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**Arguing for the spirit in the language of the mind:  
a Māori practitioner's view of research and  
science**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at Massey University**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the ways that colonisation has resulted in Māori being cast as different and the other in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It challenges perceptions of relationships between Māori and western knowledge and between science and practice, drawing on a range of theorists, scholarly writings and multiple research and evaluation projects. The study examines how these perceptions, and the definitions arising from them, tend to compartmentalise Māori knowledge and research and, in doing so, serve non-Māori agendas more than they serve Māori aspirations. The thesis looks at the impacts that the world of the coloniser has had on our ways of knowing and ways of practising. Through illustrating initiatives that operate within Māori paradigms and collaborations between Māori and non-Māori, the development of equitable relationships is explored. Key findings are the need for a more inclusive understanding of knowledge and research practice in order to reframe the way we (coloniser and colonised) look at and express our understandings of the world and how these might be operationalised through research relationships. Part of the contribution of this thesis is to provide a framework for more equitable research relationships, focusing on non-Māori development. This is suggested as a counter to the constant examination and defining of Māori as different and in need of development.

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*Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships:*

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*Natural allies: a Māori take on ecohealth* was funded in part through Health Research Council of New Zealand. I would like to acknowledge, in particular, the knowledge and support of colleague, Tim McCreanor in discussing the ideas in this paper. The reflections contained in this paper are made in recognition of the long history of knowledge and diversity of Māori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, and other indigenous peoples.

## **Authorship**

The candidate is the sole author of four of the six papers and first author on two.

Moewaka Barnes, H., McCreanor, T. and Huakau, J. *Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships*. The candidate conceptualised, planned, drafted and finalised the paper. Tim McCreanor assisted with refining the survey in relation to Māori, Treaty and resource items, discussed the data and analysis and contributed to the final draft. John Huakau, statistician, provided the data and analyses of the relevant items and read the final draft.

Moewaka Barnes, H., Borell, B., Edwards, S. and McCreanor, T. (2008) *Epistemological domination: social science research ethics in Aotearoa*. In Mertens, D. and Ginsberg, P. (Eds) *Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. London: Sage. In press. The candidate conceptualised, planned, provided case materials, drafted and revised this paper for publication; Tim McCreanor provided background literature reviews, assisted with drafting and revision; Shane Edwards provided case and conceptual materials; and Belinda Borell contributed to conceptual development and final revisions.

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## Preface

My journey as a Māori woman in writing this doctorate has encompassed feminist experiences and critiques in more ways than one. I wrote at home, at work, at T-ball, Chipmunks, Lollipop Land, in the early hours of the morning at the kitchen table, waiting for my daughter outside her primary school, at my mothers, in hotel rooms, at the hospital and other places too numerous to remember. My experiences reminded me of a Room of One's Own by Virginia Woolf, which I studied many years ago and can now more fully appreciate. Like the space fought for by Kaupapa Māori, having a Room of One's Own, is for me, physical, mental and spiritual. The physical is fairly obvious, the mental involves the space to think and focus and the spiritual is about the right and drive to do so; these have all presented many challenges.

As I wrote these papers I became increasingly aware of the words behind the words. It is written in English (or with translations provided) for a largely academic audience. This had many facets. Information was presented in language appropriate to this audience and arguments were couched in terms that would hopefully present the issues and persuade the reader. I was aware that the dominant scientific paradigm has little place for that which is not considered to be evidence based. For example, wairua<sup>1</sup> is presented and contextualised to make it as palatable as possible to 'scientific' audiences. However, wairua is what I believe gives us the strength to survive and to meet challenges. Without wairua why would I bother to do any of this? Wairua is the most important and the least visible force in these papers.

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<sup>1</sup> Interpretations of Māori words and concepts are included at the end of the thesis.

Two of the papers in this thesis have been published and one is in press.

Moewaka Barnes, H. (2006) *Transforming Science: How Our Structures Limit Innovation*. Social Policy Journal of New Zealand, 29, 1-16.

Moewaka Barnes, H., Borell, B., Edwards, S. and McCreanor, T. (2009) *Epistemological domination: social science research ethics in Aotearoa*. In Mertens, D. and Ginsberg, P. (Eds) *Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. London: Sage. In press.

Moewaka Barnes, H. (2003) *Māori and Evaluation: Some Issues to Consider*, in Lunt, McKegg & Davidson (eds), *Evaluation: A New Zealand Reader*. Pearson Press.

# Introduction

## Aims and objectives

As a social science practitioner of many years, I have both listened and contributed to discussions on Kaupapa Māori, appropriate methods, tikanga, the nature of science and knowledge and what is authentic in terms of Māori and Māori approaches. This doctorate distils and elaborates on my contribution to ongoing debates. It is an attempt to clarify and record my conceptualisation and approach at this point in time. The major challenges I have encountered have been the tensions between succinctly and logically expressing myself without arguing for an approach or theory that definitively describes *the right way, the Māori way*; my main point here is that there are many ways and nothing is as simple as it sounds.

The aim of this thesis is to reflect on and critically examine some of the key issues and practices that have arisen in my work on multiple research and evaluation projects, in order to contribute to Māori research theory and practice. This has involved examining and articulating the current and past climate in which Māori knowledge and science has been conceptualised, with reference to Māori paradigms and approaches and how Māori position themselves and are positioned in relation to research relationships and knowledge.

My objectives were to:

- examine and challenge how we (Māori and non-Māori) view Māori knowledge and the place of Māori contributions;

- challenge the privileging of some worldviews, methodologies and methods over others;
- examine the roles, responsibilities and processes of research practice and use in relation to Māori and non-Māori;
- examine how Māori are grappling with and carrying out research and practice within Māori worldviews.

This thesis contains six chapters; each consisting of published or submitted papers that examine aspects of the objectives stated above and, together, contribute to the overall aim of the thesis. I have drawn on a range of documents, specific research experiences, structured and unstructured discussions, attendance and presentations at hui and conferences, critiques of my ideas and writings and a lot of thinking and rethinking. I provide a background to the study and introduce each chapter, explaining the particular arguments and challenges that each addresses. These move from the first two chapters, which examine how Māori and non-Māori define and legitimate Māori knowledge and science, to an exploration of ethical processes and relationship issues in the following chapters, concluding with a look at relationships between environments and health and the way that broad knowledge bases and approaches can come together. Finally I discuss key points, the challenges and opportunities that this study has presented and suggest some ways forward.

## **What's your theory?**

### ***Being a Māori academic***

For Māori, as a people who were colonised, describing ourselves, our processes and the significance of our taonga is part of a process of validating, making visible and asserting the importance of the survival, recognition and practice of these things. However, it is also a process common to colonised people that we constantly name and describe ourselves, and are named and described, in terms of how we differ from the norms and practices of the dominant culture. On the other hand, hegemonic, dominant groups, such as non-Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand are rarely in the position of having to name their identity, their knowledge or their science from their position as Pākehā.

In the academy, where hegemonic norms are firmly entrenched, there is a commonplace requirement to name one's discipline and theoretical framework. Unsurprisingly, there are a number of challenges to these norms from, among others, feminist and indigenous writers. Māori identities and the theoretical underpinnings and disciplines that we use often go hand in hand, but are not a readily accepted part of such discussions, even in the social sciences.

Theory and research, along with the researcher's experience and culture are interrelated and reflecting on these is an important activity, with theory guiding research and research guiding theory (Mataira, no date). However, the marginalised status of our epistemological systems and output driven imperatives mean that there is little space to reflect on and learn from our own and others' practice in order to defend our stance. Addressing Māori health and well being carries with it an extreme sense of urgency. As

a result, we get little opportunity to examine and clarify what we do and why we do it. Few of our stories get told and, by comparison, there is a dearth of theorising, learning and reflecting. Kaupapa Māori theory is one notable exception and has provided an invaluable pou for Māori researchers attempting to contextualise, defend and legitimate their work, without genuflection to western academic disciplinary silos. Its broad parameters are both an advantage and a disadvantage. On one hand, it can embrace diverse approaches and understandings and on the other, it leaves itself open to criticism as non-rigorous, ill defined and not really a theory at all. Indeed, Graham Smith (1997) makes the point that the use of the term theory is a political manoeuvre used to claim the word, rather than because Kaupapa Māori conforms to western notions of what a theory is.

### ***Finding a place***

What does or does not constitute a theory is the subject of much discussion and debate. According to some a coherent body of rules and practices does not make a theory unless it can be used and adapted by others, but theory means different things to different people (Shoemaker, 2002). Mataira (no date: 10) writes that “the critical test of theory is whether it makes sense of particular situations through observation – that is, through the seeing-for-oneself; theory in action test.”

Addressing concerns about reading a collection of essays dealing with theory, Shoemaker (2002: vii-viii) suggests that the reader “think instead of...models, paradigms, perspectives, ideas, narratives, research questions, or analytical frameworks. At best, theories are devices for articulating research questions and zeroing in on important issues.” She uses the Native American metaphor of clearing a path to

illustrate that theory can, through examining the past, bring about clearer ways of seeing and understanding our journeys. She suggests that, ideally, theory should assist us to break away from binary categories such as advanced and primitive, literate and non-literate, “but it is precisely these types of oppositions that underlie colonial power struggles” (Shoemaker, 2002: x).

When asked for a theoretical basis or discipline, many indigenous peoples struggle to find comfortable answers. For convenience we may reply “grounded theory” or “critical theory” with a participatory action approach. If we are feeling presumptuous we may reply “disloyalty to the patriarchy” (Rich cited in McCreanor, 1995). Shoemaker (2002) suggests that indigenous peoples are suspicious and averse to theory due to the predominance of European theorists and the need of theory to generalise. Smith (1999) discusses the intimidating nature of writing theory and the way that the western academy constructs the rules by which the world, including the worlds of indigenous peoples, are theorised.

When asked our theoretical basis in Aotearoa, as of the 1990s, we can reply “Kaupapa Māori” and hope that this will silence further questions. As a transformative theory, it both challenges and creates space, both within and outside the academy, in the face of unequal power relationships (Smith, 2003). In this way Kaupapa Māori can provide a space for us to work within and to fend off colonising theoretical invasions, but this is not without critique and challenge.

Debate continues as to the definition or parameters of Kaupapa Māori and whether having such boundaries is counter productive. Without them, Kaupapa Māori can be all

things to all people, the primary characteristic being that it is about being Māori. This charge often flies in the face of mainstream expectations and hopes of categorised, defined and delineated disciplines and theories. To offer such certainty is to offer reassurance and prescribes the research methodology that will, presumably follow. To offer oneself and one's identity as the theoretical basis is, in 'western' eyes, to step into the abyss of subjectivity, myth and non-science...the unknown. And yet, this is precisely what Māori first ask: who are you; the answers to this give (hopefully) some reassurance and hopes for the research processes that will follow.

### ***Finding a path***

Objectivity has been widely dismissed by those interested in justice oriented research and social change, including indigenous peoples (Aluli-Meyer, 2006). It has been suggested that patterns, theories and deeper understandings are best developed by indigenous peoples through "a passionate, inward, subjective approach" (Marsden, 2003: 272) and through reading, thinking, exploring and reflecting on the whole, rather than component parts (Marsden, 2003; Mataira, no date). This approach does not preclude science and scholarship and many indigenous peoples are vocal in their efforts to value and promote indigenous scientific traditions (Grenier, 1998; Jegede, 1999; Lomax, 1996; Pottier, Bicker, & Sillitoe, 2003; Smith, 1999; Walker, 1987). However, the term 'Māori research' creates an oxymoron in the minds of many (Walker, 2007) and, as the following chapters argue, this is also the case for the term 'Māori science'.

O'Reagan (2007) argued that success will be achieved when we change the way we think of Māori achievement, that is, not when we achieve equity in terms of Māori statistics being the same as non-Māori, but when we achieve equitable status in terms of



international excellence and recognition. He went on to encourage Māori to explore their own world, to embrace dynamic adaptation and to “...see Māori scholarship as something they own and that is theirs.”

Indigenous writers argue that this necessarily involves contemplation of the whole (Senge cited in Mataira, no date), important features being spirituality and relationships with the land. Aluli-Meyer (2006) sees relationships with land and working for the health of the environment as a possible consequence of challenging power.

“To disagree with mainstream expectations is to wake up, to understand what is happening, to be of service to a larger whole. You may even begin to work on behalf of our lands, water and air.” (Aluli-Meyer, 2006: 275)

### ***Finding a voice***

Despite the argument put forward by indigenous scholar, Reverend Marsden (2003), that metaphysics, including spiritual matters, and the theory of knowledge could not be discussed separately, I am aware that there is much that we, as indigenous academics do not express in writing. There are ways of seeing that we leave out of proposals and research reports, but nevertheless acknowledge and talk about among ourselves. As I wrote these chapters I became increasingly aware of the difficulties of expressing spirituality as a part of indigenous worldviews, including its place in science and research.

Aluli-Meyer (2006: 273) writes that the “spirit category...is not so much written about but expressed nevertheless.” These things are a part of our knowing, but they are not a part of the mainstream, legitimated ways of knowing.

Writing for journal audiences the voice in my head was wary about the expression of these concepts. In general (but with exceptions such as the *Hulili* and *EcoHealth* journals) the reductionist way of framing spirituality suggests itself as the most likely to pass scrutiny; this is the acceptable, ‘scientific’ understanding of ways that people make sense of some of the dimensions of spirituality through, for example, concepts such as belonging and sense of place. I felt that, in ‘western’ eyes, I would be seen as less of a scientist if I suggested that the place of spirituality may be broader and largely indefinable; as a result, these less tangible aspects are dealt with only lightly.

In the course of writing this thesis, I have thought about the process, form and purpose of the written word and here, of papers for publication. There was some trepidation in using the academic paper approach. Although it has presented constraints in terms of the way I have expressed myself, it has also encouraged me to focus my writing in order to articulate key issues and succinctly develop central arguments.

This thesis has been an attempt to articulate what it means to be an academic explorer. It is written from the point of view that thinking, theorising, looking to the past and the future and writing are positive things. Writing encourages clarity and provides the writer and the reader with a basis for affirming, challenging and clarifying arguments. Even if what one believes changes over time, it documents steps on the journey and makes this available to others.

## **The chapters**

The following six chapters consist of published or submitted papers that examine how Māori and non-Māori define and legitimate Māori knowledge and science, what ethical processes and relationship might look like and conclude with a look at relationships between environments and health and the way that broad knowledge bases and approaches can come together. This structure means that the relevant literature is included in the background and introduction to each chapter, providing the context for the arguments and issues that follow.

I approached this thesis as an opportunity to reflect on theory and practice and to contribute to ongoing debates about the nature of knowledge, science and research. The need for this had become apparent to me as a researcher of several years, who had come across a wide range of views and attitudes to Māori research. I felt I had substantial experience in the practice of research, but had had little experience and opportunity to reflect on and articulate my own approaches, based on my experience.

I began by looking at quantitative research and why Māori have negative reactions to ‘number crunching’. It emerged that, in some sectors, research involving quantitative approaches is seen as less Māori and less acceptable to Māori. To some extent, Māori numerical traditions have become subsumed by the dominant science practices. In addition, some Māori feel more comfortable and familiar with qualitative methods, seeing them as giving voice to people and therefore resonating with descriptions of Māori culture as oral and holistic. Although I had taken part in discussions on these issues, there was little written on the subject.

However, in the course of carrying out this study it became apparent that, underlying these attitudes, were issues of power and identity. A more fundamental question emerged about the nature and ownership of research and research practice in general. This led me to a conceptual examination of the nature of indigenous knowledge, science and research and then to an exploration of these issues in light of my own and others' research experiences. The six chapters that comprise the body of this thesis explore these issues within different contexts and in light of different research relationships. They are ordered in groups, the first two dealing mainly with issues of identity and definition and the next three dealing with Māori and non-Māori relationships, from ethics to research. The idea for the final chapter arose during the course of writing the previous chapters. Research on relationships between people and land provided a place where many forms of knowledge and practice came together, and, through ecohealth and related approaches, provided a good fit between Māori epistemology and recent disciplinary developments. The chapters were written largely in the order in which they are presented, with the exception of *Engaging Māori in Evaluation: some issues to consider*, which was written first in order to meet a publication deadline.

The first chapter, *Transforming Science: How our structures limit innovation* sets about examining how we define and position knowledge, science and research in Aotearoa and argues that this is often limiting. Our organisations and structures are not culturally neutral, and Māori strategies and innovations have a tendency to become add-ons catering to difference. A more balanced approach to this discussion that examines not only Māori-specific developments, but also the nature of the institutions that are charged with facilitating these developments, is needed. I also argue for a paradigm

shift challenging policy makers and those who implement those policies to recognise and examine the assumptions, concepts and norms from which they operate.

The next chapter, *Forever western? Debating authentic Māori research* deals more directly with my initial question concerning attitudes towards quantitative research. I draw parallels between these attitudes and issues of authentic identities, building on the previous chapter by questioning the way that research is authenticated by drawing on markers of Māori identity. What is acceptable and deemed the most ‘authentic’ in describing Māori identity, knowledge and practice tends to be what is seen as most closely aligned with ‘traditional’ concepts of Māori. I argue that this limits Māori by denying the way that identities and knowledge form and change over time and by not embracing the diversity and potential of what it means to be Māori today.

*Epistemological domination: social science research ethics in Aotearoa* elaborates on the argument that Māori ways of finding out about and knowing the world have been subordinated to western epistemological traditions and illustrates how this operates within the ethics field. The chapter describes the dominant ethical paradigm and some of the impacts on our processes as Māori researchers, providing narratives from our research experiences to illustrate ways in which dominance is created and reproduced. I argue that relationships are a key consideration and a feature of Māori ethical processes.

Building on the theme of research relationships and ethical processes, *Engaging Māori in Evaluation: some issues to consider* addresses non-Māori researchers engaging or wanting to work with Māori, an area of considerable soul searching and concern. Although there are guidelines available to researchers and ethics committees outline

principles and processes, my intention here was to try and get at the more fundamental thinking underlying attempts to engage Māori. As such it is not a guide, but asks non-Māori researchers to examine what it means to occupy the dominant space, whether Māori are at the margins or have some real ability to enter into and engage with the research.

*Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships* extends the issues discussed in the previous chapter by telling a story of consultation from our point of view as Māori researchers. As outlined above, this is an area of considerable tension. However, little has been written from the point of view of Māori who have entered into these arrangements. We discuss a range of research relationships and provide a story of our research group's involvement, largely as consultants, in the New Zealand Values Survey 2004. We also present findings from this survey of particular relevance to Māori, with reference to their social and political implications.

*Natural allies: a Māori take on ecohealth*, the final chapter, describes an area where there is a strong and continuing, although threatened, knowledge base that has been the subject of much examination and documentation through the Waitangi Tribunal<sup>2</sup> hearings. Developing the theme of how Māori knowledge is grounded, this chapter illustrates an area where indigenous understandings and knowledge have arguably been more able to withstand assaults; land is a site of resistance and an area where it is critical that we work together. Extending the insights in the previous chapter, where Māori worked within a largely non-Māori paradigm, this chapter describes some

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<sup>2</sup> The Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 by the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975. The Tribunal is a permanent commission of inquiry charged with making recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to actions or omissions of the Crown that breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi (Waitangi Tribunal, 2008)

successful initiatives that Māori have carried out and others where Māori and non-Māori have worked together from within Māori paradigms.

In the concluding chapter I briefly examine broader implications, present a schema for the development of western research and discuss the implications, developments and challenges that have arisen.

## **Link one**

The following two chapters *Transforming Science: How our structures limit innovation* and *Forever western? Debating authentic Māori research*, were originally intended to be written as one paper, looking mainly at how and why we privilege some methods and methodologies over others. However, as I progressed I saw that this issue was much wider than how we positioned ourselves as Māori. It linked to how Māori knowledge and science were positioned and conceptualised within dominant structures.

I decided to develop the ideas as two papers because they presented separate, although interlinked, arguments. I have placed *Transforming science* first as this sets the scene for the examination of Māori conceptualisations of knowledge, identity and science in *Forever western? Debating authentic Māori research*

Although the chapters work as separate, written pieces, in verbal presentations I have usually used a mix of ideas from both, receiving largely positive feedback and sparking discussion. I presented these ideas at The Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference (2003), and gathered constructive criticism from the largely Māori audience. One comment from a Māori woman particularly stuck in my mind. She said that the presentation had fired her enthusiasm and that this was “precisely why I come to these conferences.” Presentations at International Research Institute for Māori & Indigenous Education Hui - Kaupapa Māori Theory and Research (largely Māori academic audience) and at the Women’s Studies Conference, University of Auckland (2005) plenary session (largely Pākehā feminist, women) have also been warmly received and resulted in constructive discussion.



The papers were largely written from 2003-2004. *Transforming Science* was completed first and submitted to the Social Policy Journal of New Zealand in early 2005. Reviewers' comments were received in November that year. Minor revisions were completed and the paper resubmitted in December for publication in 2006. I chose this journal because I felt that the issues were firstly of interest to New Zealand policy makers and government organisations and needed to be published in a relevant New Zealand journal.

