated, a poverty in one can have impacts in all others. Human needs do not exist in a

and fleshy… they are also exceedingly vigorous and active. Their teeth are extremely regular and as white as ivory… they seem to enjoy high health and we saw many who appeared to be of a great age". Similarly, in 1527 Cabeza de Vaca (quoted in Varnum, 2014, 78) described the Americans as "wonderfully well built, spare, very strong, and very swift". These views on physical health, particularly with regard to the hunter-gatherer life, have been largely corroborated by modern paleopathology (Cohen and Armelagos, 2013; Pool, 2012; Steckel and Rose, 2002)

In reference to their disposition, Las Casas (quoted in Zinn, 1980, 6) wrote of the Americans that "Endless testimonies… prove the mild and pacific temperament of the natives" and said they were "innocently simple… behave themselves very patiently… [and] live without the least thirst after revenge" (Las Casas, 1552, 6). Likewise, Camões, depicting one of the first recorded meetings between Europeans and Southern Africans, wrote they "were so gentle and well disposed" (quoted in Meihuizen, 2002, p. 29). Cook (1842, 187) said M ori "dispositions… [were] mild and gentle" and that the Aboriginals "may appear to some to be the most wretched upon the earth; but in reality they are far 6 (le) -3 -50 e -90 3e (t e)50 0 (t) -8 (o) -8 (o) --90 3-3 ( ) -50 e -90 .3 (-9.3 (-9.3 (t) 12 (-90 (

stood up well to twenty years of additional research." Despite criticism (see Ingold, 2000; Kaplan, 2000), it is felt that the thesis provides an important core insight: indigenous peoples are able to meet their needs through a form of 'contextual calibration'. That is, what we might call their culture's 'operating principles' are tailored to meet their collective needs in a way that is balanced by the capacity of the wider environment to sustain these needs in perpetuity. But what is the source of these principles?

We argue that they emerge from the worldview of the indigenous peoples of America, Asia, Australasia, and Africa, who, for the large part were, and in some cases remain, animist (Degler, 1991; Harvey, 2005). Animism is not, as has been framed by anthropologists, a primitive belief that both human and nonhuman entities possess a soul (Tylor, 1871; Bird-David, 1999), but rather is an inherently relational cognitive orientation that views the world as one of reciprocal and contextual interactions within an ecosystem of human and nonhuman subjects (Ingold, 2006). Animists believe that the nonhuman entities (from moose to mountain, rat to river) that they interact with are "active subjects in their world rather than passive objects and, as a consequence, they see humans as a part of reality, not apart from it, embedded in a network of ever-changing

Willerslev , 2007; Bai, 2009). This fundamentality of the animist worldview is possibly why Maslow's needs were accepted in the west despite a lack of empirical evidence.

Animist operating principles – the fundamental expressions of the animist worldview as a guide to existence – show how this relational cognitive orientation helps ensure needs are met (Goldberg,

- Gender equality: balanced, if often distinct, gender roles with limited gender hierarchy (Ackerman, 2003; Bonvillian, 1989; Boyer et al., 2015; Jenkins and Mountain Harte, 2011; Klein and Ackerman, 1995; Leacock, 1983; Tonkinson, 2000)

- Synchronized with nature: actively interacted with environment, had mechanisms in place to ensure long-term sustainability, often involving a sense of a shared bond and resultant guardianship (De Freitas and Perry, 2012; Ingold, 2000; Gammage, 2011; Trosper, 2009).

- Overarching focus on harmony: a foundational principle that prioritizes an equilibrium of being (Boyer et al., 2015; Hodge et al., 2009; Mead, 2003; Porter, 2007; Rice 2005).

These operational principles, from which a range of culturally-specific values are derived, are all seen as ensuring human needs are well met as they serve to regulate outcomes by limiting power, encouraging participation, maintaining an equilibrium through a unified outlook, providing an expanded provision of love and security, reducing hierarchies, and ensuring resources are equally shared and are not overly depleted.

It may appear that the above is arguing for a romanticized Rousseauian view of indigenous peoples and it is important not to allow this to happen. Clearly, there is a difference between having principles and putting them into practice and it is certain that different indigenous societies varied

The common principles outlined above came about because of the calibrating capacity that the animist worldview enables; we believe that animist societies will generally develop principles that ensure that they operate in equilibrium with each other and the wider environment (Ingold, 2000; Sullivan, 2013). There has been great contention about whether animists were 'ecological noble savages' (see Hames 2007 for coverage of this debate), it is important to stress that we are not arguing that they have always been perfect custodians of the environment, as the record of extinctions they caused contravenes this – though they have been accused of more than they have likely perpetrated (Westaway et al. 2017) – but that their worldview enables, even forces, them to develop a set of operating principles which takes their relationships with each other and the wider world into account in a manner that the modernist worldview cannot and does not. Furthermore, these extinctions are often used to disingenuously discredit indigenous peoples. As Belich (1996) explains, while Maori were responsible for the extinction of a number of species as well as a large amount of deforestation, this should not be used to completely denigrate their environmentalist credentials as compared to the small Pacific Islands from which they came New Zealand would have appeared as infinite and once the impact of their actions became apparent they made concerted conservation efforts – in other words, they need to calibrate to their new context. While there is an element of 'sacred ecology' to this argument (Hornborg, 2008), it is more fundamental and pragmatic than this: the animist worldview facilitates an understanding of reality that encourages mutual sustainability because animists see their own wellbeing as intrinsically connected to the wellbeing of the wider world. In game theory parlance, animists see the nexus of

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from them, but have also lost the cognitive orientation and the operating principles that ensured they lived in a manner calibrated to their context. Both their physical and psychological capacity to meet their needs has been compromised, they have become "conscri

meaning that it can never be fully utilized. Nor has it, to our knowledge, been applied to human needs, aside from by Cross.

The risk of not specifically emphasizing animism itself is not just theoretical either. Many individuals who reconnect with their indigenous identity do so in a way that is rigid and backward-looking, focusing on an inflexible, frequently ersatz, 'traditional' version of identity that has often been influenced by the colonial narrative (Hogan, 2000; Reid and Rout 2017). Thus, they will insist that the values of their culture are enforced in rigid and inflexible manner as they want to ensure that they are as close to the pre-contact ideal as possible. In so doing, the fundamental function of contextual calibration is lost. It no longer serves as a means of mediating needs based on circumstance but rather locks values that may no longer be relevant into place, for the reality is that the current circumstances of most indigenous peoples are vastly different from those under which the principles were developed. Only by embracing the underlying animist worldview can the full utility of contextual calibration be unlocked and utilized.

We believe that an overt awareness of animism is critical in ensuring that the full benefit is derived because the worldview delivers the essential understanding that existence is a non-zero sum game, that relationships should be based on respect, and that contextual calibration is vital. In short, while reconnecting with cultural identity can help overcome the trauma of colonization, re-embedding, or reinforcing, the animist cognitive orientation can actually make indigenous peoples see reality in a fundamentally more useful manner that can help them meet their needs. To see the world as one occupied by subjects whose actions influence and shape you and, in turn, who are influenced and shaped by your actions is an empowering understanding of reality, one that has enabled numerous animist cultures to ensure that the full spectrum of human needs are met. As

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