



Decolonising our cities

A VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON SCIENCE TEACHING RESOURCE

“TOI TU TE WHENUA – WHATU NGARO
NGARO TE TANGATA

AS PEOPLE PASS ON – THE LAND WILL
ALWAYS REMAINS”

WHO?



A collaboration between Victoria University of Wellington and Ngāti Toa, led by Dr Rebecca Kiddle.

WHAT IS DECOLONISATION?



When one nation is colonised by another, its development is driven by the culture of the coloniser rather than the original peoples. This process is often violent and tries to dispossess people of their land, culture, identity and practices.”

Decolonisation is the process through which an indigenous people are able to reconnect with their identity and have greater control of their nation’s development. It requires a shift not just in what actions are taken, but also in how people think. This process can have positive results for not only the indigenous people, but for the entire community.

Consider something like education. Aotearoa’s education system is almost entirely modelled around western ideas of how teaching and learning should take place. Many New Zealanders, both Pākehā and Māori, would be unable to describe how education would happen in a Māori context because of how ingrained our ideas are of how school should work despite the existence of kohanga and kura kaupapa schools. This applies to most aspects of our society.

DECOLONISING OUR CITIES?



Urban planning and design is largely done through the lens of eurocentric values rather than through the values of the indigenous people. Private land ownership is favoured over other forms of ownership, and communal spaces are designed with predominantly western ideas. The original names of locations are replaced by colonial ones. Aotearoa is a very good example of this. Despite all of our major cities being built on the sites of pā and kāinga, there is very little evidence of Māori values being included in their design. Some aspects of decolonisation are beginning to take place, for example the renaming of Wellington’s ‘Tinakori Hill’ to its original ‘Te Ahumairangi’, but there is still a lot of work to be done to better represent Māori values in our urban design.

IMAGINING DECOLONISED CITIES



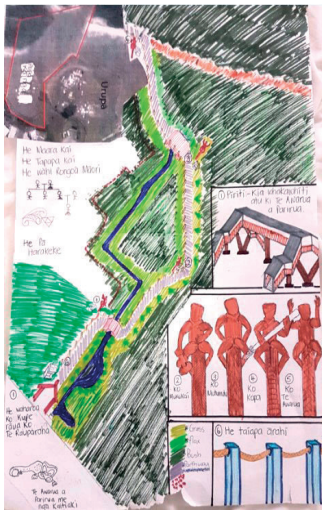
The ‘Imagining Decolonised Cities’ competition was launched, encouraging people to imagine how two sites in Porirua could look if they were designed with Māori values rather than a colonial ones. Over forty submissions were received, offering a range of perspectives on what a decolonised city could look like.

The submissions and brief for ‘Imagining Decolonised Cities’ can be found at www.idcities.co.nz

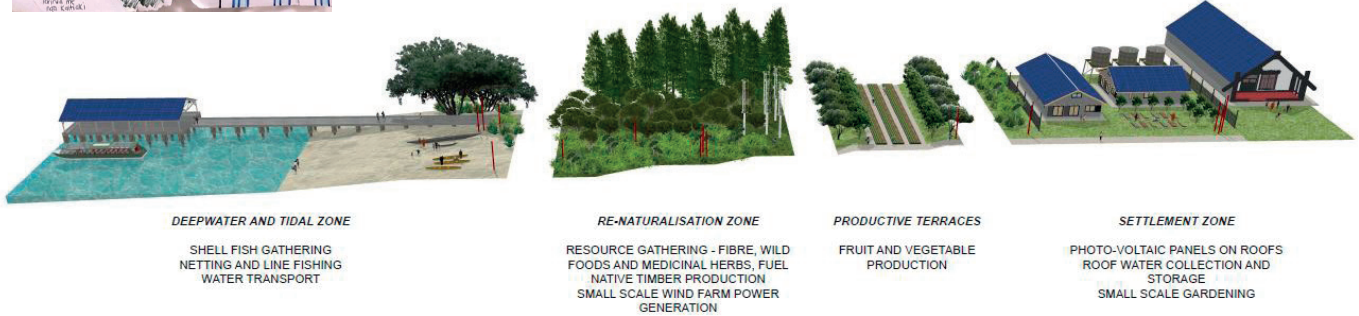
IMAGINING YOUR DECOLONISED CITY

Imagining a decolonised city is an opportunity for non-Māori to engage with Māori culture to challenge any generalisations or assumptions they might have.

However, one of the most important tasks that any urban designer should undertake is consultation – meeting and including the various communities and populations that live in the area. This is also an important task for researchers, who will find their results are much stronger when placed within the context of the place they’re investigating.



- Take a look at some of the submissions to the competition. What are some of the central ideas the shape some of these entries?
- Research your local area.
 - Was it ever inhabited by Māori either permanently or temporarily?
 - How have Māori historically used the area?
 - How has the area been changed by colonisation?
- Consult with local iwi. What are their values? What are the overarching principles that they would want to see reflected in how the land is used?



DEEPWATER AND TIDAL ZONE

SHELL FISH GATHERING
NETTING AND LINE FISHING
WATER TRANSPORT

RE-NATURALISATION ZONE

RESOURCE GATHERING - FIBRE, WILD
FOODS AND MEDICINAL HERBS, FUEL
NATIVE TIMBER, PRODUCTION
SMALL SCALE WIND FARM POWER
GENERATION

PRODUCTIVE TERRACES

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE
PRODUCTION

SETTLEMENT ZONE

PHOTO-VOLTAIC PANELS ON ROOFS
ROOF WATER COLLECTION AND
STORAGE
SMALL SCALE GARDENING

DECOLONISING AOTEAROA

Decolonisation can sometimes be imagined as a ‘What if’ question. What if Aotearoa hadn’t been colonised? How would society and technology have developed over time? Alternatively, how could we have Māori values more equally represented in already existing cities? To explore this question, we need to consider a number of things.

- What resources are readily available in New Zealand?

- What are the major cultural differences between Māori and European societies?
- What kinds of pressures would the different populations of people face?

The answers to these questions will vary between iwi and hapū, as Māori were and are not one homogenous culture.

- Using an appropriate medium, draft out a concept of what Aotearoa would look like if it had developed without colonisation?

EXPLORING DECOLONISATION WORLDWIDE

- What are some significant international design projects, past or present, that have clear decolonisation themes?
- The Marvel film, ‘Black Panther’ is considered to have very strong decolonisation themes. What are they?

- The UN describes that the process of decolonisation involves the coloniser allowing the indigenous people self-determination. How has decolonisation actually taken place in practice in Aotearoa New Zealand to date?