*Forever western* was completed in 2007 and submitted to *Hulili*; after a one year suspension, due to a whānau illness, in two blocks in mid 2005 and again in 2006.

Moewaka Barnes, H. (2006) Transforming Science: How Our Structures Limit Innovation. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 29, 1-16.

“Forever western? Debating authentic Māori research” has been submitted to the journal *Hulili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being*.

## Chapter 1

# Transforming Science: How Our Structures Limit Innovation

### Abstract

This paper argues that how we define and position Māori knowledge, science and research in Aotearoa is often limiting. These definitions and approaches are underpinned by power dynamics that see developments occurring in ways that rarely challenge established power relations. Our organisations and structures are not culturally neutral, and Māori strategies have a tendency to become add-ons catering to “difference”. As a result, we take a narrow approach to developments in this sector. A more balanced approach is argued for, which examines not only Māori-specific developments, but also the nature of the institutions that are charged with facilitating these developments. There are Treaty-driven obligations that support this argument, as well as a need to fully value and consider the richness and diversity that all people in Aotearoa have to offer.

### Introduction

In 2002 the Health Research Council of New Zealand funded a study on quantitative methods and methodologies within Māori paradigms. One of the objectives was to examine Māori approaches and theory in relation to quantitative research. However, in the course of carrying out this study, a more fundamental question emerged about ownership of research and research practice in general. In some sectors, research

involving quantitative approaches is seen as less Māori and less acceptable to Māori. This is, in part, because numerical traditions have become subsumed by the dominant science practices. In addition, some Māori feel more comfortable and familiar with qualitative methods, seeing them as giving voice to people and therefore resonating with descriptions of Māori culture as oral and holistic. Thus, at least to some extent, comfort with qualitative methods is about feeling able to claim some ownership. However, attitudes towards quantitative and qualitative methods and methodologies are also shaped by the difficulties that institutions and research practitioners have in conceptualising Māori science and practice, sometimes to the point of denying their existence.

In order to explore these issues, I have set about examining how we position knowledge, science and research in Aotearoa. The focus of this paper is the survival and position of Māori research and science in a contemporary setting. As Feyerabend (1991) argues, the ascendancy of western-dominated science is a result of the power and resources poured into it at the expense and denigration of other systems. This has seen Māori knowledge<sup>3</sup> and practitioners marginalised, and the less-than-successful engagement of Māori in the research, science and technology sector. Organisations seeking to improve this situation often focus on the development of Māori-specific policies without acknowledging the role that their organisational culture plays. As a result, Māori knowledge and research struggle for space and credibility, and as a nation we fail to value and nurture the full depth of knowledge that exists in this country.

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<sup>3</sup> “Mātauranga” and “Māori knowledge” are used in this paper as broad concepts, encompassing all knowledge held and practised by Māori. The term “traditional knowledge” is here more closely aligned to mātauranga tuku iho, or kaimanga, which carry a sense of early knowledge – handed-down practices with some stability. Although this may be knowledge that has its origins largely in pre-colonial times, it is not a static category, as tradition is created and added to over time.

## **Power and knowledge**

These debates about approaches and value would be very different if power imbalances were not present. The power to involve or exclude, to marginalise or legitimate, is the critical difference between the dominant culture and indigenous peoples (Agrawal, 1993; Agrawal 1996 cited in Grenier, 1998). The two systems have their meaning in relation to one another: the indigenous system is seen as the lesser (Cunningham, 2000; Durie, 1995; Macedo, 1999) and is frequently described and defined in opposition to the dominant system. “Western” knowledge is owned by the dominant system and “other” knowledge (that which is identifiable and describable as “different”) belongs to the other, the indigenous people. It has been argued that “policy makers accept the prevailing default definitions, which are inevitably those established by political power in its customary alliance with practical positivism” (Nash, 2001: 209). In this case, the “default definition” is the limited construct of knowledge based on difference, and seen as having its origins in a largely pre-colonial past.

Thus dominant systems determine what knowledge is, what is legitimate and what is real, and present this as “universal” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 29; Smith, 1999). This process renders invisible the cultural paradigm from which “universal” springs. Smith (1999: 63) argues:

The globalization of knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West’s view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of “civilized” knowledge. This form of global

knowledge is generally referred to as “universal” knowledge, available to all and not really “owned” by anyone, that is, until non-Western scholars make claims to it.

What constitutes knowledge – and who decides such matters – has consequences for the place of Māori knowledge and practice and, consequently, how New Zealand selects and constructs its identity in terms of global knowledge and global participation. We need to challenge the compartmentalisation of Māori knowledge and its status, particularly in relation to the current desire for innovation. Power is an integral part of this. Without examining the way in which structures that can facilitate innovation and development operate, and the paradigms that they operate within, innovation is likely to be linear, not lateral. The danger is that “more often than not, change will be in the directions which consolidate the established power relations of the country” (Cram, 2002: 5). For Māori this is inequitable, and for New Zealand as a whole it is limiting because it misses the opportunities we have for valuing and supporting all our knowledge systems.

Just as we are debating diversity of identity, we also need to consider the diversity of Māori world views and the practices that flow from these. Power is, again, an integral part of these dynamics. Care must be taken not to validate or authenticate one over another or we run the risk of claiming ownership only of that which is distinct. The danger is that we will replicate hierarchies of knowledge and exclude what is seen as less “authentic”. Generally this manifests itself as a tendency to give higher status to what is seen as uniquely Māori, often described in terms of “traditional” knowledge; that is, knowledge seen as originating largely in a pre-colonial past. I do not wish to undermine the value of these taonga, but rather suggest that all Māori knowledge has

value. We need to consider and embrace this knowledge in its broadest sense to enable all our experiences and knowing to be available to te iwi Māori.

## **Western versus indigenous**

In New Zealand, breaking the trajectory of Māori epistemology some 150 years ago has now placed us in a position of arguing whether Māori science exists. According to the *New Zealand Herald* (2003), the question of whether or not there is such a thing as Māori science “has been debated since the question of funding such a sector was put aside a decade ago in the creation of the Crown research institutes”. This question could as easily be asked of western science. Although it is often referred to as a cohesive system, Smith (1999: 44) has outlined the multiple traditions that the west draws on, describing it as “a ‘storehouse’ of histories, artefacts, ideas, texts, and/or images, which are classified, preserved, arranged and represented back to the West”. Semali and Kincheloe (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 25) cite hundreds of years of interchanges between Europe and various non-western cultures, and describes various areas of knowledge usually seen as belonging to the west – to name a few, magnetic science and chemistry from China; Polynesian knowledge of navigation and sea currents; and Australian Aboriginal peoples’ knowledge of flora and fauna (Hess 1995, Baker 1996, Scheurich and Young 1997 cited in Semali & Kincheloe, 1999).

Although these and other (usually indigenous) writers do discuss what is meant by “western”, it has been more common to debate and reflect on what identifies and differentiates indigenous knowledge and practices at the levels of both policy and application. For example, in New Zealand, social scientists are almost without exception required to address their processes concerning Māori in some way when

seeking contracts, developing funding proposals or applying for ethics approval. It is important that these requirements are in place, but what this means is that we constantly reflect, Māori and non-Māori, on processes related to Māori culture and rarely reflect on, or give a name to, Pākehā research practices and culture. Research with particular groups such as youth or the elderly might require particular attention but, if the participants are part of the dominant group, their ethnicity is not an issue. Researchers are not required by ethics committees or funders to address appropriateness of methods etc. for Pākehā (non-Māori), or to explain in proposals what skills or record of accomplishment they have in working with these communities. The processes involved in working with these groups are a normalised given and are therefore not named as culture. Many Pākehā researchers would probably find describing many of their own “cultural” practices an extremely difficult task.

It is a process common to colonised people that we are constantly named and described in terms of how our identity and processes differ from the norm; i.e. the dominant culture. There are important reasons for such practices. One is that if there is a specific requirement to consider Māori, then responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>4</sup> are more likely to be addressed. Another is the need that colonised peoples have to describe ourselves in order to validate, make visible and assert the importance of the survival, recognition and practice of identified cultural characteristics and taonga. This is linked to a resistance to the dominant culture and its knowledge systems, which are seen as undermining the survival of these characteristics and taonga.

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<sup>4</sup> The Treaty of Waitangi is an agreement between the British Crown and Māori signed progressively between 1840 and 1841. Contested interpretations range between cession and guarantee of Māori sovereignty

Many writers now acknowledge that it is problematic attempting to neatly define categories such as western knowledge and science versus indigenous knowledge (Durie, 2002; Grenier, 1998; Smylie et al., 2004). The emphasis on what differentiates Māori from non-Māori and Māori knowledge from western knowledge is often fixed in the idea of a static pre-colonial past. This can make invisible the dynamic nature of knowledge systems where, for example, new knowledge is continually added and incorporated into Māori world views. Indigenous knowledge, using this construct, is as much about the present and future as it is about the past (Durie, 2002: 7; Grenier, 1998: 1).

### **Valuing Māori knowledge**

Challenging these neatly defined categories does not mean an acceptance that one construct can embrace diverse concepts of knowledge and science. Much of the debate between western knowledge and science and indigenous knowledge takes three forms: “opposition to the promotion of science as the only valid body of knowledge; the rejection of science in favour of indigenous knowledge; the misinterpretation of knowledge by the use of system-bound criteria” (Durie, 2002: 7).

The marginalisation of Māori and the “significant concerns about the application of intellectual property law” (Mead, 2002) are ongoing issues. Generally, western-dominated research has been seen as appropriative and inconsistent with Māori world views and understandings. Indigenous writers in Aotearoa have challenged the place of Māori knowledge and research by arguing that Māori research should not be placed within or confined by current disciplinary boundaries (Durie, 1995: 3) nor should it “be considered as an interesting aside to western scientific knowledge” (Cram, 2002). Part



of this is the tendency to view indigenous knowledge as historical, “quaint” or “ethnic”. Under these constructs, indigenous approaches and practitioners are not given legitimacy in some areas unless they are seen as operating within “scientific” principles.

Māori knowledge and research can be seen as having distinguishing features such as being Māori led, meeting Māori aspirations and using collective and transformative approaches (Durie, 1995: 4; Moewaka Barnes, 2000b; Smith, 1999). Some attempts have been made to move beyond these broad features and narrow down what is considered to be authentic or appropriate for Māori and Māori research. In these debates, preference is given to *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) methods and qualitative rather than quantitative approaches (Bevan-Brown, 1999). “Traditional” knowledge, seen as originating in pre-colonial times, is more likely to be described as Māori knowledge, rather than knowledge that is reflective of modern times. These definitions exclude some of the knowledge we hold and practise and recognise, and privilege what is often viewed as more authentic – that is, the “traditional”. I suggest that care needs to be taken not to compartmentalise and limit Māori to narrow definitions of our knowledge and science.

It may be useful to distinguish between the world views (Māori and non-Māori) within which knowledge is gained and perpetuated, rather than what might distinguish one system and one tool from the other. This distinction argues for the primacy of the world view over the methodology or method, and a holistic approach to all knowledge that is held. Our world views have profound effects on how we view and use methodologies and methods; they are the frameworks that fundamentally shape our relationships to knowledge and practice. As a result, different people will apply and use apparently

similar methodologies in quite different ways. Any knowledge that a researcher holds and uses is within the context of their world view, creating a space for multiple interpretations of knowledge and science; this can also apply within cultures and paradigms.

In describing Māori world views as holistic, Durie (1995) rejects the idea that there is only one science. Cunningham (2000) argues:

Traditional Māori operated in ways not dissimilar to western researchers, scientists and technologists, albeit with indigenous methodologies, philosophies and world views.

However, he suggests that the paradigms that operate in the research, science and technology sector in New Zealand do not “easily” cater for Māori knowledge. It has been argued that Māori have been excluded from many areas of research, in part because those areas do not validate or value Māori world views and in part because Māori are continually positioned as the “different” other (Cunningham, 2000; Durie, 2002; Moewaka Barnes, 2000b).

There has been a century and a half of disinvestment in Māori epistemologies and methods while, by comparison, non-Māori equivalents have been well resourced. There is little argument that within Aotearoa science is western-dominated. As a result, science carried out within Māori world views may not be readily valued or validated unless it can be judged and recognised from the dominant “western” perspective. Māori become accepted when we conform to dominant systems or when we can be added to or

incorporated within practices without fundamentally challenging or changing power or paradigms.

Developing and carrying out research within Māori paradigms begins as a challenge to accepted norms and assumptions about knowledge and the way it is constructed, and continues as a search for understanding within a Māori world view (Bishop, 1996). It is a claim and reclamation of knowledge affirmed as a right under the Treaty of Waitangi, a pragmatic approach to providing research evidence in which Māori have confidence, and a unique contribution to the national and international research community (Bevan-Brown, 1999; Cunningham, 2000; Smith, 1999).

If Māori are to have control over what knowledge is gained about us, then we need tools available to us within Māori paradigms (Jackson, 1999). The way in which research is carried out is central to the quality of research (Ministry of Health, 2000; Pōmare, Keefe Ormsby, & Ormsby, 1995). This means taking a proactive approach to methodologies; not simply using tools without question, but critically examining practice and developing and articulating theories. It is essential to understand what this means to us as Māori in order to develop practical frameworks that can underpin the Māori knowledge bases and inform innovative approaches. In addition, this may enable non-Māori to improve their understanding and research practice.

The following sections explore two strands of consideration in relation to funding research in Aotearoa. The first strand describes some aspects of how we currently place and fund “Māori research”, and the second examines some of the broader influences that impact on Māori engagement across all areas of knowledge construction, research

and innovation. My perspective is that of a Māori researcher and is therefore an attempt to describe something of what it means to be a Māori who practises science.

## **A place for Māori**

Firstly, I wish to consider the tendency to use distinct characteristics and compartmentalisation to define Māori contributions and to argue for an open and diverse approach that gives space to the development and validation of Māori methodologies.

In the research field, many documents include the term “Māori knowledge”. For example, the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology’s (FRST) descriptor of Kaupapa Māori research is:

Research that responds to a culturally distinct issue of importance; Māori are significant participants and primary researchers; Māori knowledge is used and produced. Research which primarily meets expectations and quality standards, set by Māori, e.g., a study that contributes to revitalisation of Te Reo Māori. (Foundation for Research Science & Technology, 2003/04)

It is difficult to know what Māori knowledge in this context means, and it is likely that the “default definition” will be applied. The example given – the revitalisation of te reo Māori – reinforces this, indicating that a narrow concept of knowledge is the most likely interpretation. All research should use and produce knowledge; the difference here is in how one interprets and decides what “Māori knowledge” is.

In 2004 a round of meetings was held as part of the development of a Māori Research and Innovation Strategy, “to create a framework to conceptualise and incentivise the ‘Māori dimension’ within Vote Research, Science and Technology” (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2004). At a meeting in Auckland attended by researchers, and officials from the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST), FRST and the Health Research Council, representatives of FRST described the rationale behind their strategy as being to “unlock the creative potential of Māori people and resources for the benefit of New Zealand”, “build New Zealand’s innovation skill base” and to “unlock potential of [a] distinct Māori knowledge base for the benefit of New Zealand” (Foundation for Research Science & Technology, 2004). Also at this meeting, some discussion took place on the nature of Māori knowledge and the need to open up definitions of mātauranga Māori. The draft strategy was seen as needing more clarity around these concepts. There was support for recognising Māori knowledge as including not just “distinct” or “traditional” knowledge, but all knowledge held and practised by Māori up to the present day, including new knowledge generated by Māori research.

In 2005, MoRST’s Vision Mātauranga was developed to “assist research funders, researchers and research users when they consider research of relevance to Māori – particularly its distinctive aspects and how this might be supported” (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2005). The glossary describes mātauranga Māori as “a body of knowledge first brought to New Zealand by Polynesian ancestors ... it changed and grew ... and grew and changed again (on European contact) ... becoming endangered ... in the 19th and 20th centuries.” I argue that mātauranga Māori in this

context describes one form of Māori knowledge and is a sub-category and not interchangeable with the term Māori knowledge as it is used in the vision.

Māori knowledge is as broad and varied as any other knowledge. Although it includes MoRST's "traditional" examples such as te reo, it also includes Māori science, experiences of colonisation, urbanisation and racism. It includes aspects that are distinctive and unique, as well as knowledge that, in some ways, has commonalities across cultures, such as knowledge related to indigenous struggles or to being a New Zealander. Although the MoRST definition of mātauranga Māori embraces an important aspect of our knowledge, it is only one consideration in research of relevance to Māori. It is not clear where other Māori knowledge and research fit or whether they are excluded from the definition of Māori knowledge.

In research, at least two broad types of knowledge might result: knowledge generated about research itself, such as new methodologies, and "content" knowledge produced as a result of the area of investigation. For Māori, both are critical issues. However, the emphasis is, with very few exceptions, given to the area of investigation (e.g. diabetes, te reo) with little space for Māori to explore potentially innovative research practices and develop new approaches.

The value of innovative research practice and the role that funding bodies can play in this has received some recognition. Attempts have been made to provide a space for Māori to develop research within Māori paradigms. For example, the Health Research Council operates under a framework that allocates Māori health research to either Māori development or Māori advancement. The former is funded from the Rangahau Hauora

Māori Research Portfolio, assessed by a Māori committee using slightly modified criteria (Health Research Council, 2002, 2006). Research that might be classified as Māori advancement is also assessed by this committee, and potentially co-funded or funded from other portfolios.

The Rangahau Hauora portfolio is generally described as covering “by Māori, for Māori” research. One of its specific roles is to fund research that develops Māori research paradigms (Health Research Council, 2006). However, these developments compete with a broad range of Māori health priorities for limited funding and are assessed alongside other Māori-driven research. Although a Māori assessing committee assesses them, the same criteria are used for all proposals: significance and relevance for Māori health, scientific merit, design and methods, and expertise and track record.

This may not be the most appropriate way of funding methodological developments; separate strategies may be more effective. However, it is acknowledged that it is not simply a matter of how proposals are assessed. It is likely that very few proposals whose central aim is to develop methodologies are submitted in the first place. Reasons for this probably include under-investment in Māori research, the small Māori workforce, the state of Māori health necessitating more directly applicable outcome-driven research, and Māori perceptions of the agencies that seek to engage them.

## **Challenging paradigms**

The second strand of my argument is that the lack of Māori engagement and the less-than-successful involvement of Māori may in part be due to the failure of structures to come to terms with their own paradigms, culture and power. The fundamental challenge

is for policy makers and those who enact those policies to recognise and examine the assumptions, concepts and norms within which they operate.

Māori researchers have often expressed concerns that various agencies and their processes do not work well for Māori. One reason is perhaps the unspoken “funding envelope syndrome” – that proposals led by Māori or with a strong Māori focus should only be funded by Māori-specific funding, such as the Rangahau Hauora portfolio. Other funding sources are not seen as having such obligations. Another concern is that proposals submitted for funding will not be understood and valued using processes largely designed and facilitated by non-Māori.

Discussions among Māori researchers at various forums have made it clear that many feel they have little chance of success through any channels other than Māori-specific funding, such as the Māori Knowledge and Development Research output class (MKDOC, administered by the Health Research Council and FRST), regardless of stated commitments in regard to Māori as a priority across funding output classes and organisations. In these discussions, Māori often say that Māori assessing committees are more qualified to assess the research being proposed, and that Māori proposals would be disadvantaged when assessed by a committee with perhaps one or two Māori members (but which is predominantly non-Māori).

Māori see this problem as not about the quality of Māori research proposals but about non-Māori perceptions. Comments reported in the media would seem to reinforce this. According to the *New Zealand Herald* (2003), FRST’s group manager of investment operations, Peter Benfell, said that they had a target of 5–10% of the annual research



funding to be spent on research “that has a good level of involvement with Māori.” However, these targets might not be met for a number of years because the foundation would not lower the standards of research it funds (New Zealand Herald, 2003). There are two implications here: one is the perception that the standard of research that would be put forward by Māori would be low; the other is that FRST would rather not meet its Māori research targets than fund below its “standards”. The question is whether these standards are about quality or about a lack of openness to, and appreciation of, other approaches.

These types of comments have led Māori to speculate on what a Māori-driven funding agency might be able to achieve. Cunningham et al. (2003: 448) write:

Ultimately, Māori researchers will demand a dedicated purchase agency, where Māori methodologies and world views are orthodox, where Māori assessment processes (including meeting Māori ethical standards) are fundamental, and where collective, culturally based prioritisation and assessment processes prevail.

However, to return to an earlier point, developing Māori-specific policies to facilitate this is only one part of the picture. Our gaze must not only be directed toward Māori, but to the environments and structures that shape engagement.

Whatever is supported (or not) by Māori-specific funding, there will always be greater resources in other non-Māori-specific funding where Māori engagement is an issue. A MoRST report notes:

There is widespread recognition by both Māori and non-Māori that the RS&T system does not support Māori innovation as well as it could. MoRST will continue to build connections with those working in the field of Māori innovation as we design and deliver policy advice (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2003: 40).

The Honourable Parekura Horomia (2003), in his introduction to a session of the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference focusing on Māori research, said that he believed there was an underestimation on the Government's part, of what Māori people's role could and should be. At the same conference Walker (2003) noted that "currently Māori are not prominent in our discussions of a knowledge society". In an address to a Ministry of Research, Science and Technology hui, the Honourable Pete Hodgson (2001) said that Māori must have better access to the innovation system:

I think Māori think differently. Different thought processes, different paradigms, different ways to approach a problem, explore it and solve it. If I'm right, and I might be, then I put it to you that better infusing the New Zealand innovation system with that different approach and paradigm is good not for Māori alone, but for us as a nation.

A report to FRST, *Why a Māori Economic Innovation Strategy* (Nixon, 2003), described Māori innovation as being unique in terms of culture and that this is a "competitive advantage" (Nixon, 2003: ii) in the global market. The report went on to describe what were seen as some of the characteristics of Māori innovation: a Māori

world view (specifically, collectivism); a reluctance to risk assets; a desire to maintain assets and collective ownership of assets; and being able to enlist people with specialist skills. The report describes the key issues as “having an appreciation of the market (i.e. being market-led) and being responsive to changing market whims.” (Nixon, 2003: ii) The report does suggest that different pathways may be needed, and that “a specific Māori approach tailored to the Māori need and styled along the lines of their favoured operational style” (Nixon, 2003: 18) may have to be constructed.

However, the idea that such an approach can be tailored, and that the strategy could take “into account the distinct resources, capabilities and qualities of Māori”, suggests that the current system can make adaptations within the existing paradigm, rather than providing a fundamental challenge to the system itself as a producer of the best outcomes for Māori. Later, the report writers state that they “suspect” that there are “unique natural Māori approaches to ... the innovative process.” The report echoes Hodgson’s (2001) earlier comments by concluding that a greater understanding of such approaches will mean that “a more efficient response can be constructed to overcome impediments to further innovation, which would not only benefit Māori, but New Zealand as a whole” (Nixon, 2003: 26).

In the desire to characterise Māori innovation we are in danger of thinking that we can define and therefore account for these within dominant paradigms. Rather, these “characteristics” operate within a broader context that cannot be fully explained because culture is all-pervasive. Structures controlled by the dominant paradigm have fallen short of engaging the potential and innovation of Māori.

The reports and comments described above indicate that Māori are considered to have potential value, although what this value means and the desired nature of engagement with Māori is less clear. For example, the benefits that might result from this engagement are often described in terms of how knowledge can be commoditised or harvested. The *New Zealand Herald* (2003) mentioned a 1996 FRST report that stated that much of the recording and preservation of traditional knowledge was “not eligible for public funding because it was too iwi-specific, confidential, or not research producing economic benefits.” Simon Upton, then Science Minister, was described as saying that this knowledge “included biological, geological and climate history needed by mainstream scientists.” In the same article, Benfell was reported as saying that the foundation did not believe there would be any gain in funding “Māori science” separately: “We think the gains are to be made in integrating Māori involvement in the research that’s being undertaken.” This discourse suggests that there is a lack of validation for Māori as scientists in their own right and that the value lies in harvesting Māori knowledge for “mainstream” science.

Durie talks about how cultural views other than the dominant culture “tend to be grafted on as perspectives but within conventional disciplinary frameworks” and that Māori reject the notion of their ideas, concepts and philosophies “fitting in with eurocentric views” (Durie, 1995: 2-3). He suggests interface as an opportunity for combining science and indigenous knowledge (Durie, 2002). As a place where interaction occurs between two systems or processes (Allen, 1990: 618), interface is a more acceptable concept than integration. It may provide a useful way forward for non-Māori researchers seeking ways of working that are more consistent with the Treaty of

Waitangi and a way for Māori who are not scientists to form more equitable research relationships.

The fourth theme under MoRST's Vision Mātauranga Māori refers to interface. This is a vision and responsibility that more appropriately sits across the sector and has the potential to bring cultural shifts into "mainstream" visions and policies. This will depend on the extent to which this theme is "woven into Vote Research, Science and Technology" (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2005: 4) or whether, in practice, it is seen as a Māori issue or add-on. Largely this will not be about Māori practice, but will rely heavily on non-Māori abilities and motivation and the support to work in different ways. With the erosion of the status of the Treaty, these contingencies mean that the status of Māori knowledge remains under question.

For Māori scientists, interface may be one form of Māori research development but not the whole picture. If we conceptualise the science we practise as ours, then this changes our status in relation to research. We do not need to be integrated and science does not need to engage us; rather, it is the failure of structures to examine their own constructs that limits both Māori and non-Māori alike.

## **Summary**

In a bid to struggle for the survival of Māori taonga we define and dichotomise knowledge, often conceptualising Māori knowledge as only that which existed largely before colonisation and denying ourselves ownership of knowledge that has been a part of our experience in more recent times. The dilemma about western versus indigenous might not be a dilemma if power imbalances and domination were not present – if both

Māori and non-Māori knowledge and world views were valued, and we had full ownership and protection of taonga as guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi.

As part of this struggle, and in an attempt to make a place for Māori, we frequently categorise and define Māori knowledge in opposition to other constructs, such as science, western science and western knowledge. This practice usually describes Māori in terms of what is unique or distinct, not what is important or significant. This division is problematic; Māori knowledge is not seen as encompassing all current Māori knowledge, but largely places Māori knowledge within a static pre-colonial past that focuses on definition in relation to difference. Uniqueness is most likely a subset of what is important to Māori. If we define Māori science, mātauranga Māori and Māori knowledge as knowledge that Māori hold and practise, then the definition becomes holistic.

Developing Māori policies is part of the process of facilitating Māori engagement and innovation. However, the acknowledgment that Māori engagement and participation in innovation has not been as successful as desired should lead to an examination of the paradigms and assumptions from which structures that seek to engage Māori operate. If policies continue to be developed without a more fundamental examination of the assumptions and cultures within which these developments take place, then change is unlikely and progress will be hard fought.

Effective engagement and innovation is likely to challenge internal power dynamics, challenge the way in which organisations attempt to engage with Māori and challenge how Māori and Māori knowledge and science are viewed. It is not just about what

specific approaches will be adopted to facilitate engagement, but how organisations operate; this involves an understanding that organisations and structures are not culturally neutral. Specific approaches catering to “difference” become add-ons unless responsibility is taken across the organisational structure (not relegated to Māori-specific staff or units) to understand organisational culture and practice.

Externally, agencies need to look at what developments are occurring and how they might serve and support Māori, rather than how Māori might serve them. In the past, the discourse has more usually centred on what defines Māori and how and what Māori might contribute, with undertones (and sometimes clear messages) of integration. Clarity of what engagement means and what it offers to both parties is needed; discourses around harvesting Māori knowledge or utilising it for “mainstream” are unlikely to facilitate equitable and trusting relationships and practices.

Some concepts are not definable. We can talk of world views and paradigms and most people will have some common (although disputed) ideas of what these mean, but they also carry intangible elements that form the basis from which many Māori operate. Innovation requires imagination and a broad examination. The more Māori are defined, and by definition many aspects become excluded, the less likely Māori innovation is. If we want innovation and not limitation, then we need to start with open minds and imagination.

## Chapter 2

# Forever western? Debating Authentic Māori Research

### **Abstract**

As our Māori research organisation, Whāriki, carried out quantitative research, parallels emerged with work we were doing around identity. What was acceptable and deemed the most ‘authentic’ in describing Māori identity, knowledge and practice tended to be what was most closely aligned with ‘traditional’ concepts of Māori.

These concepts limit what we claim, and what we are enabled to claim as Māori. Debates around authenticity are linked to ways we position ourselves as Māori and exist within the context of colonisation and loss, frequently resulting in defining Māori and Māori practice as that which is distinctive from dominant paradigms. In social science these notions of identity and authenticity can result in the rejection of some forms of knowledge and knowledge production.

### **Introduction**

In the social sciences, identity politics and ethnicity classifications are becoming increasingly familiar areas of discussion and contention. As well as issues of how people are classified in terms of identity and the selection of multiple ethnicities, there are also attempts to construct scales and measurements of identity. For Māori (the indigenous people of Aotearoa, New Zealand), identities are often constructed using ‘traditional markers’, such as language, participation in ‘cultural’ events and other



indicators that are seen as having their roots largely in pre-colonial times. Challengers to these constructions, argue that they set up hierarchies of identity, where some Māori are more Māori than others and some knowledge and events are more authentic (Borell, 2005; Durie et al., 1996). The concern is that this limits Māori by denying the way that identities form and change over time and by not embracing the potential of what it means to be Māori today.

The conceptualisation of Māori identity as linked to traditional indicators such as te reo (Māori language), access to marae (gathering places) and knowledge of whākapapa (genealogy and connections) serves to reinforce the importance of these indicators. Research in this area can demonstrate the importance of these elements as taonga and support their active protection as guaranteed by the Treaty. Knowledge identity in research, conceptualised by the apparent dualities of mātauranga Māori and western science, can serve a similar purpose, legitimating and supporting the need for resources and credibility to be given to the exercise of ‘traditional’ forms of Māori knowledge and practice within research in this country. Distinctiveness is often relied on as an important descriptor, used to define Māori and Māori practice (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2005). Distinctiveness in this sense clearly differs and differentiates Māori from the dominant culture and knowledge base.

However, many people identify as Māori but feel conflict in relation to how they measure up in terms of traditional markers of identity. People who do not ‘measure up’ may be seen as lacking and less authentic, the implication being that they need more of these particular connections and markers in order to be secure in their identity (Borell, 2005; Durie et al., 1996). We therefore need to critically examine these

conceptualisations, including how we embrace change and diversity and how we exclude and become excluded. As Māori researchers many of us are working to create new ways of conceptualising and understanding our work, to transform what research is and what it means.

It is commonly argued that the western epistemological system is largely incompatible with Māori; but we are debating whether this means that the tools and technologies drawn on and utilised within this system are therefore incompatible. The question of whether and to what extent we have been assimilated is one of the issues and tensions that we and other indigenous people grapple with in our work and in our lives. Decolonisation also arises within these debates, but what does it mean to decolonise? One notion is that our minds are freed of the clutter that another culture has introduced; another is that we challenge our assumptions particularly of ourselves and our position. These struggles are however, still a part of our 'authentic reality' as a colonised people. We define and redefine our knowledge and ourselves in an attempt to work out the worlds we live in.

If science is a process and one that is present in various forms within many, if not all, cultures, then the major issue is not with science but with certain manifestations of it. In Aotearoa, science is western dominated, both by people and by the paradigms that it operates within. Challenges to western research and the development of Kaupapa Māori theories seek to redress this imbalance. Through examining and naming, we legitimate and assert our right to practice and own the science we practice, drawing on all forms of knowledge that are available to us.

## **Research as oppression**

There are many dimensions to the suspicion and distrust that have arisen in the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. These distrustful relationships extend to a distrust of research and an examination of knowledge production and their roles in perpetuating dominant views of the world. The suppression of knowledge is inextricably linked with the oppression of people; many indigenous peoples describing “the problematic nature of Western science and its power saturated relationship with indigenous knowledge” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 25). Science and research are distrusted as tools of oppression, sometimes manifested in the rejection of things ‘western’ and the embracing of the ‘authentic’ from an indigenous viewpoint.

Locally and internationally, science has supported dominant views of the world where “the objects of research do not have a voice and do not contribute to research or science” (Smith, 1999: 60-61). In New Zealand there is a history of research that has been carried out ‘on’ Māori. At their more negative, these approaches do not reflect Māori agendas and place Māori within deficit frameworks, giving little consideration to the role of research in perpetuating inequities (Bishop, 1996; Cram, 1995; 1997; Moewaka Barnes, 2000b; Reid, Robson, & Jones, 2000; Smith, 1999). This has resulted in Māori being reluctant to engage in research, as participants and as practitioners.

## **Contesting knowledge**

Feminists and indigenous peoples are among the critics of western knowledge and its methods of production who have felt excluded by, and not reflected in, dominant approaches to knowledge and research. Power relationships and the reductionist and exclusive nature of knowledge production positioned as a ‘truth’ isolated from the practitioner are features of these critiques (Baum, 1995; Jones, 1994; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Smith, 1999).

‘Western’ knowledge is seen as superior and consequently, the knowledge that indigenous people hold and practice is inferior. Indigenous people are placed outside the dominant systems; positioned as exotic and uncivilised (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). In Aotearoa, there has been a history of disinvestment in Māori knowledge and infrastructures. Along with the imbalance in investment has gone denigration of Māori systems; for example, the Tohunga Suppression Act, passed in 1907. Although passed for a number of reasons, Durie (1994) argued that it was a criticism of “native healers” and “a clear statement from the Government that health care would be firmly based on Western concepts and methods”. This lower status given to indigenous knowledge systems reinforces the view that knowledge and practices produced by and framed by the dominant culture are universal and objective; it also makes it impossible to make any commonly agreed claims for Māori equivalence in the current system.

Even when knowledge is produced, in whole or part, by other cultures western culture is able to appropriate and claim this knowledge as its own and thus “reaffirms the West’s view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of ‘civilized’ knowledge” (Smith, 1999: 63).

The notion that this knowledge is universal has been challenged and subsequently rejected by many Māori and other indigenous peoples. Durie (1995: 2) wrote that:

“The “universal” approach...falls well short of being able to locate Māori at the centre of the exercise or even to seriously incorporate Māori needs; nor has it significantly contributed to growing Māori researchers or promoting methodologies appropriate to Māori...in practice...other cultural views...tend to be grafted on as perspectives but within conventional disciplinary frameworks.”

It is difficult to argue for Māori science without the implicit idea that science sits in a place of status in the hierarchy of knowledge, an idea that does not always sit comfortably. However, in many debates we place ourselves in the interesting position of arguing for the status of indigenous knowledge by aligning it with science. These claims are not uncontested; given the established power dynamics it is however, an uneven contest. Science is often claimed as the domain of western knowledge, with the resultant questioning of whether Māori or other indigenous science exists (Hutchison, 2003). Many indigenous peoples refute this, pointing to indigenous examples and understandings of ‘science’ Walker (1987), and making the point that indigenous knowledge is neither static nor ‘unscientific’ (Grenier, 1998; Pottier, 2003). Pottier (2003) describes how, when science sought to make use of indigenous knowledge “the neat distinction between science and local knowledge did not last” due to the changing and complex nature of all knowledge systems, including the move for “science” (as

opposed to local knowledges) to be viewed “as less universal and more pluralistic than hitherto assumed.”

Dickison (quoted in Lomax, 1996: 12) argues that science “is distinct from the underlying knowledge base” and is more “a way of thinking”. Lomax questions the notion that this was not the domain of Māori, describing evidence that Māori had “a framework for understanding observable facts” and that “Science is a process!” He goes on to argue that we should not “confuse the data base and its interpretation (the science) with the method of gaining the information (the technology).” Twenty years ago, Walker (1987: 157) wrote about a meeting between Māori and scientists where a Māori speaker pointed out that “observation and identifying causal relations between dependent and independent variables which can be manipulated to bring about predicted results was known to the Māori.” Walker goes on to cite the examples of navigation by observation of migration and star alignments and the technology surrounding kumara propagation and cultivation.

Other indigenous writers also question the claiming of science as the preserve of western knowledge systems. Jegede (1999) argues that science is an aspect of all cultures. Grenier (1998: 49) writes “The Dene people from northern Canada want their knowledge to be known as “Dene science”!”

## **Research relationships**

In New Zealand, knowledge and research relationships between Māori and non-Māori move from the rejection of research, to approaches that seek to make research less damaging and more appropriate or responsive to Māori, to an examination of what equitable research relationships might look like; and back again depending on the circumstances.

Rejection of research manifests itself as the rejection of research processes and/or knowledge in general and a refusal to participate. Academics, including Māori academics, can be spoken of in disparaging terms as disconnected from the ‘real world’; quantitative research is a particular target because of the inappropriate ways that it has been used and because of the methods, which may be seen as inadequately oriented toward Māori (Kaupapa Māori Theory and Research Workshop, 2004).

Making research more appropriate or responsive to Māori has been a strong feature of attempts to, at the least, limit damage resulting from inappropriate ways of working. These approaches may also provide benefits for Māori by requiring specific attention to be directed to issues such as consultation, participation and the usefulness of the research to Māori (Health Research Council, 2006; Moewaka Barnes, 2003).

It has been suggested that the intention of the research is a key feature, with Māori and western peoples having different aspirations and attitudes to knowledge and its use. Māori and other indigenous peoples suggest that research should have collective, transformative uses and make sense to the people who are the focus of the research (Abdullah & Stringer, 1999; Smith, 1999).

However, making research appropriate or responsive to Māori does not necessarily involve shared leadership or collaborations and changing the approach may only be acceptable if it is not seen as a threat. Attempts to grapple with these unequal power relationships have led some writers to suggest types of relationships between what are largely positioned as two separate, and, ideally, mutually respectful systems. Durie (2002: 2) described indigenous knowledge and science as “built on distinctive philosophies, methodologies and criteria” and conceptualised relationships between Māori and non-Māori as interface, providing opportunities “for creating new knowledge that reflects the dual persuasions.”

However, power imbalances all too often create hierarchical relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous practitioners. If power is not explicitly addressed, these relationships are in danger of leaning towards the indigenous contribution being to serve the non-Māori research agenda, minimise harm to Māori participants and facilitate research rather than fundamentally change the research at its core.

## **Defining indigenous research practice**

As more indigenous people get involved as practitioners and users of research, increasing attention has been given, not only to relationships between Māori and non-Māori, but also to what is desirable or appropriate for Māori researchers and Māori research practice. One early target of these debates was the idea that, based on notions of objectivity, the researcher’s ethnicity and affiliations were irrelevant (Cram, 1997; Edwards, McManus, & McCreanor, 2005).



In Aotearoa much debate has taken place on research and research theory. One strong focus for discussion has been Kaupapa Māori theory, covering both methodologies and methods (Hui Whakapiripiri, 1996: 125; Moewaka Barnes, 2000b; Smith, 1999). Although different people will use a range of descriptors for Kaupapa Māori, most discussions will include broad characteristics such as being Māori led and controlled, having all Māori or preferably all Māori researchers, being driven by Māori agendas and aspirations and being transformative. Emphasis is also placed on research processes, relationships and other ethical considerations (Cram, 2009).

In addition to these overall approaches, there are also attempts to define Māori research in more prescriptive ways. This may include particular processes and “cultural practices” such as rituals of encounter including karakia (prayers), te reo, mihi and involvement of kaumātua (Irwin, 1994; National Aboriginal Health Association, 2002).

There have also been discussions around what research methods and methodologies are appropriate and what are not; these arguments revolve around distrust of western methods and discussions of what is ‘authentic’ in Māori research. This brings in another dimension to the rejection of research that was mentioned earlier; the rejection of particular approaches because of their role in oppression and their relation to power. This goes alongside the greater acceptance of approaches seen as more resonant with indigenous approaches.

### **‘Authentic’ Māori research**

Quantitative research, in particular, has been distrusted by Māori because of the way that it has operated to portray Māori in a negative light; statistics presenting poor Māori

health have been criticised for not offering a sense of positive change (Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999). When presented without a contextual understanding of the underlying reasons, poor health is too often seen as a result of individual lifestyle risks and health behaviours, rather than a result of broader determinants and collective responsibility.

Qualitative research is, by contrast seen by some as a more appropriate and acceptable approach (Grenier, 1998). It is viewed, perhaps naively, as a more equal relationship that enables the voices of people participating in the research to be heard. These arguments have also been put forward by non-Māori and are a strong feature of feminist critiques of research methods, where it is argued that qualitative methodologies enable a more equal conversation, where power can be negotiated in ways not generally considered or thought possible in quantitative methodologies (Bryman, 1988; Dyck & Kearns, 1995). Dyck and Kearns (1995) argue that the neutral and scientific position that quantitative approaches take up has been a process of claiming power. Māori accuse western research in general of these inequalities and quantitative research as particularly culpable. Contributors to these debates often point to Māori and other indigenous peoples coming from oral rather than written traditions (Lomax, 1996; Maurial, 1999). Not surprisingly, the methods that are seen as more appropriate are the ones that are more commonly used in qualitative research; oral rather than written and face to face rather than postal, telephone or other forms of telecommunications. Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) is standard practice in qualitative inquiries and commonly cited as the most appropriate way of gathering and disseminating information for Māori.

An example of this is demonstrated in a literature review on Māori research by Bevan-Brown (1998). She found “general agreement among Māori researchers...that objectivity with its concomitant distance and detachment is inappropriate in Māori

research...given these arguments, it is not surprising that the methods used and recommended for Māori research are subjective, qualitative approaches such as action and feminist research using participatory, emancipatory, collaborative and empowering processes.” (Bevan-Brown, 1999: 241) This notion reinforces the perception of quantitative research as more ‘objective’ than qualitative and places it on the outer in terms of appropriateness for Māori. Quantitative research is established as scientifically desirable from a western science viewpoint, more predominant among funders and other ‘mainstream’ agencies, and less desirable in Māori contexts.

Although Bevan-Brown (1999: 244) frames “objective methods” as not being recommended, she did concede that “there are exceptions. Researchers need to choose the methods that will best suit the nature and purpose of their research.” She goes on to quote Durie (1995: 37) who writes:

“What is important...is the terms under which Māori will participate in the project, but also the incorporation of Māori world views into the research design and the utilisation of measures which are capable of reflecting Māori positions.”

In more recent times, it is probably reasonable to conclude that Durie’s position is widely supported, encouraged by notable advances in Māori quantitative approaches, such as the Hauora series (Pōmare, 1980; Pōmare & De Boer, 1988; Pōmare et al., 1995; Robson & Harris, 2007). However, it is not just the way that quantitative research has been used or presented that has come under attack. The methods themselves are often rejected as not based on Māori constructs, not reflecting Māori culture and not meeting the needs of Māori. In these discussions, quantitative research

is not only seen as inappropriate in terms of power and the way it approaches knowledge, but also in the authenticity of the methods that are commonly employed. Quantitative is viewed as removed from Māori realities and inconsistent with holistic ways of working and viewing the world.

Rundstrom (1995) outlined the binary form that debates around the appropriateness of GIS (Geographical Information Systems) technology have taken. In contrast to much of the discussion outlined above, these debates are carried out within the largely non-indigenous 'GIS community'. He argued that "the epistemological system within which GIS is grounded is largely incompatible with the corresponding systems of indigenous peoples" (Rundstrom, 1995: 55). He poses the question of whether western knowledge and science, with their "overwhelming emphasis on binary thinking and the idea that ambiguity is more a liability than an asset" (Rundstrom, 1995: 50), are tools for epistemological assimilation (Rundstrom, 1995: 45). He called for caution in the GIS community in using and interpreting GIS research in cross-cultural settings. Dunn et al. (1997) described how critics of GIS often drew "parallels with quantitative approaches adopted by geographers in the 1960s or with other forms of social control" (Dunn et al., 1997: 151). They stated that GIS was "a tool of power" with "the potential to reduce social inequities or to exacerbate them" (Dunn et al., 1997: 157). They concluded however, that it could serve "the poor" rather than be an instrument of control (Dunn et al., 1997:157) if users were more cautious and aware of the politics of geographical information and associated issues of power (Dunn et al., 1997: 156). Again, significant advances in the use of GIS by Māori, where Māori values have been incorporated, in order to meet Māori goals and aspirations (Harmsworth, 1998), have seen changes in attitudes to GIS.

## **Challenging research essentialism**

Smith argues that the west uses authenticity as a criterion to “determine who really is indigenous, who is worth saving, who is still innocent and free from Western contamination” (Smith, 1999: 74). She writes that indigenous cultures cannot change nor have the same tensions and diversity that the west has without losing claims to authenticity. Indigenous cultures also parallel these tensions in discussions of essentialism, but for different reasons; “claiming essential characteristics is as much strategic as anything else, because it has been about claiming human rights and indigenous rights” (Smith, 1999: 74). However, claiming certain characteristics can come at the cost of excluding characteristics that are not seen as authentic, creating a hierarchy of indigeneity or placing Māori in the position of knowing and practicing what is not seen as ours. Just as we critique western epistemologies as separating out people from what they know and do, we separate the Māori research practitioner from the practice; the practice is Māori, but the science and tools are not.

Power and loss are the dividers between indigenous struggles with questions about what is authentic and the dominant culture’s comfort with evolving and changing knowledge. We fear losing the things that have been handed down to us, which struggle for space within the dominant culture; language is a strong example of this. The English language can adapt and adopt from a very powerful position. Changes in the English language are met by criticisms in some circles, but changes in te reo Māori are accompanied by the real fear that the language itself may die out. When faced with the fear of loss, adaptation and adoption are not to be considered lightly. As a result change carries with it a tension; colonisation and development often sit side by side. It is

unlikely that questions of contamination versus development can ever be answered and our attempts to separate and divide out have both strengths and weaknesses, particularly if we do so without question or in doing so create hierarchies of knowledge and exclusion.

Our negative perceptions of, for example, quantitative research leading to its rejection, bring oral traditions to the fore and make invisible our mathematical traditions (e.g. navigation and numerical systems.) and, at times, close off a useful method of inquiry. A major factor in this is the relationship of these to power. But, even if we could not point to some resonance with our history, the rejection of some areas of knowledge poses the danger that Māori knowledge, science and research become bounded by static notions of acceptability and by what is seen as distinct about Māori. The result of this is that our definitions fall within constructs that are seen as having a more linear relationship with pre-colonial notions of Māori; these distinctions place boundaries around what Māori research is and mask the ongoing role of Māori and other indigenous peoples in science and the development and use of knowledge. Power relationships in quantitative research have been turned over in Māori hands. For example the Hauora series, framed comparisons between Māori and non-Māori health statistics as a Māori “right to monitor the Crown and to evaluate Crown action and inaction” (Reid & Robson, 2007: 3).

## **Conclusions**

As a colonised people, describing ourselves and asserting the importance of our taonga (things that are highly valued) is part of a process of validating, making visible and advocating for the survival, recognition and practice of these things. However, it is also

a process, common to colonised people, where we constantly name and describe ourselves (and are described by others) in terms of how we differ from the norm - the dominant culture. This extends to how we view and conceptualise knowledge and the practices that spring from it. In a bid to struggle for the survival of Māori taonga we define and dichotomise knowledge, often conceptualising Māori knowledge as that which is seen as being derived largely before colonisation and denying, and being denied, ownership of knowledge that does not fit well with these constructs.

The result can be that we reject what we do not see as belonging to our past, what we feel does not distinguish us from non-Māori and knowledge and practices that non-Māori have made very effective claims to. Some methods can become privileged over others; numbers may be viewed negatively, with Māori not seen as having a numerical tradition. By contrast, qualitative methods may be considered more acceptable, resonating with oral traditions and having the ability to give voice to marginalised groups.

There is little argument that, within Aotearoa, science is western dominated and does not easily validate or value science carried out within Māori worldviews unless it can judge and recognise it from the dominant perspective. Although western knowledge draws on many different systems, including Māori and Pacific, it is played out within particular ideologies. As Māori researchers we use a range of methods or tools, some of which are identified as more western or western derived than others.

There is a tension between adopting inappropriate approaches and owning developments that we use and have contributed to before and since colonisation. We may be Māori researchers carrying out research with Māori, but some

conceptualisations suggest that this is not our knowledge and not our science; it is and will always be, forever western. However, in debating the identity of people and of knowledge in both cases Māori forms are far more than the distinctive cultural markers that we use to define and demarcate our lives and practices. Who carries out the research and the processes used will infuse the research with these diverse and often indefinable forms, regardless of the methods.

We need to challenge, question and provide the space to look theoretically and philosophically at what we do and why we do it. Kaupapa Māori Theory is one example of what can happen in this space. At its core are notions of transformation and the creation of knowledge that will advance Māori. If we do not look to this potential and instead base our concepts of knowledge and its production on bounded ideas and static constructs, we fall into binary and limited ways of thinking and understanding ourselves, which we critique as a western way of making sense of the world.

Ambiguity may not be comfortable, but it is not necessarily a liability.



## **Link two**

In the context of the concepts and structures that influence our practice, as described in the first two chapters, the following chapters move to different aspects of relationships between groups: researchers, participants and collaborators; and Māori and non-Māori. They call for a greater focus on relationships, power, decision making, and intentions, leading researchers to address more underlying considerations that guide research. *Epistemological domination: social science research ethics in Aotearoa* continues the theme of difference by looking at how ethics frameworks position Māori as other. It discusses the impacts of assumed dominant norms and practices on the ethical processes involved in research and develops the notion of resistance, which is less evident in the previous chapters.

My contribution to this chapter was informed by reading and reflecting on our research practice and experience. Discussions with colleagues and communities, presentations to and discussions with ethics committees as well as filling in numerous ethics proposals have all shaped my understanding.

The chapter was commissioned as a book chapter and written in the latter half of 2006, for submission in January 2007. Feedback from the peer review process was received in August and a revised version submitted in November 2007, the main change being less emphasis on the history of ethics in Aotearoa, as it was felt that this was covered elsewhere. Editorial feedback and proofing was concluded in early 2008.

I conceptualised, planned, provided case materials, drafted and revised this chapter for publication; Tim McCreanor provided background literature reviews, assisted with

drafting and revision; Shane Edwards provided case and conceptual materials, which I edited; and Belinda Borell contributed to conceptual development and final revisions.

Moewaka Barnes, H., Borell, B., Edwards, S. and McCreanor, T. (2009) *Epistemological domination: social science research ethics in Aotearoa*. In Mertens, D. and Ginsberg, P. (Eds) *Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. London: Sage.

## Chapter 3

# Epistemological Domination: Social Science Research Ethics in Aotearoa

In Aotearoa, now widely known as New Zealand, the sovereign territory of indigenous Māori, explored and colonized by Britain and other western nations from the 1800s onward, the ongoing impacts of the processes of illicit and unjust domination continue to reverberate (Reid & Cram, 2005). There have been profound consequences in terms of damage to Māori economy and culture (especially from land confiscation and alienation), to population health and well-being and the loss of potential and actual development. In turn, these have impacted negatively on social cohesion, justice, and equity against a background of serious disparities on all social indicators (Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias, & Bonne, 2003; Durie, 2004; Ministry of Social Development, 2006; Spoonley, Macpherson, & Pearson, 2004; Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999b; Walker, 1990).

On the other hand, the social agenda in this country has been substantially influenced by resurgent Māori development that has sought redress and culture change from the paternalistic colonial roots of our contemporary society. From the earliest encounters and as embodied in the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori have operated from an ethic of self-determination that has historically, and in the contemporary setting, fuelled tensions between Māori and non-Māori over what form that sovereignty should take (Orange, 1987; Sharp, 1990). By warfare, diplomacy, petition, protest action, via the courts and

the Waitangi Tribunal, through the development of affirmative policy agendas across the spectrum of social concern, through initiatives in indigenous education and development, Māori have battled for shared power and a more equitable social order. These challenges have not been allowed to pass unimpeded by entrenched settler<sup>5</sup> interests. A raft of mainstream measures, in the military, legal, political, and ideological domains have been enacted to maintain colonial domination (Durie, 2004).

The tension between renaissance and resistance has been obvious in the field of social research, where the past two decades have seen an efflorescence of work in Māori theory, epistemology, and research (Bishop, 1996; Cram, 2001; Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999; Moewaka Barnes, 2000b; Smith, 1999). Huge effort has gone into shifting Māori knowledge and research from the status of invisible, derogated folklore to authoritative and valued understandings that can be used in policy development and implementation, legal settlement of historical injustices (especially land claims), and support of Māori innovation and development. Established systems of ethics regulation and monitoring, from legitimating overarching paradigms to the conduct of research, remain an impediment in the struggle to articulate and enact Māori ways of knowing, research practices, knowledge creation, and transfer.

In this chapter, we examine how Māori ways of finding out about and knowing the world have been subordinated to western/settler epistemological traditions. By scrutinizing emergence of a particular set of ethical paradigms and practices and the ways in which these are imposed, we highlight the irony that, in this branch of epistemological endeavour, which is so concerned with sensitivity and safety, Māori

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<sup>5</sup> Following Bell (2004), we adopt the term *settler* to encompass the wide range of European (mainly British) cultural groups who have colonized Aotearoa since 1840.

approaches are still an adjunct to a rationalist model, the main purpose of which is sustaining the status quo. We provide a brief sketch of the political economy of Māori/Pākehā relations in Aotearoa, outline the history of ethics in this context, and provide narratives from our research experience to illustrate ways in which dominance is created and reproduced. We refer to the importance of mundane, microlevel research processes and practices as well as tensions within the broader field of social science research ethics (Cram, McCreanor, Smith, Nairn, & Johnstone, 2006) and a wider agenda for social change within New Zealand society (Dew & Davis, 2004; Kelsey, 2002; Spoonley et al., 2004). Our conclusions draw these together to argue for strong recognition of the contributions Māori research and ethical approaches are making to social equity here and to call for change and development in ethical practices.

## **Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand**

We begin with a brief account of the development of social science ethics in Aotearoa, which contextualizes the concerns we have about how Māori research ethics have been marginalized. It also contributes to the theme of “studying up” in this volume by scrutinizing the colonial system that regulates our research and practices.

In Aotearoa, government responses to Māori claims for more involvement in decision making and resource allocation have been to engage in diverse processes of consultation. However, there is a perception that such exercises are mainly about being seen to be behaving appropriately rather than changing behaviour toward more equitable power sharing (Walker, 1990). As a result, pressure has grown for fairer and more progressive engagements between Māori and Pākehā in areas such as resource management, environmental protection and sustainability, health service provision and

promotion, and Māori development in general. Research has been a key mechanism for informing policy and action in these areas.

In Aotearoa, we have a very strong and complex network of health and social ethics committees that work to apply national and uniform standards (Ministry of Health, 2006) to the conduct of research in a wide range of fields (Campbell, 1995; Goodyear-Smith, Lobb, Davies, Nachson, & Seelau, 2002; McNeil, 2002). Their early roots lie in the efforts of hospital committees, modelled on the British system (Richmond, 1977). The contemporary system has arisen out of concern with emerging medical technologies in fertility and genetics in the mid-1980s (Jones & Telfer, 1990), but especially out of a major inquiry (the Cartwright inquiry) into informal, unregulated cervical cancer research at National Women's Hospital in Auckland. This research involved observing the effects of non-intervention in women with abnormal cervical histologies. It resulted in preventable deaths from cervical cancers, illnesses, and disabilities (Cartwright, 1988; Coney, 1988; McNeil, 1989), required support and compensation for those who suffered, and brought strong censure on the researchers involved. The inquiry gave rise to a set of national ethical standards that effectively shifted practice toward the more systematic (and litigation conscious) American model (Gillett, 1989) and has reverberated throughout university, research, legal, professional, and political communities ever since (Campbell, 1991; 1995; Daniels, 1989; Poutasi, 1989; Rosier, 1989).

As research ethics emerged onto the national agenda in the early 1990s, the academy, both funders and providers, began to invest in ethical requirements and processes, motivated by a need to manage risk to researchers, to participants, and to institutions

themselves. Research proposals must now address potential risks that had hitherto been a matter of unscreened professional practice. Universities and hospitals require that research be vetted by committees that apply implicit and explicit standards. In practical terms, requirements include written participant information and consent forms, complaint processes, and provision of supports for participants in the case of possible trauma (including psychological distress) arising from the research.

There are currently three broad systems of ethical committees that may be used by researchers depending on the focus and scope of their projects: university, area health board, and the National Health and Disabilities Ethical Committees. Ethical approval is now a requirement for release of funding from external bodies and critical to career advancement of researchers. Both experience and research show some discontent with these requirements among researchers (Harris, 1988; Mitchell et al., 1994; Neutze, 1989; Paul, 1988; 2000). However, there is also general acceptance of these processes, and it is fair to say that research ethics represent an important and developing strand within social science research (Campbell, 1995; Edwards et al., 2005; Park, 1994; Tolich, 2002).

In national ethical guidelines, Māori interests are represented via a focus on broad principles derived from institutional and legal readings of the Treaty of Waitangi that attempt to enact partnership, participation, and protection for Māori and Māori communities. Overall, the guidelines require that research relating to Māori be undertaken “in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner” (Ministry of Health, 2006) that emphasizes consultation, inclusion, and knowledge sharing, and may

specifically provide for the use of te reo Māori, tikanga, relevant Māori theoretical frameworks, and Māori concepts of well-being (e.g. Durie, 1994; Pere, 1991).

The disjuncture between Māori frameworks and the rationalist western/settler epistemological system is stark. Māori epistemological and ethical schemata are essentially other and, despite advances and ambiguities, remain add-ons, widely seen as politically forced rather than critical and vital alternatives to the status quo.

The medical origins of the research ethics system in Aotearoa in part explain the mismatch with Māori research practices. Biomedical models of health operate from within positivist scientific traditions of the West (Antonovsky, 1996; Beaglehole, 2002), evoking the power relations of the objective observer operating within an impeccable methodology that ensures realist, generalisable truths. Such rationalist methodologies are incommensurable with, and intolerant of, other approaches and theories of knowledge creation and accumulation. Traditions, approaches, and methods from outside the western epistemological frame are regarded with scepticism and hostility and are regulated, undermined, and marginalized.

Most social science research in this country is conducted within positivist frameworks with a minor deviation due to theoretical poststructuralism permitting a brittle endorsement of certain qualitative styles (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Park, 1994). At a national hui of Māori social scientists convened in 2006, it was clear that, while there are a number of vital nodes of Māori social science activity, they are under resourced, overworked, and fragmented (Whāriki, 2007) and, therefore, not strongly positioned to



join and carry debates over issues of research ethics in the face of resourced, legislated, and established settler theory and practice (Clarke, 2005; Gillett, 2005; Moore, 2004).

There are multiple examples, before, during, and following first European contact, of innovative Māori development from within their own cultural resources and epistemologies that could be cited here. The point is that strengths eroded by colonial processes, particularly if provided with resources and support, are available for application to many contemporary issues of importance to Māori and the public good. In critiquing settler practices, our aim is to further open a space already spoken to by many Māori thinkers and writers to encourage wider debate and understanding of Māori contributions to social science research ethics development for Aotearoa. The rationale for this analysis turns on political considerations around self-determination of indigenous peoples, a principled support for epistemological diversity, the need for equity and justice in our social order, and a broadly pragmatic approach that seeks to ensure the best possible outcomes of research through ensuring that the ethical issues are dealt with in culturally appropriate ways.

## **Tikanga and research**

Partially in response to the National Women's Hospital scandal, Te Awekotuku (1991) stressed the importance of research responsibility and accountability to the Māori communities that it works within, warning that breakdowns would result in findings of dubious validity and jeopardize future studies.

Despite the challenges and developments led by Māori and the movement and intent shown by Pākehā, powerful mechanisms of ethical control and guidance fall well short

of embracing Māori epistemologies and have barely encompassed the need to shift beyond rationalist, positivist practice. This tension has some important implications for ethics and conventional ethical procedures. Both ethics committee and research funder application forms are designed from the perspective that the research design, processes, analysis, and dissemination will not be controlled by Māori but will involve Māori in some way. Applicants are asked for detailed information about specific population groups, aside from Pākehā, including consultation processes, the research team's knowledge and proficiency in relevant languages and customs, ongoing involvement of groups consulted, and dissemination practices. For Māori, the perception is that these requirements are intended to engage non-Māori researchers in efforts to make their practices safe for Māori and other groups they might work with.

As a result of this emphasis, Māori members on ethics committees work within particular paradigms and references that are not necessarily very meaningful or relevant to a Māori research ethic. These dominant ethical epistemologies are not only applied to non-Māori working with Māori but also to Māori working with Māori.

What speaks to how indigenous people should conduct themselves and whose realm this is? In the climate of research ethics development described above and through the theorizing of Kaupapa Māori research (Smith, 1995; 1999), a number of Māori concepts have been articulated and incorporated into Māori research practice. Contributing to these discussions, Cram (2009) outlines a number of areas that Māori may consider to be central to a Māori research ethic. Several papers (Edwards et al., 2005; Jones, Crengle, & McCreanor, 2006) point out the implications of these approaches for researchers and participants, arguing for processes to protect both parties.

Through the practice of research, ethical processes are evaluated by Māori and non-Māori. In a Māori worldview, many of the non-Māori practices (and in some cases also Māori) are evaluated as unethical, and it is not uncommon for us to start a research relationship by trying to rebuild some of the trust that has been lost. Although all researchers are evaluated by the people they work with, non-Māori working with Māori usually have more choice about what level of evaluation they accept from Māori and the level of detachment they feel from this evaluation.

An overriding understanding among Māori is that, if indigenous researchers do not conduct themselves with accountability to Māori ways of operating, the comeback will be much greater and more devastating than any censure that an ethics committee could deliver. As Cram (2009) concludes, and we illustrate in our stories from the field, transgressions can reverberate throughout families and through generations.

As Māori, we are used to walking in at least two worlds—the diverse environments that stem from Māori worldviews and the world of the colonizer, which surrounds us. As researchers, we negotiate these worlds and the spaces between them. Meeting institutional ethical requirements is about fitting into the dominant processes, knowing what is required, and ensuring that when we come to carry out the research we will not be hamstrung by these requirements. This means that we often fill in ethics proposals in ways that keep our options open; we can then act appropriately in the Māori world without being limited by what we have written on the ethics form.

In Māori worlds, we carry out research with many ethics requirements acting as a kind of *white noise*. We work in ways that we know to be appropriate for Māori but still make sure that we fulfil institutional ethics requirements. We acknowledge that areas ethics committees focus on are useful to think through, but the processes that are central to institutional ethics are rarely of central concern to Māori.

When carrying out research, the first information that we give as Māori is who we are and where we are from, that is, our affiliations, tribal and otherwise, including our research organization. Māori who we engage with generally want to know the purpose of the research, who owns and benefits from the information, and what the dissemination processes are. The purpose of the research is also an important institutional requirement, but, for Māori, it is seen as more than what the researchers want to know and encompasses why the researchers are doing the research; what their agendas are and whether they are to be trusted (see also Cram, 2009).

An example of the different importance placed on ethical processes is attitudes toward informed consent and confidentiality. Māori (researchers and participants) frequently view consent forms as a known requirement of universities; something we fill in for Pākehā independent of any expectations that the participant has about the acceptability of the research process. Expectations about the research relationship and our communication and accountability processes are separate and may be unspoken. This relationship-based ethic may clash with an ethics committee approach, for here relationships are in an ongoing process of negotiation, rather than a one-off decision.

Māori understand these differences and negotiate them with regular monotony acutely aware of the difference that attaches. But, when you are of the dominant culture, there is little need to question your own worldview or sometimes even to acknowledge that you have one. The pragmatic approach that Māori take to gaining ethics approval and then acting ethically (not necessarily the same thing) enables the system to function and apparently work for Māori—Māori researchers carry out projects and regularly gain ethics approval for them. As such, it presents few challenges to the dominant way of viewing ethics.

Our experiences as a Māori research group reflect the importance of processes and building relationships over time. Research proposals are often developed over many years of engagement, informal and formal. However, since community connection and involvement in research including design, implementation, and dissemination are built into the ongoing practices of our research group, we do not fit with funder expectations and requirements, despite strongly meeting ethical obligations. Proposal forms from the Health Research Council (HRC) of New Zealand (2006) ask for evidence and documentation of consultation and networking with Māori as well as descriptions of the cultural skills and competencies of researchers. First, our immersion in Māori communities means that the dynamics do not lend themselves to such documentation. Second, we are only able to undertake the work we do because of these competencies while non-Māori researchers are able to proceed (with negative or unknown impacts) by meeting the instrumental requirements of an ethics committee. Non-Māori groups are not required to provide equivalent credentials for knowledge of English language or specific Pākehā cultural practices.

The following stories from the field illustrate ways in which the glacial pace of change affects Māori social research practice. From these examples, we have learned much about the ethics apparatus and can discern a number of states that prevail, including blocking and falling short of Māori ethical requirements. Responding to Māori challenges, we draw these insights together in our conclusions.

### **Stories from the field**

In a Māori sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) study (Edwards et al., 2005; McManus, Abel, & McCreanor, 2005), we carried out the requirements of the funder (HRC) and host institution (Auckland University), committing to the standard provisions of informed consent and confidentiality. However, we were acutely aware that gathering data from the Māori parents who had lost a baby to SIDS required far more. The project was driven by completely different concerns that turned on the safety and well-being of the researchers and our participants who, apart from their obvious loss, were frequently subjected to gruelling and adversarial police and coronial inquiries that in many cases cast the tragedy as a crime to be solved, damagingly disrupting and prolonging grief processes and resolution (Clarke & McCreanor, 2006).

From the outset, the project was developed as a partnership between the researchers and members of the National Māori SIDS Prevention Team (MSPT) (Everard, 1997; Tipene-Leach, Abel, Haretuku, & Everard, 2000) to understand the contexts in which Māori SIDS occurs so as to strengthen prevention efforts. We based our approach firmly in Māori ethical practices that considered the inherent sacredness of the objectives (to reduce preventable loss of babies) and the significant affects on the well-being of parents. These orientations to the situation and the *mana* of the people involved

arose from MSPT praxis and the values of Māori research team members and guided the development of the research design and implementation.

MSPT care workers discussed possible contributors from within their caseloads and made selections based on their perceptions of readiness of the bereaved parents to give interviews and on sample diversity criteria. Care workers approached possible participants with whom, as a matter of established MSPT practice, they had firmly established and ongoing relationships, in a staged process, a minimum of 18 months after the death of the baby. Where parents agreed to participate, the individual care workers set up the meetings, attended the interviews, and provided follow-up to encompass any reactions and distress arising from revisiting the trauma.

A number of participants commented that they achieved a kind of closure through provision of a safe, secure environment in which to tell their own story from beginning to end without interruption, pressure, or deflection from investigative authorities or family members with different perceptions of events. We obtained data of the highest quality about the social and environmental antecedents of Māori SIDS and its sequelae and disseminated widely through hui, reports (McManus et al., 2005) and publications (Edwards, McCreanor, Ormsby, Tuwhangai, & Tipene-Leach, 2009; Edwards et al., 2005) locally and internationally; the study has significantly contributed to understanding determinants of indigenous SIDS.

### ***Lessons from the field: Edwards and McCreanor***

*“Hauora Tāne: Health of Māori Men”* was another HRC-funded project that involved authors Edwards and McCreanor. In the face of entrenched health disparities that saw Māori men, as a group, experiencing worse health than other demographic subgroups

within Aotearoa, we sought to understand the social determinants of these outcomes through life story data gathered as individual interviews (Jones et al., 2006).

The university ethics committee required the usual provisions for confidentiality and informed consent. In practice, we found that these forms were at best irrelevant “red tape” and, at worst, a source of suspicion, disrupting the expected Māori processes of research and evoking questions about what would happen to the forms and who really controlled the research.

The impetus for the study arose from the work of Māori researchers who had carried out a replication of *Rapuora*, a national survey of Māori women’s health (Murchie, 1984), in partnership with the Māori Women’s Welfare League (MWWL). They were challenged to carry out an equivalent study of the health and well-being of Māori men and the funded research included capability building and skills development among Māori men in recognition of the low profile of the issue on official horizons and the scarcity of Māori male researchers. We knew that the issues around Māori men’s health would be sensitive and not easy to articulate. We therefore adopted an approach that relied on matching interviewers and participants on both geographic and gender variables and also drew strongly on tikanga to guide and manage the project. Through the MWWL, we recruited men with whākapapa or community connections, most of whom had no research training or experience, to gather the data within each of the League’s administrative regions. We provided live-in training at marae in Auckland, regular e-mail contact and mentoring while they were in the field, and gatherings to debrief and discuss data analysis. We engaged the male researchers we had trained to pilot test a national survey that was developed from the qualitative research and made



use of the established networks to facilitate the return of the research findings to audiences in each of the districts as well as a major report (Jones et al., 2007) and published paper (Jones et al., 2006).

Because the project was set against the background of a well-regarded study, responded to Māori calls for research, and was conducted through Māori networks and processes, the project was able to proceed and collect data of outstanding quality. Initial suspicion of the project, which threatened participation, was able to be allayed, not through institutional ways of proceeding with the research, but in spite of the institutional requirements that had given rise to the suspicion in the first place.

### ***Lessons from the field: Helen Moewaka Barnes***

In the late 1990s, I put in an ethics research proposal to a university committee, covering evaluation of Māori projects in several communities, run by four Māori service providers. We had been selected by the providers and were working with them throughout the evaluation as well as jointly appointing and supporting community researchers. Evaluation plans had been worked through and agreed to by each of the providers. This was detailed in the ethics proposal.

One comment from the ethics committee was that we could not telephone and make arrangements to carry out interviews with Māori participants; our process should be to ring, introduce ourselves, make an appointment to visit, and further explain the project. If the participant agreed, make an appointment to return to carry out an interview. These processes had not been suggested for another project we were working on with mainly non-Māori participants. This requirement was mentioned at a hui where we were

discussing evaluation processes. A Māori researcher from another university said that they had been told the same thing and had told the committee that this is what they would do, even though they were unsure whether this would work in practice. Our response had been to write a detailed letter to the ethics committee explaining why this process would not be necessarily appropriate.

We explained that the researchers were selected in collaboration with their iwi and would follow appropriate processes for each situation. For example, it is not uncommon to interview someone and then be told who you are going to interview next. One elder said to me, “You should talk to our kaumātua down the road. I’ll ring and see if he’s home, then I’ll take you down.” Under set rules of encounter, this approach would not be possible. The prescribed ethical approach would take precedence over the wishes of these two kaumātua. This is not to say that flexibility is not acceptable to ethics committees, it is more that ethics forms guide one to write in a particular way, filling in set sections with set practices. It is simpler and easier to say to ethics committees “this is how we will do it” (as our hui participant did) rather than to explain that there will be a range of ways, and we may not be able to describe the full list of possibilities. Our explanation was accepted by the committee.

At a later date, and to another ethics committee, we filled in an ethics form in a way that left the research process open for communities and participants to have their tikanga needs met. This was a time-consuming process, and it would have been much simpler to fill in the form in a straightforward, one-size-fits-all approach.

Each section required some detail and an open range of possibilities. For example, to refer to the issue in the previous story, the section asking who would make the initial approach to participants we wrote,

This will depend on the entry point into the research project. Some will already be involved through the collaborating iwi groups, some will attend the hui and some will be suggested by others . . . some participants will directly contact the researchers. The researchers are known in their communities. If an approach is to be made to someone who has been suggested, then the most appropriate way of contacting this person/whānau will be determined . . . We will very much follow a process that is appropriate for the situation, for the potential participant and for their role in the community.

Issues of confidentiality also required some explanation. We wrote that we would discuss these issues in the consultation and collaboration processes and would develop protocols for identifying what information is of a more sensitive and locational nature. We undertook to look at different levels of knowledge sharing; some information could be held by the iwi in each site and decisions made as to what is iwi owned and held and what and how information is to be dispersed to wider audiences. Although confidentiality is often a cornerstone of ethics, we suggested that, in some cases, it might be unethical not to name or identify some organizations; for example, if there are particular issues that a marae group has with their whenua, the research may be used to highlight and develop strategies to deal with the issue.

In other sections, the way in which various hui and discussions would guide the tikanga were detailed. The information and consent sheets provided multiple options, to be selected at a later date, depending on the process to be followed. However, the ethics proposal also stated that written consent might be seen as inappropriate or some participants might wish to provide oral consent as a point of tikanga. We described how we wanted to be able to offer a range of consent options to each community and to work within their tikanga, consistent with the principles outlined by our university.

These principles included partnership, respect, and individual and collective rights. We felt this directed researchers to be flexible and responsive in working with Māori, rather than following a set way of conducting the research. An aside to this story is that, when working with a non-Māori researcher who was requested by a hapū group to carry out research using their particular tikanga practices, the non-Māori researcher's response was that this breached ethics. This researcher was following the preordained, individual process that had been described in the proposal, rather than one that was respectful of participants' collective approaches. In this example, it is possible to see how one set of ethics directly challenges another.

It was uncertain how the ethics committee would view our proposal. To their credit, they were very positive, and the proposal was accepted. It is likely that their trust in the process was due to some particular circumstances—the people on the committee, previous proposals by the applicant, and the applicant being known to the committee and having discussed ethics, Māori, and the Treaty with them on their invitation. Since implementation, one of the iwi groups we were working with wanted to incorporate the project as part of a wider strategic research direction. Because our ethics proposal had

built these types of processes and possibilities into the project, we were able to be responsive and develop this direction with minimal problems. A straightforward notification to the university ethics committee followed.

One further comment on this project came from a funding committee, which felt that we had not thought through the ethical implications fully enough. This was despite the fact that this was a joint proposal put forward by researchers and iwi who had worked together for a decade. We had explained our longstanding whākapapa and research connections, our process of working together through negotiation and individual and collective decision making, but we did not have a predetermined ethical standard. Thinking through the implications would be integral and ongoing as the research progressed; it was our perception that this reliance on a relationship ethic, rather than a procedural ethic saw our approach judged as unthought through.

A related story, illustrating the serious way we as Māori view transgressions, came about in my role as a support person for a Ph.D. student. In their master's program, the student had developed a trusting relationship with a Māori person of high mana who had contributed to the student's thesis. The student had found much wisdom in their conversations (interviews) and was planning to further discuss the subject for the doctorate, when the kaumātua died. The student sought the permission of the family to include the previous material, outlining possible processes.

The family response was supportive; they understood that there was a trusting relationship and also noted that the student would need to heed the mana of the

deceased in any use of the data. The ethics committee would, because of institutional requirements, need to give approval before the processes could be implemented.

On the face of it, this might seem a relatively straightforward situation, but the student was aware of deep implications. To refer to our previous point about transgressions, any inappropriate use on the student's part could bring censure on them from the committee. This is negligible, however, in the face of what it would mean in the Māori world, where the wairua of the student, the student's family, and even wider could be affected for generations. To include this information is a daunting prospect, but not to include it can be unethical; the knowledge was given to be shared, in the hope of others learning and benefiting. The task with which the researcher is charged is to do it, fully understanding these issues and responsibilities.

These experiences highlight a tension between filling out a proposal in the commonly expected way and following principles such as the ones in the Treaty of Waitangi, which lead the research process to be a more flexible, iterative one.

It could be argued that confidentiality is not necessarily a Māori issue. However, confidentiality issues are illustrative of where worldviews and concepts may clash. There is a pervasive standard of anonymity in mainstream research. In ethics forms, a researcher doesn't have to ensure anonymity but needs to explain any departure from this assumed standard. Anonymity and identity are interlinked and are a complex matter for Māori. In some hui (e.g., Hui Whakapiripiri), Māori have described anonymity as unethical and a nonstandard practice; being able to front up, face-to-face, and having stories attributed is the standard. If research is going to make a difference, then

anonymity may be counterproductive—how do you tell the story of your hapū and colonization if you can't name and identify yourself?

If tikanga is about processes, then the main role of external groups such as ethics committees is to safeguard the tikanga of others, rather than prescribing what tikanga is and how it is applied in advance, implying that there is a universal right or wrong way of doing things. Tikanga is about ensuring that relationships and processes are in place to enable the research to follow paths that work for each participant and for each situation, many of which cannot be anticipated. The more closely that researchers are involved with the researched, the more likely it is that they will need to be responsive and adaptable and the greater the likelihood that they will be able to do so; close relationships with the local community, for example, can ensure that the appropriate people will be on board and able to provide expertise, endorsement, and guidance for the research. In this way, prescribing a right and wrong way of carrying out research may not be ethical for the participants involved.

In relation to ensuring ethical ways of conducting research and ethical implications, if we live within a Māori worldview, how *could we* as researchers transgress without serious reverberations? The care and respect (and bravery) that is needed to tread these paths is at the forefront of our minds, possible censure by the academy is truly white noise by comparison.

### ***Lessons from the field: Shane Edwards***

Tikanga, described as wise action and thought, draws on theory and practices validated by Māori. The most interesting and challenging ethical dilemmas are not where right and wrong are clear but rather where they are conflicted.

The following example arose in the context of a doctoral study that required university ethics approval. My research practice is informed by my personal ethics; what is wisest given my knowledge level of particular situations. The greatest concern I had was the effects that my activities would have for all concerned, on the mana of my participants, my people, and myself. In Māori communities that I am familiar with, the consequences to the individual and their whānau can remain for generations.

My personal ethics were informed by my knowledge of my own tribal (Ngāti Maniapoto) context, having resided, watched, listened, and practiced over years of inclusion and involvement. The knowledge of the potential effects on long-term collective and personal mana and responsibility, together with the shame that would touch my family possibly well into the future, was foremost in my mind.

In my doctoral research, I am recording and studying the extant knowledge of elders with whom I share whākapapa connections. These kinships have been forged into relationships over many years and many interactions. Interestingly, actions of earlier ancestors that neither I nor the participants have known resonated through these relationships with vividness and clarity during the course of our (re)connections. The scope of our relationships meant that, as well as the topics of the research, the elders regularly discussed my development as part of their care for, and of, me and my family.



Perhaps unsurprisingly, this resulted in high levels of mutual trust and my elders were supportive of me engaging in the study; when I talked to them about the possibility of interviewing them, all agreed.

However, having received my elders' ethical approval to engage in this research, enrolling in a course of doctoral study at a university meant that I was also required to apply for research ethics approval via that system; I effectively needed two sets of ethical approval. As part of my ethics application to the university, I was keen to maintain a Ngāti Maniapoto epistemological approach consistent with my cultural grounding and the theme of my research.

Te reo Māori is one of the official languages of Aotearoa, and I wrote my ethics application in te reo Māori and answered the questions concisely. For the ethics committee viewing the application, this was challenging as it was believed to be the first application they had received in te reo Māori; translation was required. Even so members not familiar with the Māori world were left with more questions than answers and I met with the full committee to discuss the application. I explained to them in English what I was doing; although they were happy with that, they said they needed to have something for their records. Once the discussion ended, the Chair of the committee said that my discussion had greatly enhanced their understandings. Members commented that they were clearly dealing with two different systems; for me it was two different worldviews and two different ideologies. At the conclusion, the Chair requested that I write my verbal iterations up and the committee would be happy to accept the application. I pondered for a minute and asked if I might be allowed to do so orally as this was the best way I could express myself and that it was exactly what my

research was arguing for. Some members of the committee felt excited by this, with a lawyer member saying that, since oral evidence is acceptable in court, oral ethics should be given the same space. The Chair, on behalf of the committee, agreed after requesting that I speak in English to expedite approval decisions. I agreed but informed him that it would not be as relevant and contextual in English, as regards my hapū and iwi and our epistemologies. Ethical approval was granted after the Chair of the Ethics Committee had heard my tape.

We have since heard from a colleague that an ethics application in Māori to another committee was required to be resubmitted in English (J. Gavala, personal communication, June 10, 2006).

To be able to articulate something of what it means for me to work within Māori approaches, I developed a conceptual schema that encapsulates the ethical framework guiding my research. I suggest a set of mā tāpuna (principles) and uara (values) that can be applied to Māori contexts and may have wider relevance for other settings. The three mā tāpuna I propose are tika, pono, and aroha, terms often referred to in Māori settings. They are the researcher's accountabilities to hapū and whānau,<sup>6</sup> namely, to act in a manner that does not detract from, but maintains or enhances the mana of the whānau or hapū. Actions are based on correctness, truthfulness, honesty, and transparency, for the benefit of the research participants and, at times of conflict, the overriding responsibility for the researcher is to focus on others.

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<sup>6</sup> In this context, whanau refers also to a group that shares a common identity or belonging, for example, a group of researchers working under the banner of a university.

I also suggest a set of uara that detail the researcher's responsibilities, first to the participants and second, the researcher's whānau and hapū. Broadly speaking, the uara cover relationships, communication, reciprocity (benefits and hospitality), ongoing connections, bonds and interactions, mutual respect, the researcher's place, and their spiritual and physical well-being.

## **Conclusions**

Contrasting views exist on ethical theory and practice between Māori and non-Māori and within and between different groups of Māori. Acknowledging and enabling approaches that reconcile diverse worldviews is a challenge for this generation and those to come. Reconciliation lies in the negotiation of ambivalence and contestation that is always present in journeys of development. This ambivalence and contestation is common to minority peoples who share histories where the "dominance of certain types of cultural form have had to be negotiated continually in the process of liberation and reclamation" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999: 12).

These few stories plus the accumulated wisdom of the Māori literature in this area suggest that conventional ethical requirements are alien and alienating to Māori researchers and communities and cannot provide or understand the kinds of protection and guidance needed for the successful and more equitable conduct of social research.

Ethics for Māori research takes many flexible forms and a variety of ethics frameworks and guides present themselves for consideration. These range from western epistemologically based ethics proposals to frameworks developed by Māori, usually very strongly relationship based.

The stories that we have presented demonstrate that one size does not fit all, even within Māori research approaches. What they have in common is the commitment to honouring relationships and being guided by the researched in recognition that tikanga (ethics) lies with participants. This is in contrast to the dominant epistemological approach, which vests ethics with the researcher and is largely determined by preset requirements. What this lends itself to is the domination of one epistemology over another (e.g., non-Māori vs. Māori), the subordination of evolving ethical processes that would enable greater decision making and power to sit with participants and, lastly, the tendency to tread safe and preset paths rather than diverse journeys (between and within cultures).

For these reasons, some suggest separate ethics committees or processes for Māori; this is not an unlikely scenario. However, a change in focus for mainstream ethics approval may benefit both non-Māori and Māori. A greater focus on relationships, power, decision making, and intentions would lead researchers to address more underlying ethical considerations that guide processes. Evidence of relationships and processes to guide ethics and tikanga is a legitimate basis for ethical approval, as is the understanding that Māori are being judged and evaluated within an incredibly powerful and relevant framework.

It is acknowledged that some actions are in themselves a cause for alarm and that a shift in focus would present those vested with approving research protocols with the tension of having enough information about actions to feel that the researcher understands safety and conduct issues while not requiring so much set detail that the ethics protocols

are immutable. Currently, this balance is weighted on the side of prescribed action where participants' greatest power is the refusal to participate.

### **Link three**

*Epistemological domination: social science research ethics in Aotearoa* suggested that equitable relationships were a key consideration in research ethics. Through Māori researcher stories we described how Māori place a strong emphasis on developing equitable relationships to ensure the integrity of the research process. The following chapter calls for researchers to think beyond ethical requirements to notions of a relationship ethic and what this means for research and evaluation practice.

*Māori and Evaluation: Some Issues to Consider* continues the theme of relationships, looking at this issue from the standpoint of non-Māori wanting to develop relationships with Māori. Although originally written for evaluators, the issues are applicable to research in general and also refer back to the validity of research and the legitimacy of researchers in the eyes of communities, issues touched on in the previous three chapters.

The themes in this chapter come from lectures and presentations over the years, from sitting on assessing committees and from reading and reviewing policies and guidelines on research involving Māori. It was written in the mid 2002 as an invited book chapter. Reviewer comments were received in October 2002 and minor revisions completed in the same month.

Moewaka Barnes, H. (2003) *Māori and Evaluation: Some Issues to Consider*, in Lunt, McKegg & Davidson (eds), *Evaluation: A New Zealand Reader*. Pearson Press.

## Chapter 4

# Engaging Māori in Evaluation: Some Issues to Consider

In the past, suspicion and distrust has arisen from research that has been carried out ‘on’ Māori with little or no consideration of Māori aspirations or researcher accountabilities. This history has relevance for both Māori and non-Māori engaged in evaluation research (Bishop, 1996; Cram, 1995; 1997; Moewaka Barnes, 2000b; Smith, 1999). For non-Māori carrying out research with or involving Māori, it is hoped that the process now is more usually located on a continuum. This ranges from compliance, where Māori may be dealt with as research ‘subjects’ according to ethical procedures that are largely designed to protect participants<sup>7</sup>, to a collaborative process where Māori are involved at an upstream point in the research and a partnership approach is pursued. This paper deals with issues for non-Māori researchers engaging or wanting to engage with Māori. As such it is not a ‘guidebook’ for those who “are often still ‘operating in (and ironically maintaining) that majority space’” (Myers, 2004:8 cited in Ormond, Cram, & Carter, 2004), but asks non-Māori researchers to examine what it means to occupy this space and whether Māori are at the margins or have some real ability to enter into and engage with the research.

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<sup>7</sup> Albeit arising at least in part from the motivation to protect institutions; a point made in the previous chapter.

## **Relevance to Māori**

All evaluation in this country, even if it does not appear to have direct relevance to Māori, raises obligations to be considered under the Treaty of Waitangi. Some of these are also relevant to and may act as principles for other research situations.

Even if the evaluation project does not have a specific Māori focus, if it impacts on the health of the general population, or sub-groups it is also likely to impact on Māori. If it is Māori focused, of particular relevance to Māori or involves Māori participation to some degree, evaluators need to examine what this means for the evaluation process. The following sections outline some of the areas for consideration.

## **Engagement**

The earlier that Māori are involved in the formulation of the evaluation, the more Māori are able to make choices about whether the evaluation should be carried out at all, what level of involvement and control they want, who should carry out the evaluation and what they want from it. The further the evaluation progresses, the less opportunity there is to have input, except to comment on what has already been done and make suggestions for the future (Health Research Council, 1998). Once ideas are set in motion, it becomes less and less possible for new parties to have any level of ownership of the process. It is likely that the later that people are consulted, the less power they will have to change anything or have significant impacts on the research. It also means that the evaluation is less likely to have any impact on them and their work, which may compromise its usefulness to stakeholders and other Māori endusers of the research. It is vital, therefore that, when a programme is being evaluated, an inclusive approach is



taken with all key stakeholders (relevant to the scope of the research), particularly Māori.

Although it may be tempting, finding one person or a small group of people to support your work, is rarely effective in the long run. Others may refuse to be involved or feel that the consultation has been tokenistic. The evaluation risks being of limited use because those who may use or be affected by your work have not had an opportunity to be involved; the evaluation may be missing key information, either through people withholding information or by their refusal to participate. The evaluation and the evaluators may also be seen as less credible and their chances of carrying out any further work in those communities will be compromised.

As a Māori research group, we look carefully at how the first approaches will be made. Whenever possible, we try to match researchers with the whākapapa (in this sense whākapapa means blood ties and other connections) of the area or organizations that are involved. This means that there are pre-existing relationships that can serve as starting points. Further approaches are often made under the umbrella of or with the support of these initial contacts, giving others an indication of who you are and where you come from (Moewaka Barnes, 2000a).

However, even if the research is supported by Māori, partnership and engagement are not always appropriate or possible. The Māori workforce is small and overstretched. Communities/people you approach may support your evaluation, but not feel it is a priority for them to have a high level of involvement. Although the evaluators may feel passionately that their study is beneficial, expecting involvement because of priorities

set by others does not respect the right of those approached to make their own decisions. As a result of different priority setting, Māori may be more interested in the results than in being part of the process.

This highlights the importance of evaluation being included from the inception of programmes, where it is hoped that a process of negotiation will promote mutual understandings and commitments about the role and importance of the evaluation and what each party will contribute and what each party hopes to gain.

## **Involvement**

There are many possible levels of involvement from the more ‘upstream’, where Māori are more likely to have a degree of control over the evaluation (e.g. the opportunity to veto, to formulate the research questions, be involved in the design) to the more ‘downstream’ approach of talking (often misleadingly called consultation) to Māori once the evaluation design is largely completed.

Significant involvement is more likely to occur if Māori are approached at the upstream level. As the research process progresses, Māori involvement is much less likely to be equitable (e.g. employing a junior researcher) and is more usually in the form of input to ‘enhance’ the project or enable it to be more ‘appropriate’ or acceptable to funders and participants. Responsiveness and appropriateness for Māori - or whatever terms are used – are not solely the responsibility of Māori. All too often consultation is undertaken because it is a requirement of a funding or ethics body and without the researchers attempting to think through their roles and responsibilities as researchers and as Treaty partners. Effective consultation should be undertaken at the earliest

possible time, in good faith and with knowledge of and respect for the process and purpose of consultation (other than meeting researcher obligations).

However, the reality is that frequently an evaluation is imposed on a programme and the researchers may have little control over its parameters, other than in deciding whether they will do it or not. Consultation in this context is not about being able to offer those consulted with any level of control over the evaluation.

Whatever the context, it is important that the evaluators have thought through and are realistic about why they are consulting and what the parameters of the consultation are prior to approaching others. This may involve asking the following:

- Why are we consulting?
- Why are we asking these people?
- What are we asking of these people?
- What can we offer?
- What do we want to learn from this consultation?
- What do we want to let others know?
- What can/will happen as a result e.g. what power do those consulted with have to change the evaluation?
- How will we follow up on the consultation?

It is important that those consulted with are kept informed of any outcomes; so that they do not feel that their voice has been ignored or marginalised. Expectations that arise as a result of the consultation also need to be followed through. This will be dependent on

what is negotiated; with some a research partnership may develop, others although not wanting to be involved may, for example, want copies of reports.

## **Accountability**

Some evaluation can be damaging. Active protection presents challenges to researchers. At the least researchers need to consider the possible implications of their work and to take responsibility for their processes and the research findings. Will the research add to negative or unhelpful images of Māori? Will it perpetuate current assumptions and power relationships or will it present new perspectives and challenges that support Māori aspirations? Evaluators may want to consider the following:

- Ownership of the research, including processes and findings,
- How the research is approached, presented and disseminated and
- Researcher obligations above and beyond the life of the project.

To be effective evaluation often requires a level of trust. As evaluators we may be asking people for their co-operation, active support, time and knowledge. We recognise that we need to offer something in return. It has been our experience that evaluators may be invited in and welcomed with open arms; providers and communities can be excited by the opportunities that evaluation can offer and by the possibility that their work will receive some recognition and possibly some credibility to help with funding and other needs. On the other hand, we also need to tread carefully, demonstrating that we work collaboratively, recognise multiple accountabilities and want the work that we do to be used by the communities involved. For us, working through existing connections is a clear statement of researcher accountabilities. As Māori working through these processes, if we ‘stuff up’ we don’t merely compromise our integrity with

individual organizations; we are answerable to any group or any person who has given us their support, including whānau and iwi (Moewaka Barnes, 1999).

In the past, our reciprocity has included koha, presentations at hui, assisting with other information needs, seeking additional funding in order to meet training needs in some communities and maintaining ongoing relationships. We have also involved community researchers, appointed in collaboration with the communities and organizations involved or interested in the evaluation. Some of these have gone on to careers in research.

## **Research agendas**

Finally, while this paper has focused largely on processes, evaluators need to consider the findings of the evaluation, for example, who will own the findings and how will they be presented? Evaluators need to ask whose needs the evaluation is serving and how they might realistically and effectively be able to meet those needs.

Conflicts can arise between what funders see as their information needs and what other stakeholders (communities, programme implementers) want. Sometimes evaluators can end up explaining the usefulness of the funder's criteria to communities while pushing the legitimacy of the community's position to funders. This is perhaps one of the most difficult areas in evaluation. If differing needs and perspectives cannot be reconciled and met, at least to some extent, within the one project, evaluators risk carrying out work that is accepted by one group and rejected by another. Again this illustrates the importance of bringing stakeholders together at the earliest possible stage, where it is hoped that negotiation will enable some mutual understandings. Even when the

evaluation has been largely pre-determined, it may be possible and useful to look at what role other views and concepts might play. For example, in an evaluation of a community action project aimed at developing strategies to reduce alcohol-related vehicle crashes in a rural police district, community capacity, authentic partnership, self-reliance and sustainability were examined (McCreanor, Moewaka Barnes, & Mathews, 1998). The evaluation covered both Māori and Pākehā initiatives that were implemented as part of the project. What emerged was that, although these concepts had some relevance for Māori, they were expressed and understood differently. For Māori, the evaluation needed to be able to embrace kaupapa, identity and tikanga. Without this a great deal of the uniqueness and value of the Māori initiatives that emerged from the evaluation would have remained invisible. Capturing this depth of knowledge and what that knowledge means in relation to research can only be done if Māori are actively involved.

Increasingly we are moving away from the idea of researchers as objective discoverers and conduits of knowledge and recognising that we bring our own interpretations and agendas to our work. The same information can be seen and presented differently by different people and differing agendas can also drive the way research is framed and presented. For example, comparisons between Māori and non-Māori health status can be presented to highlight 'unhealthy behaviours' or to monitor how, as a society, we perpetuate disparities and inequities. Different responses and different solutions will be elicited by these interpretations.

The suspicion and distrust spoken of earlier can only be alleviated by research and researchers acknowledging and grappling with the challenges that are presented. A part

of this is recognising our own agendas and examining the spaces that we occupy before we attempt to engage others.

#### **Link four**

The previous chapter contributes to ethical and other research literature that focuses on non-Māori and researchers in general, working with Māori or carrying out research involving Māori. In writing *Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships*, I developed the theme of relationships by writing from an indigenous perspective about what it means to be in a consultative role; to support a largely non-Māori Kaupapa. It seemed critical to me that we document and explore these experiences and that this was an important contribution to an examination of Māori and non-Māori paradigms and approaches. However, I found a dearth of literature on this topic.

I started work on the paper in mid 2006, drawing on my experiences with the New Zealand Values Survey team in order to illustrate our Māori research group's decision making criteria and the implications of developing positive research relationships between Māori and non-Māori. I conceptualised, planned, drafted and finalised the paper. Tim McCreanor assisted with refining the survey in relation to Māori, Treaty and resource items, discussed the data and analysis and contributed to the final draft. John Huakau, statistician, provided the data and analyses of the relevant items and read the final draft. The paper was submitted to *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Sciences Online* in March 2008.

Moewaka Barnes, H., McCreanor, T. and Huakau, J. Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships, *Kōtuitui : New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences*.



## Chapter 5

# Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships

### Abstract

In Aotearoa requirements for non-Māori researchers to consult with Māori compete with by Māori for Māori research agendas. Nevertheless, Māori provide varying forms of consultation, with Māori perspectives rarely being entered into the literature. Following an invitation from the Centre for Social Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE), members of the Whāriki Research Group agreed to take a consultative role, providing Māori input into the New Zealand Values Survey 2004. After initial examination of the survey instrument and follow-up on previous consultation with Māori, Whāriki's main role focused on questions relevant to the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>8</sup> and to Māori. The questions and related findings were of particular salience in the context of ongoing controversy and challenges to the status of the Treaty and to the position of Māori in Aotearoa. Here we describe research processes and relationships and present the findings with reference to their social and political implications.

### Māori and non-Māori relationship frameworks

A number of theories and frameworks have been suggested in efforts to describe relationships between Māori and research knowledge production. Foremost among

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<sup>8</sup> A covenant between Māori and the Crown, signed in 1840.

discussions on Māori driven and controlled research is Kaupapa Māori theory. When describing a broader taxonomy of research in Aotearoa, Cunningham (1999) postulated a framework comprising four descriptors; research not involving Māori, research involving Māori, Māori-centred research and Kaupapa Māori research. Each of these involves different degrees of Māori involvement and control, from little or none (research not involving Māori), through to complete, or almost complete, control in the case of Kaupapa Māori.

In addition to these parameters, a range of relationships are also required, dependent on the needs of the research and the agendas of the researchers. For non-Māori these may, for example, be driven by organisational requirements to consult in order to be responsive to Māori, by pragmatic concerns about the research process (e.g. the recruitment of Māori participants) or by a desire to form varying types of relationships with Māori groups or individuals in order to create more collaborative research processes.

## **Relationship considerations and features**

As well as outlining considerations for non-Māori when conducting research and for making decisions about relationships with Māori (e.g. Cram, 1995; Cunningham, 1999; Health Research Council, 1998), the literature also suggests areas for Māori to consider; these largely involve self reflection and an examination of ethical research processes and practices (Cram, 1995; 2009; Smith, 1992; Te Awekotuku, 1991). The questions posed by Smith (1992) provide useful starting points for Māori when making decisions about possible involvement in research relationships: who defined the research problem;

who is the study relevant to; who is the researcher accountable to and; who stands to gain the most?

Recently ethical spaces have gained some popularity as a way of describing a conceptual environment where disparate groups, for example indigenous and non-indigenous, can equitably engage and exchange knowledge away from their own spaces (Ermine, 2008; Hudson & Mila-Schaaf, 2008).

The small, emerging body of literature looking at collaborative research relationships, including Māori and non-Māori sides of the experience tells a largely positive tale (2006; Cram, Phillips, Tipene-Matua, Parsons, & Taupo, 2004). Usually, these arrangements are entered into on the basis of pre-existing relationships or as the result of considerable negotiation over a period of time. Discussions focus on notions of working together, signalling equitable relationships involving mutual respect, equity, empowerment (Cram, 2002) and participatory arrangements (Harmsworth, 2001). Hepi et al. (2007: 37) also highlight the importance of the question “Who are you?” when developing cross-cultural collaborative research relationships.

However, varying forms of consultation, rather than collaboration, are the most commonly sought relationships. They are also often the most problematic despite (or perhaps for this reason) the tendency of research and ethics guidelines and other literature to focus on consultation and engagement as a key activity for non-Māori working with Māori or carrying out research involving Māori (Health Research Council, 1998; Massey University, 2004; Moewaka Barnes, 2003; Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999a).

Consultation and definitions of consultation are complex, with descriptions covering a range of power relationships and understandings. The Health Research Council (1998) and the University of Otago Research Consultation with Māori Policy (University of Otago, no date) use a definition from Justice McGechan; “Consultation does not mean negotiation or agreement. It means: setting out a proposal not yet fully decided upon...listening with an open mind...reaching a decision that may or may not alter the original proposal.”

It is not clear what “not yet fully decided upon” means. An invitation to participate when the research agenda and processes have been substantially, but perhaps not fully, decided upon enables little or no input at a conceptual level; the need then is usually for comment on specific aspects of the research or for assistance with recruitment. Nor, using the definition provided is there a responsibility to take concerns on board or feedback what happened or didn’t happen as a result and the reasons for these decisions. It is not surprising that, when consultation results in little or no change, despite Māori raising concerns, we hear of research where Māori view their involvement as tokenistic and minimal (other than as research ‘subjects’). Another concern is that Māori involvement may have made a risky research project appear acceptable or endorsed. This continues the damaging view of research as something that non-Māori do to Māori (Bishop, 1997; Smith, 1999).

Developing relationships with, and/or employing Māori researchers, is often sought as a means of meeting responsiveness to Māori; possibly involving input into the research design and implementation and as the face of engagement when seeking wider Māori

input, such as participation in the research. Sporle and Koea (2004) discuss the burden, time and resources that consultative requirements may impose. For the relatively small Māori research workforce, these impositions may detract from the ability to determine and lead our own (and wider Māori) research agendas (Smith, 1999); by Māori for Māori approaches (Ormond et al., 2004).

There is very little written from an indigenous perspective about what it means to be in a consultative role; to support a largely non-Māori kaupapa, which is in essence what much of the role of consultation in the non-Māori research context is about. Most literature is written by non-Māori researchers, focusing on research findings and does not tell the story of the consultants; there are obvious reasons why this occurs including issues of capacity, power and access to particular forms of research dissemination opportunities.

In a paper discussing examples of interface, or “straddling the divide between science and indigenous knowledge” Durie (2002: 17) tells of a study where having a Māori advisory groups and elders working alongside a senior Māori researcher resulted in amendments to the food frequency questionnaire and in appropriate protocols for looking after participants’ blood and urine.

From our experience quantitative consultation has been particularly problematic as tools are often presented as largely decided upon; frequently this means that consultation may be limited to comment on pre-validated tools rather than being from the conceptual stage. Another dimension is the tendency of quantitative methodologies to be put forwards as objective and value free.

However, many writers (e.g. Cram, 1995; Te Awekotuku, 1991) argue that no research is objective and that the values and the positioning of the researcher are never absent. Values impact for example on the research question, the allocation of resource to that question, the questions that participants are asked or not asked and the options available to them. Quantitative and other tools are developed from the values one starts with.

In the following sections, we will describe a largely positive tale of our experiences as consultants on a non-Māori research project, which came about largely because of these pre-existing relationships.

## **The decision**

As part of a longstanding partnership relationship with SHORE we have developed a process of working together that requires dialogue, reflection and negotiation based on a commitment to partnership and to meeting the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi. The partnership works at both the policy and project level within the group. Projects are Whāriki led, SHORE led or partnership projects. In partnership studies, SHORE and Whāriki work as a team, often with different areas of responsibility, depending on each project. Conceptual and developmental work is a shared and negotiated process.

In 2003, a funding proposal for the New Zealand Values Survey 2004 was sent to us by a senior SHORE researcher to see if we were interested in becoming involved.

“The NZ Values Study 2004 has the single objective of: measuring trends and current values regarding public life held by New Zealanders, to make

comparisons with values in other countries and to promote public and stakeholder debate regarding these findings.” (Casswell, 2003)

The New Zealand Values Survey is part of the World Values Survey, a population survey of selected value perceptions, carried out in over 80 countries, using core questions with minor adaptations and additional questions. The New Zealand survey was first conducted face to face in 1985, then as a postal survey in 1989 and 1998.

Previously, two thirds of the survey questions were from the international survey, with additional items created specifically for the New Zealand context. After discussions we became aware that other Māori researchers had raised concerns in earlier consultation on the survey, but we did not know the specifics, or what the outcomes of this consultation had been. From looking at the survey, we could see that there were potential areas of concern for Māori and that the survey could have significant national and international implications. At this point we could have made one of several decisions: pursue the relationship at a partnership level; decline involvement; or consider involvement, but at a lower level.

For several reasons, we decided that we would not pursue the partnership approach. We had a relatively short time frame to make a decision and we did not feel that we could explore this option appropriately. A partnership approach would, at least, mean a major change to the sample (and budget) to enable equal explanatory power; that is having a large enough sample to enable the same depth and breadth of analysis for Māori as for non-Māori. We also felt that if we were to put this amount of our limited people resource into a survey, it would not be the Values Survey.

Although it is not usual for us to take a consultative role, in light of our existing relationship and the importance of the Values Survey as a high profile tool carrying considerable credibility nationally and internationally, we decided that, if the proposal was funded, we would look at what we might be able to contribute and how we might address the issues that had arisen. The other Values Survey team members acknowledged our position and wrote in the proposal that the possibility of a complementary survey with a sample with Māori was being discussed.

The survey was funded and we began discussions as part of the project team. We presumed a negotiation and consensus decision making approach to the process, which is something of an extension to the less iterative definitions of consultation discussed earlier in this paper. This was mainly because we had worked with most of the investigators before, knew that they had a commitment to the Treaty and that their work contributed to Māori well being.

### **Whāriki input**

Although we commented on and made contributions across the project, our main area of responsibility centred on three questions that had been designed as part of the New Zealand specific items in previous surveys. It was acknowledged that comparability with past data would not be possible if the questions were changed. Our argument, that it was better to revisit the questions at this time and examine whether we should continue with the established items, was supported.



It was agreed that we would examine the items, discuss them and the wider survey with a range of people, including the Māori researchers who had been involved in the previous consultation, and conduct a pilot study with Māori. We were also involved in several meetings with ministerial staff that had an interest in the survey.

Discussion included whether people were interested in the design or analysis of any particular data, as well as broad discussions on the survey and on values in general. We found that there was a high level of trust from external groups and individuals; they said that they were reassured that we were involved and were satisfied for us to carry on and look at the questions without their involvement. We said that we would let them know what the findings were.

In our discussions, we also asked “if we (Māori) were doing research in this area is this how we would do it?” The answer was a clear “no”. The groups and individuals we met with felt that the values in the New Zealand Values Survey did not adequately represent Māori values. There was, however, considerable interest in looking at values within Māori paradigms.

## **The wider context**

At the time that we were considering the three items and debating their content, their relevance was thrown into high relief by political developments. The then leader of the opposition Don Brash delivered a controversial speech at Orewa on January 2004 focusing on Māori and the Treaty (Brash, 2004). He argued that government responses to Māori dependence and claims were a serious threat to national values and constituted

a serious impetus for social division that could “undermine the very essence of what it means to be a New Zealander”. He summarised his position as follows:

“The ‘principles of the Treaty’ – never clearly defined yet ever expanding – are the thin end of a wedge leading to a racially divided state and we want no part of that. There can be no basis for special privileges for any race, no basis for government funding based on race...”

There was an outpouring of criticism and support with different parties endorsing and attacking Brash’s words. His political opponents criticised him for racist populism and the Race Relations Commissioner, Joris de Bres, argued that the things that Brash described as Māori privilege were measures to address inequality and that politicians should desist from the use of such “broad slogans” (Haines, 2004).

The government made little attempt to contextualise or explain the rationale for their approaches, but responded by largely agreeing with Brash (Trotter, 2005). In a Listener article, the Prime Minister, Helen Clark reflected that “it was cause for stocktake and, frankly, there were some things that had been public policy and practice for a long, long time that needed to be re-examined. That was done to try and strike a new balance” (Black, 2006: 19). She said that the government had “done a lot of opinion testing over many years and have always been aware that there are issues there” (Black, 2006: 19). Newspaper and other opinion polls showed National’s popularity increasing (ABC NewsOnline, 2004; Milne, 2005). In response, the government took up what appeared to be a popular cause and sought out largely Māori, but also other (particularly Pacific), race based privilege in a range of ways.

In November 2004, the government announced its intention to carry out a parliamentary review of New Zealand's constitutional arrangements, including the role of the Treaty of Waitangi (Young, 2004). Politicians across the spectrum questioned and criticised the Treaty (Young, 2004) and subsequently, there were numerous reports and discussions about the removal or downplaying of the Treaty in government documents (e.g. International Research Institute for Māori & Indigenous Education, 2004; Nga Pae o Te Māramatanga, 2004).

This unfolding climate made the wording of the items in the New Zealand Values Survey of clear concern, demonstrated the range of meanings that some of the survey terms evoked and resonated with the discussions around the survey as not adequately representing Māori values. The denigration as 'race-based', of initiatives that were not based on mainstream values, underlined the distance that our discussants had felt from the Values Survey and the invisibility of the culture and values associated with dominant norms. Thus the use of the phrases "special land and fishing rights" and "special assistance" in the Values Survey tool, a concern noted in the discussion phase described earlier, seemed even more problematic as the survey was prepared for the field.

We knew that the findings would be disseminated whatever the results and felt that we were taking some risks in being associated with a project that could potentially deliver bad news for the status of the Treaty and the social and economic responsibilities that flow from it.

Specifically, we were concerned about how people would respond to the items that we were examining and we wanted to contribute to informed debate. The items needed to be clear, consistent and informative and we wanted to move away from some of the more evocative and emotive terminology that had been used by politicians and in the media (Sharples, 2005). We also knew that we had to maintain credibility and develop items based on our discussions, our pilot study and sound, defensible, albeit contestable, reasoning.

The pilot study involved administering the survey, including the revised questions, to 14 Māori participants by telephone. We asked for their responses, then thoughts and reactions to each item, particularly probing the items of interest. When the survey was completed we asked for their overall comments. We also conducted two focus groups; one with those with no previous knowledge of the survey and one with participants who had been administered the survey.

### **Item redesign**

The following section presents the three items we were examining and the items we designed to replace them, based on information from discussions and the pilot study. We were assisted in this by robust discussions with the wider research team. Through these processes we were able to reach a consensus decision on the items.

**Item one:**

**Here are four statements about the Treaty of Waitangi. Which ONE statement do you think comes closest to YOUR OWN view of the Treaty?**

1. The Treaty should be strengthened and given the full force of the law
2. The Treaty should be dealt with through the Waitangi Tribunal<sup>9</sup> as it is at present
3. There need to be greater limits on Māori claims under the Treaty
4. The Treaty should be abolished.

From discussions with the project team, other, mainly Māori, researchers and from the pilot study the options in this item were identified as including both the status of the Treaty (options 1 and 4) and settlement claims (options 2 and 3), although there was some overlap. One pilot participant noted that the items were at major variance from their values and that there was nothing reflecting their view that the government was not honouring the Treaty. We also had concerns around abolishing the Treaty as a useful option. The Treaty is a founding document (Ministry of Justice, 2006) and abolishment was an extreme action, and questionable as the Treaty lacks statutory force. The meaning was therefore somewhat unclear and did not directly provide information about perceptions of the Treaty. It was agreed by the team that a question that asked about respondents' views on the status of the Treaty in a more direct and clear manner was at the core of this item, which was redesigned accordingly:

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<sup>9</sup> The Waitangi Tribunal was established by the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975. The Tribunal is a quasi-judicial body that makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to actions or omissions of the Crown that breach the Treaty of Waitangi (Waitangi Tribunal, 2008). Its jurisdiction goes back to 1840, when the Treaty was signed.

**Item 1 replacement:**

**What status do you give the Treaty?**

1. It is very important.
2. It is important.
3. It is unimportant.
4. It is irrelevant<sup>10</sup>.

We also added an item asking:

**How much do you know about the Treaty of Waitangi; would it be:**

1. Detailed knowledge
2. Fairly Detailed Knowledge
3. Some knowledge
4. Basic knowledge
5. No knowledge

**Item two:**

This item was one of nine (e.g. education, military, environment, job training) as part of a question that asked people to choose between increasing taxes in order to increase government spending on these nine areas or cutting spending and taxes.

**Special assistance for Māori and Pacific Islanders**

1. Greatly increase
2. Increase

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<sup>10</sup> For each item respondents were also able to select don't know or refuse to answer.

3. Keep as it is
4. Cut
5. Greatly cut

Concerns about this item were that it used the term ‘special assistance’. It was not clear what ‘special assistance’ referred to other than, as previously discussed, evoking meanings that were likely to elicit particular responses in relation to privilege and advantage. Another concern was that it included two population groups, likely to confuse the issue and the subsequent responses. We revised this item by having it refer only to Māori and by being more specific about funding.

#### **Public funding for Māori language, marae and other activities**

1. Greatly increase
2. Increase
3. Keep as it is
4. Cut
5. Greatly cut

#### **Item three:**

Would you be strongly in favour, in favour, neutral, against, or strongly against...**Giving Māori special land and fishing rights to make up for past injustices**

1. Strongly in favour
2. In favour
3. Neutral

4. Against
5. Strongly against

Again, one of the concerns was the terminology, specifically the use of ‘special land and fishing rights’. We suggested relatively minor changes; taking out ‘special rights’ and replacing it with a more specific and hopefully less evocative phrase. We do however recognise that changing the term ‘giving’ to ‘compensating for or returning’ has our value framework attached. We supported this change by placing the issue within what we believe was an item designed to garner people’s views on restoration and redress. In this context ‘returning’ was seen as more appropriate than ‘giving’ and is in line with the Waitangi Tribunal’s brief (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007b).

Would you be strongly in favour, in favour, neutral, against, or strongly against...**Compensating for or returning land, fisheries, other resources to Māori, where injustices have occurred**

1. Strongly in favour
2. In favour
3. Neutral
4. Against
5. Strongly against

Refusal and don’t know options were available for all these items.

Participants were happy with the revised and new items and expressed an interest in the findings. Participants generally considered the questions to be phrased appropriately.



They felt that the survey was not reflective of how Māori would approach values and that the findings would not provide much information on Māori values. They did however believe that it was important to raise and discuss issues of values.

## **Data collection**

The 2004/5 New Zealand Values Survey collected data by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system from New Zealanders aged 18 years and over. Data collection took place between 9 December 2004-24 March 2005 and the response rate was 51%<sup>11</sup>.

## **Findings**

More than two thirds of the respondents thought that the Treaty was important or very important (68% in total) and around a third thought it was unimportant or irrelevant (32%). Significantly more Māori (83%) than non-Māori (63%) thought that the Treaty was either very important or important.

Around one in five people described their knowledge of the Treaty as detailed or fairly detailed. Just under half (45%) said they had “some knowledge” and just over a third (36%) felt they had little or no real knowledge.

Forty three percent were either in favour or strongly in favour of compensating for or returning land, fisheries and other resources to Māori where injustices had occurred; just

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<sup>11</sup> For a detailed description of the sampling design, respondent selection, data collection and processing, see the Public Life Values Report on Centre for Social Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation website: <http://www.shore.ac.nz/projects/Public%20Life%20Values%2023.11.05.pdf>.

under a third (30%) were neutral and just over one in four (27%) were against or strongly against.

Those who said they had little or no knowledge were evenly spread in terms of how they regarded the Treaty; those who regarded the Treaty as important were more likely to say they had some knowledge or detailed knowledge and to be in favour of returning resources to Māori where injustices had occurred.

Twenty three percent wanted an increase in public funding for Māori language, marae and other activities, nearly half (47%) thought funding should be kept the same and thirty percent thought that it should be cut or greatly cut.

Respondents who reported detailed, fairly detailed or some knowledge of the Treaty were more likely to assign the Treaty an important status and were more likely to support public funding of the specified activities and to support redress where injustices had occurred than respondents who reported little or no knowledge of the Treaty.

## **Discussion**

In the example discussed in this paper interface took place, not in terms of straddling the divide between science and Māori (Durie, 2002), but in providing a bridge for Māori input into the Values Survey. This contrasts with a by Māori for Māori agenda where the role of Māori researchers is more likely to cross boundaries in a more holistic approach to the development of knowledge. Although the scope of our work was relatively limited, we were not left feeling that we were window dressing. Māori were able to speak from their own spaces to modify the instrument before it went into the

field. The work that we undertook was what we had agreed to at the outset and we were largely able to keep to a realistic work load. Discussions and debates with the Values team were constructive and we felt that our input was valued and that we were able to make a contribution to the survey. The team was able to operate within an “ethical space” (Ermine, 2008; Hudson & Mila-Schaaf, 2008) where negotiation and consensus decision making were features.

The importance of having a sense of who you are as a researcher, both from the point of view of self reflection and from others knowing the researcher and their affiliations was apparent. The existing relationship with the Values team and with those we worked with in the discussion phase meant that we were able to carry out our work with a level of trust and understanding already in place. This significantly eased the way.

The nature of relationships was one of the first areas we considered when making our decisions about consultation and engagement. As a contribution to the meta questions (Cram, 1995; Smith, 1992) that might help to guide Māori when making decisions about consultation and engagement, and the question who are you (Hepi et al., 2007) we suggest that decision making might also be based on:

- The potential and scope for Māori to make a positive contribution to the research that meets, at least, Māori aspirations?
- The extent to which expectations and responsibilities are realistic and achievable.
- How Māori input is valued; is it respected and appropriately acknowledged; how will we know?

- Is it a learning opportunity?
- The nature of any involvement or employment; is it safe and supported?
- To what extent and with what impacts will involvement in this research take resources away from other activities?
- How will the researchers be accountable to Māori?

Despite our concerns about the climate at the time of data collection, the majority of respondents assigned the Treaty an important or very important status and almost half were either in favour or strongly in favour of compensating for or returning land, fisheries and other resources to Māori where injustices had occurred. Around half felt that public funding levels for Māori language, marae and other activities should remain the same. We speculated that, if the findings were this positive in this environment, then it would be interesting to see if the findings would be any different when the Treaty and Māori in general were not under attack.

In 2004, State Services Minister Trevor Mallard (2004) described concerns over public access to reliable and understandable information on the Treaty when he launched a website as part of the Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme. The low levels of knowledge of the Treaty reported by our respondents reinforce these concerns. Greater knowledge of the Treaty was associated with more positive responses in terms of supporting the Treaty, public funding for the specified activities and redress. It may be that people took the time and had a greater interest in the Treaty if they held these values, it may also be that the more people learned about the Treaty, the more likely they were to understand and support particular positions; most likely it is some combination of these.

In light of these findings, we concluded that the assumptions made about public opinion in relation to the Treaty and redress need to be questioned. Participant responses were consistent with the Treaty as a founding document. We believe the questioning of the Treaty is a significant public issue, requiring open acknowledgement and informed debate. Findings on the public importance of the Treaty also support the call for considered and open examination of our constitutional arrangements and the Treaty's role (Bargh, 2006).

This was a somewhat extreme research situation, given the environment and its relationship to the survey items. However, it does illustrate, more generally the concerns that we have as Māori researchers entering into relationships based on non-Māori kaupapa. This paper has presented an opportunity to describe some of the accountabilities and responsibilities we negotiate as well as the importance of working with a wider team where trust and good communication are key features. It has also provided an opportunity to present a small, but significant set of findings. The challenge of contributing to informed and constructive debate and processes continues.

## **Link five**

The previous chapters move from conceptualising Māori knowledge, science and research to an examination of how different worldviews and dominant paradigms impact on ethical processes and research relationships in the social sciences.

I was excited by the responses that I had received from presentations and discussions and became increasingly interested in exploring the implications of these conceptualisations and how others were grappling with them on a practical level. At the same time my research work was progressing more and more into relationships between Māori health and environmental health. *Natural allies: a Māori take on ecohealth* illustrates the divisions in worldviews that I discussed in previous chapters and demonstrates ways forward, through equitable relationships and through initiatives steeped in Māori paradigms.

Environments and health is an area of critical importance to Māori knowledge systems and values and is emerging on the international agenda as an area where indigenous peoples have much to contribute. This chapter develops the considerations discussed in the earlier chapters; that is, the nature of Māori knowledge and science, power imbalances and the development of respectful and equitable relationships. It outlines some Māori knowledge resources and approaches and provides examples of Māori leading by example to bring about positive changes. The chapter demonstrates the bringing together of many strands, moving away from narrow notions of science and knowledge and breaking down boundaries of researchers versus research users.

In a sense, this final chapter is an awakening and a way forward. It draws on research and other life experience, and takes inspiration from other Māori and indigenous scientists (all chapters draw on these, but this chapter more specifically).

The paper was written in 2007 and early 2008, initially to be presented at the EcoHealth Conference in Melbourne, November 2007. After further development of the themes presented, the paper was submitted in May 2008 to the EcoHealth journal for indigenous and non-indigenous audiences in ecohealth and related fields

## Chapter 6

# Natural Allies: A Māori Take on Ecohealth<sup>12</sup>

### Abstract

Māori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand maintain a compromised, but unbroken trajectory of knowledge and advocacy for the interconnected nature of relationships between land and people. However, Māori (and other indigenous) sciences and approaches are less visible and credible in emerging understandings about ways to address the critical state of their lands, the country and the planet. In particular, Māori face fundamental challenges associated with indigenous approaches to environmental health within the context of ongoing colonisation. Clashes of worldviews and values are set against a backdrop of unequal power relationships, political marginalisation and transformed economies.

Despite stark contrasts between ideologies of land as property and kaitiakitanga ethics of obligation, sustainability, nurture and protection, Māori are engaging with mainstream agencies and leading by example in efforts to promote the well being of people and environments.

### Introduction

Alongside examinations of the role of public health in promoting health at the environmental, rather than individual level, there is growing recognition of the

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<sup>12</sup> Although pronounced differently, *take* encompasses both the English meaning ‘*perspective*’ and the Māori meaning ‘*issue*’.



importance of place in relation to well being (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Kawachi, 2006; Kawachi & Berkman, 2000; McCreanor et al., 2006). Emerging and related understandings of the interconnectedness of people and their environments argue that the health of people and the health of the environment be addressed as interrelated and complex systems. However, in a conventional, positivist schema, it is easier to put forward an argument for looking at, for example, urban environments and ‘deprived’ neighbourhoods or for examining environments as health demoting through physical mechanisms such as contaminants in water than to argue for relationships with land as determinants of health in themselves.

Ecohealth, with its complex systems orientation, is a useful counter to the compartmentalising tendencies of such approaches and a place to (re)integrate indigenous knowledge and approaches (Stephens, Parkes, & Chang, 2007). Diverse indigenous cultures have used complexity approaches to balance and sustain their existence, often for millennia and have much to offer these emerging western frames. For Māori, the extent to which people can identify with place and feel and practice these connections, whether tribal, geographical or other, are seen as key features of well being (Borell, 2005; Durie et al., 1996). Such understandings have the potential to gain greater traction and contribute to change as acceptance of the critical state of the planet gains momentum.

This paper outlines challenges that Māori face in maintaining relationships with the land in the context of colonisation and ideologies of land as property. Kaitiakitanga as an expression of Māori philosophies, as a challenge to dominant strategies and as a framework for interventions is discussed.

## **Māori connections with the land**

A common finding in health research in Aotearoa is that, even when socio-economic factors are taken into account, disparities between Māori and non-Māori persist. Explanations for the poor health status of Māori when compared to non-Māori are many and varied; ranging from factors inherent to Māori to external disadvantage, particularly the ongoing role that colonisation plays. Part of this is the extent to which Māori feel that their ways of knowing and being are reflected and enabled by the wider society in which they live (Robson & Harris, 2007). Loss of land and the disruption of Māori relationships with land are argued as important determinants of health and well being.

For Māori, well being is inextricably linked to understandings about the state of the environment and the way that it provides for spiritual and physical necessities, including the ability to grow, gather and share food from that environment in particular places and in particular seasons (Henwood, Harris, & Pirini, 2007). The roles and responsibilities that people have with and to the land carry with them intergenerational, physical, emotional and spiritual attachments and are enacted as part of a detailed cosmogony (Marsden, 2003; Matiu & Mutu, 2003; Roberts, Norman, Minhinnick, Wihongi, & Kirkwood, 1995).

Concerns for past and future generations are continually present. Honouring and upholding the dignity of ancestors and striving for the well being of future generations are key drivers in efforts to protect and nurture the land (Moewaka Barnes, 2006). The environment provides critical connections over time; holding ancestral memories and embodying the continuance of people. A whakataukī encompasses some of the philosophy and rationale behind this:

Whatungarongaro he tangata, toitu he whenua hoki: People pass on, but the land remains (Mead & Grove, 2001: 425)

As well as supporting the necessities of life and having clear connections to economic resources, land, known as whenua in Māori, is a central concept in Māori identity, connection and spirituality. Water and land are inseparable, both holding deep spiritual significance. A witness who the Waitangi Tribunal felt summed up the “fundamental cultural and spiritual significance of water<sup>13</sup>” said: “Ko wai au? I am water, I am spirit” (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 241).

Māori are known as tangata whenua – the people of the land. Whenua is also the word for afterbirth, which is returned to the whenua by burial in a place of significance. In more formal introductions and welcomes, key geographical markers such as mountains, rivers, harbours and the sea are given, alongside people’s names<sup>14</sup>. Through these markers, those with reasonable knowledge can pinpoint where the speaker is from, before tribes or sub tribes are mentioned. Some more knowledgeable speakers can travel through genealogical lineages, both spiritual and physical, thus making connections to all present and to complex cosmologies.

Māori science recognises these complex and holistic relationships, and argues against separating people from nature (Roberts et al., 1995: 16). This position has not gained traction within more mainstream approaches until recent times, when the critical state of

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<sup>13</sup> S Eillison, Evidence for Te Takere o Ngā Wai, 28 February 2005 (Māori), C25; and S Eillison, Evidence for Te Takere o Ngā Wai, 28 February 2005 (English), C25(a)

<sup>14</sup> Māori share this with other indigenous peoples, including those of Hawai ‘i (Kana‘iapuni & Malone, 2006)

the environment has seen the emergence of ecohealth and related fields. These paradigms resonate with aspects of what Māori (and other indigenous peoples) have continually maintained, that is the interrelated nature of ecosystems and health and, in more recent times, the need to more deeply understand and urgently address the “complex interactions between environmental-sociocultural and economic factors” (De Plaen & Kilelu, 2004). Understanding these interconnections opens the way for approaches that span disciplines and are able to draw on diverse knowledge systems.

Maramataka or monthly calendars are based on the phases of the moon, and are one example of a Māori knowledge resource. They provide for, among other activities, the planting and harvesting of crops and catching fish to ensure both success and resource protection (Roberts, Weko, & Clarke, 2006). They are one contribution to kaitiakitanga, which constitutes an integral part of Māori knowledge systems and lays the foundations for unified relationships between Māori and the environment. Although kaitiakitanga has many applications, this paper focuses on aspects relating to environmental resources and associated knowledge bases.

Kaitiakitanga and hunga tiaki (Mihinui, 2002) illustrate Māori understandings of interconnections and offer a framework for addressing human and environmental health. One practice associated with kaitiakitanga is rahui, laying a prohibition or restricted access on an area due to the tapu nature of the site or to protect resources. This provides various processes for addressing the sustainability of resources and the setting aside, permanently or for periods of time, specific practices in specific areas.

Kereopa (cited in Moon, 2003: 23) expressed kaitiakitanga relationships in this way:

“the job of the kaitiaki is to keep the things of creation safe. The return from this is the relationship you get with the thing you are protecting and the knowledge and learning that comes from that. When the world was created, everything was given full wairua and mana, like the trees for example, so that everything is its own master. So if people want to exercise kaitiaki, they will need to know the value of all things, and the wairua of all things...”

Kaitiakitanga places the interests of the land at the centre of human concern; humans belong to, and are part of, the land. This is often in stark contrast to concepts of land as owned by people.

Ownership has considerable impacts in terms of how people ‘manage’ whenua, make decisions and account to the legal system. For example, as a kaitiaki trustee one of the requirements is to ‘act in the best interests’ of the beneficiaries who own the land. Under English law<sup>15</sup>, this is commonly understood to mean, to firstly act in their best financial interests, putting financial considerations at the forefront. In contrast, kaitiakitanga may be more concerned with the interests of the land, the concept being that the best interests of people will follow.

These differing worldviews and the dominance of the ownership model present considerable challenges. Māori grapple continually with conflicting choices about how to manage land in the face of commercial externalities; for example planting introduced commercial pine forests, rather than regenerating native habitats.

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<sup>15</sup> See Land alienation, following section.

Guardianship and the sustainability of resources are also set against these resources being owned or not owned by Māori. Indigenous epistemologies and philosophies are forced into uncomfortable tensions, one manifestation being the way relationships with land are conceptualised and operationalised (Henwood et al., 2007). The concept of ownership is synonymous with potential alienation, so that if land is not Māori owned, then the ability to exercise any type of kaitiakitanga will be limited or near impossible. These legal transformations of the physical environment are alien to the concept and practices of kaitiakitanga and to the associated concept of tino rangatiratanga.

The ability to uphold kaitiakitanga flows from tino rangatiratanga, a much discussed and debated concept guaranteed to Māori in Article 2 of the Māori version of the Treaty of Waitangi. Irrespective of the Crown (the New Zealand Government) position, this concept carries many obligations, to tribes and sub-tribes, to future generations and to the ‘resource’ itself; a primary principle being that Māori have no rights to destroy these resources (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 26). Actions must encompass guardianship, protection, knowledge and uphold the mauri and interests of the land (Marsden, 2003: 67). However, breaches of the Treaty have seen these principles and roles fundamentally disrupted.

## **Land alienation**

In 1840 Māori ‘owned’ 66,400,000 acres of land. A number of measures extinguished customary title; largely purchasing, expropriation and the British government’s 1846 instruction that all Māori land ownership was to be registered, with any lands considered unused or surplus becoming Crown land. (New Zealand History online, no

date; Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 47). By 1852 Māori owned 34,000,000 acres. (New Zealand History online, no date)

The English Acts Act was passed in New Zealand in 1854, making all English laws applicable in New Zealand (Durie, 2004) and cementing the ideology of land as property. Part of this ideology was the separation of ownership of land from the ownership of water; Māori made no such distinctions, and “possessed a water resource” (Waitangi Tribunal Rekohu Report cited in Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 44).

By 1865 all land was either Crown or freehold, with interests in environmental resources arising from rights of ownership (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 47).

“Māori customary rights and interests in land were individualised under the Native Land legislation. The effects of that system, coupled with the application of presumptions of law and Crown legislation, made it possible for individuals to alienate tribal rights to many resources. Rights were transferred sometimes piece by piece, individual share by individual share, without any further reference to the hapū or iwi and sometimes without their knowledge. This could lead to a situation where the community was deprived of its tribal base. Tribal society and leadership, the very things embodied in the guarantee of rangatiratanga of the Treaty, were as a result severely undermined.” (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 27)

Not surprisingly, there is a long and sustained history of ‘protest’ including early military engagement, peaceful resistance, occupations and redress through official

channels, particularly in recent years (New Zealand History online, no date). The Waitangi Tribunal was established by the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975. The Tribunal is a quasi-judicial body that makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to actions or omissions of the Crown that breach the Treaty of Waitangi (Waitangi Tribunal, 2008). Its jurisdiction goes back to the date that the Treaty, a covenant between Māori and the Crown, was signed in 1840.

In recent times colonisation has manifested itself in the form of globalisation (Kelsey, 2002: 384), one example being the fostering of local legislation, in the form of the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004, to fit with multi-national trade agreements, such as GATT. This saw the ‘public’ foreshore and seabed being vested in the Crown, amid widespread objections from Māori. The Act came about in the context of increasing economic and market interest in the foreshore and oceans surrounding Aotearoa and after “the Court of Appeal ruled that the Māori Land Court had the jurisdiction to hear claims related to the foreshore and seabed” (Bargh, 2006: 14). In an urgent inquiry into the Crown’s policy for the foreshore and seabed, the Waitangi Tribunal found that it breached the Treaty of Waitangi (Waitangi Tribunal, 2004).

Along with the disruption of Māori relationships with land and kaitiakitanga knowledge came the subjugation of Māori knowledge in general. Unless legitimated by reference to western scientific paradigms, indigenous expertise is often relegated to a cultural perspective, rather than a valuable and authoritative contribution arising from complex and comprehensive knowledge systems (Moewaka Barnes, 2006; Smith, 1999) that have nurtured people and their environments for generations.



The Waitangi Tribunal has made some efforts to define a Māori environmental ethic and to acknowledge Māori ways of constructing environmental understandings (Waitangi Tribunal, 1983; 1984; 1985). Through referring to western scientific paradigms, the Waitangi Tribunal found that Māori “stories” reflected western scientific views about geothermal activity and that Māori knowledge and “western science as understood in that period (1840-1860) were, we believe, in substantial accord” (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 314). However, Māori knowledge is often dismissed as legend or myth and not seen as a valuable and valid way of interpreting and conveying knowledge. As Jianchu et al. (2004: 328) put it “perhaps, as scientists, we need to recover our sense of being mediators between the natural world and the social world... and not to belittle the knowledge of indigenous peoples because we are uncomfortable with the religious language they use.”

The alienation of land and resources and the unsustainable management of taonga, such as fisheries, forest, geothermal resources and water, have seen the disruption of associated knowledge and practices, resulting in multiple impacts on Māori (Waitangi Tribunal, 1988; 1997; 2007a; 2008). These include marginalisation from economic development, the loss of the ability to sustain communities and its likely contribution to urban migration to find work, limited or no access to important sites, loss of mana, clashes of world views and systems of law and authority and offended values and implications for themselves, their ancestors and future generations (Waitangi Tribunal, 1997; 2007a; 2008).

## **Māori roles in environmental management**

The issue of who is responsible and who can and should address environmental damage is one that has been widely grappled with. The Waitangi Tribunal outlined how unsustainable developments had negatively impacted on lakes in the Central North Island. Although there had been some improvements as a result of environmental legislation, including the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)<sup>16</sup>, Māori were limited in their ability to develop resources (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 215).

The Waitangi Tribunal said that, notwithstanding discussions and environmental management arrangements between the local tribe and central and local government, “at the end of the day the damage has been done and it is the Crown that has a Treaty responsibility to rectify it. The burden of rectification should not be transferred to Māori.” (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 215).

Nevertheless, Māori seek to collectively engage on issues of environmental development and restoration, arguing that autonomy, self determination and authority over resources are central to tino rangatiratanga. This contrasts with the Crown’s view that Māori are subjects and “separate sovereignty or parallel governments does not fit within the Treaty” (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 5). In this view, although tino rangatiratanga includes notions of control and management over what Māori ‘own’, how much ‘self-management’ is consistent with the Treaty and how this changes over time is debatable (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 5).

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<sup>16</sup> New Zealand's main piece of legislation that sets out how we should manage our environment.

This limited control is not what Māori see as intended by the Treaty (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 8). The RMA and associated resource management laws and practices have come under fire for not reflecting Treaty guarantees (Waitangi Tribunal, 2007a: 446), but for working within narrow parameters that limit Māori engagement and take a restrictive stewardship approach in attempting to define kaitiakitanga (Marsden, 2003: 67). These roles tend to be responsive rather than proactive and do not give full recognition to Māori knowledge and science bases.

In an effort to promote the recognition and engagement of Māori knowledge and expertise, Te Aranga: Māori cultural landscape strategy was developed, incorporating contributions from over 40 hui participants. It is a step towards fulfilling Māori roles as active guardians of Papatuanuku, the earth mother and aims to bring about benefits for Māori and non-Māori and for future generations. It emphasises active rather than responsive opportunities for Māori, relationships with local bodies, Māori expertise (kaitiakitanga and design) and the “reassertion of a Māori voice in the landscape” (Te Aranga Steering Committee, 2007: 4).

## **Working for change**

In Aotearoa alone, examples of indigenous peoples working for environmental restoration are innumerable. As Māori scientist Garth Harmsworth (2007) argued in a web based discussion of kaitiakitanga, an important way forward is to lead by example. The following section provides a small selection of examples where a range of experts have come together; local tribes, scientists and local, national and regional agencies.

The Hokianga is a largely rural area with a high Māori population. After concerns about the quality of drinking water were highlighted by extensive flooding in the area in 1999, the Hokianga Health Enterprise Trust (Hauora Hokianga), a local Primary Health Organisation was approached, by the Ministry of Health to initiate a pilot project focusing on safe drinking water for marae<sup>17</sup> and other communities. The project, Ngā Puna Wai o Hokianga, worked with 36 marae (Marino, Lands, & Anderson, 2006), bringing about dramatic improvements in potable water and generating interest and action on grey water and sewage disposal, at the marae sites and in the wider community.

As a participatory action research project they also looked at the role that tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga played in the project's successes; a further participatory action research project, Te Riu o Hokianga, looking at marae sewage treatment and disposal built on these relationships. These projects were collaborative, involving local people in leadership roles, the ESR (Institute of Environmental Science & Research Limited: one of nine Crown Research Institutes), Tipa and Associates, and the University of Auckland (ESR, 2005).

Hauora Hokianga has now become involved in another participatory action proposal with the Whāriki Research Group, in collaboration with people involved in initiatives at Lake Omapere and its outlet the Utakura River, which sit in one arm of the Hokianga catchment. These are sites of great significance to local Māori and the people of the area in general (White, 1998). The state of the waterways has meant the loss of traditional food sources, vastly reduced recreational use and the disruption of kaitiakitanga. This project will explore and contribute to the development and

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<sup>17</sup> Marae are gathering places, in this sense they are tribally based usually with a meeting house, kitchen, dining and washing facilities. People may stay there for several nights for tangi ( a type of funeral/wake) and other gatherings.

reassertion of kaitiakitanga and other Māori social and environmental values. Locally based Māori researchers will work alongside other local experts, working for the health of people and the environment. It will also draw on knowledge and tools from other environmental initiatives.

The Cultural Health Index (CHI) is one such tool. It was developed as part of a collaborative research programme with members of the Ngai Tahu tribe and ecologists at Otago University in the South Island of Aotearoa. It offers a practical, multi-index measure based in tikanga (which are Māori ethical processes and understandings), for assessing the health of bodies of water (Tipa & Teirney, 2006). The study looked at “cultural” and “western” measures, arguing that this would enhance “dialogue between Māori and resource management agencies” (Townsend, Tipa, Teirney, & Niyogi, 2004: 186).

Another valuable tool is a set of Māori Environmental Performance Indicators (EPIs). This was developed by Garth Harmsworth, a Māori environmental scientist, to gauge, measure and indicate changes in wetlands; stillwater, running and estuarine. In the last 150 years, ninety percent of this important ecosystem has “been destroyed or significantly modified through draining and other human (anthropogenic) activities” (Harmsworth, no date). The nine EPIs complement other scientific and community indicators and identify the issues, what to measure and trends and actions; the four most significant are taonga species, unwanted animal species, unwanted plant species and a scale of change in the mauri of the wetland.

Water is a major focus in these initiatives. The Crown claims that, under common law, water is common property, but it is argued that Māori customary title has not been

extinguished (Bargh, no date). Water plays a vital role in maintaining all life on this planet and in providing catchment drainage, bodies of water are frequent sites of cumulative damage and collective awareness. Bodies of water provide sites of mobilisation where people (Māori and non-Māori) may feel a sense of shared responsibility. As a result, being concerned and initiating action around the health of waterways is often seen as a legitimate focus for public action. There may, for example, be concerns about fertiliser use; not just its impact on water, but its impact on the land as a whole. To approach farmers about impacts on 'their land' would most likely be seen as interference in their rights as owners. To approach them in terms of impacts on the waterways, although needing careful negotiation and relationship building, is more likely to be acceptable and to produce benefits for land and water. Thus, although water is a key site, it enables entry into the wider ecosystem.

Involvement of Māori in the management and healing of the environment is a practical goal in all these initiatives. All offer ways of proactive participation in measuring, monitoring, planning and addressing environmental concerns within Māori concepts and processes. They are about the recovery, retention and the development of Māori knowledge and Māori science in order to explore ways of exercising tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga. They acknowledge mauri and wairua and recognise that this work is for future generations and will take the work of generations.

## Discussion

What indigenous peoples have been saying consistently is that the health of land and people are interrelated and that these relationships are multi-layered, spiritual and complex. Māori argue for the interconnectedness of all things – a woven universe, a concept suggested by the writings of the Reverend Māori Marsden (2003).

Kaitiakitanga provides a framework that embraces Māori concepts and lays a foundation for ways of addressing the well being of both people and the environment. This is not limited to and should not depend on ownership but is about reciprocity; responsibility and accountability. Nevertheless, kaitiakitanga (and other indigenous knowledge systems and practices) threatens and is threatened by dominant attitudes, which see the planet primarily as property and a series of resources to be harvested and controlled. The ability of indigenous people to exercise kaitiakitanga roles and for others to take on these principles at local, regional, national and global levels is a potential measure of how successful we might be in addressing the critical threats to our environments. Under this framework the passing of the Foreshore and Seabed Act in Aotearoa/New Zealand is a potential indicator of a move away from, not only indigenous rights, but from environmental health.

Despite working within often hostile cultural and legislative environments that do not readily provide for or recognise the value of Māori systems and practices, there are encouraging examples of successful initiatives and relationships. Opportunities for the engagement of Māori and mainstream stakeholders are taken up when they are based on recognising and valuing diversity and developing processes and relationships that work for the people involved; in this case, understandings and processes that stem from Māori

worldviews and values. Without this, participation will be limited and opportunities for action will be lost. As Parkes (no date: 14) put it “Participation is a bridge between knowledge and action”.

With the tensions and challenges outlined in this paper in mind, there is considerable potential for natural allegiances with emerging understandings and approaches in more mainstream fields such as ecohealth. The successful initiatives described in this paper recognise the knowledge and science that all groups have to offer. They are not about scientists persuading people to be involved but about developing allegiances based on the knowledge, work and aspirations of local people, who need no encouragement to recognise the damaged state of their environments and the negative impacts that ensue.



## **Conclusions**

### **Discussion**

Throughout the chapters I have articulated a basis for proceeding, based on concepts and principles underlying my practice. The nature of this study means that I have not provided any hard and fast rules or frameworks; this is both a strength and a limitation. As a researcher, I am aware that named theories, frameworks, models and clear directions are often seen as desirable outputs, hopefully providing a level of certainty and an applicable tool. They serve a utilitarian purpose that I do not provide here. Here, I argue that theories are more like methods; we draw on all baskets of knowledge, appropriate to our context, in order to make sense of who we are, individually and collectively, and in order to defend our right to practice in ways that are consistent with who we are. A key theme underlying this is that the dominant culture is just that, a culture; it is neither neutral nor universal. The way forward is therefore not individual decolonisation or Māori decolonisation alone, but will be most effective and sustainable when non-Māori recognise the full nature and reach of research and actively seek to create a research environment where knowledge, in its broadest sense and with its diverse approaches to generating fresh insights, can be embraced.

I also ask that people see themselves as a framework and hope that this thesis will encourage readers to ask questions of themselves and their practices, to do some work in conceptualising what they do and why and how they do it; from examining their own position, how they will engage with Māori, how they will treat Māori participants, through to wider issues of power and culture.

The chapters in this thesis do not represent a whole journey, but provide a part of the process of articulation. The beginning point here is an examination of the way that the processes of colonisation have resulted in the structural othering of Māori and the invisibility of the dominant culture. Flowing from this is a questioning of how we position and conceptualise Māori and non-Māori knowledge, science and research practices, particularly the tendency to set up neatly defined boxes that serve non-Māori agendas as much as they serve Māori aspirations. Some of these categories suggest that, although we are Māori researchers carrying out research with Māori, this is not our knowledge and not our science; some knowledge, some science is supposedly more Māori. This puts Māori in a number of boxes, focusing on Māori difference and the drive to define what Māori have to contribute; everything outside the box is the realm of the undefined, unnamed and eclectic western academy. Non-Māori sometimes talk about harvesting, integrating or accounting for Māori perspectives and Māori may ossify or create hierarchical categories of authenticity, denying the right to adapt, adopt and be as eclectic as western claims to knowledge. Struggles inevitably occur with, for example, the validation and authentication of one knowledge form over another; Māori versus non-Māori and, within Māori domains, traditional versus non-traditional.

In grappling with the strengths and limitations of conceptualisations of science, research and Māori, I fell into the prevailing exercise of attempting to rationalise some of the things that trouble me, thereby further defining, explaining and arguing for the legitimacy of what should be normal for us as Māori, the indigenous people in Aotearoa.

As Māori scientists, many of us are working to make sense of and articulate what research means in a world where claims of being Māori evoke challenges and the subsequent defence of our positioning. An extension of this is that Māori approaches, such as the kaitiakitanga knowledge and practices described in the final chapter, need to be legitimated within western understandings in order to be given approval as scientific. Essentially, kaitiakitanga, and other similar concepts that are grounded in Aotearoa ecology, are part of a Māori context. If legitimacy is required, it would be more significant to utilise a process that located kaitiakitanga within a system of knowledge that accords with Māori values, methods and ethics and not with more limited notions of science.

In this respect, Kaupapa Māori has value as a system of research, despite the supposed need for it to be defined and recognised as a theory in western terms, in order for it to be a legitimate framework for conducting research.

Attempting to define where Kaupapa Māori practice or theory is derived from externally (its theoretical underpinnings) and whether it owes more to constructivism or Critical Theory may go some way to perpetuating the either/or approaches that are not reflective of claims of a holistic perspective on research and practice. If the practitioner is the starting point, then many theories and experiences are likely to contribute to the development of their principles and practices. Whether we are more formally steeped in one theory or discipline will, of course influence our ways of seeing the world. For many indigenous peoples, these are processed through our experiences, arriving at Kaupapa Māori, Native or other indigenous theories and understandings.

Latterly, two useful pieces of writing were published in MAI Review (Eketone, 2008; Ratima, 2008) that addressed some of the issues I had been working on. Eketone (2008: 7) argues that Kaupapa Māori Theory is about placing Māori “knowledges in the box of the Western academy, an act which could negate a thousand years of Māori knowledge.”

In his peer commentary, Ratima (2008: 2) responds by reiterating the importance of the question of “whether or not centring Kaupapa Māori within a western theoretical paradigm will advance the goals of Kaupapa Māori?” He raises Cheryl Waerea-i-te-rangi Smith’s challenge for Māori to stop “leaving culture ‘at the door’ in order to participate in the academy” (Ratima, 2008: 2). For me, as an academy insider Kaupapa Māori is about naming our approaches in a way that *may* enable us to practice our knowledge with some safety within the western academy.

Although I have, to some extent, challenged ways that we as Māori and indigenous peoples position ourselves, the emphasis has been on the impacts that the world of the coloniser has had on our ways of knowing and ways of practising. A key aspiration is to reframe the way we (coloniser and colonised) look at the world. With this in mind, I have developed a schema for the further development of research in Aotearoa.

### **Shifting our gaze**

Reflecting on my practice and experiences as a Māori scientist has strengthened my resolve to turn an increasing gaze on the concepts, structures and environments that we work within. As outlined in several of the chapters, Māori are the common focus of explanations and definitions and this presents us with many challenges.

Prior to colonisation, Māori knowledge was dynamic, intact and holistic. Today, Māori knowledge and science are commonly framed in terms of development and use. This includes bringing Māori up to the same standard as non-Māori and harvesting or integrating Māori knowledge for mainstream.

The development of western knowledge and science is framed very differently and assumes a level of power, status and quality. Indigenous knowledge needs to be developed and non-Māori knowledge needs to be advanced.

The following table places Māori science, research and participation in relationship to western development. This is presented as a counter to the predominant view of these research trajectories as a developmental process for Māori, one where Māori will evolve from lay person to educated scientist, able to carry out research respected and validated by western academic criteria. The table presupposes that an evolving research agenda is emerging in New Zealand. It is characterised by greater or lesser degrees of Māori knowledge in research paradigms and theories and varying levels of Māori participation. The schema is built around a central horizontal band, ‘A Continuum of Development,’ which incorporates graded dimensions of power relationships. At one end of the continuum, Māori are positioned as powerless, at the other end there is power equity. The cells above the band reflect western research agendas in relation to levels of Māori participation – and the extent to which Māori knowledge is valued. Cells below the band mirror the responses of Māori to research and research processes, again according to levels of power sharing. Where partnership is evident, Māori engagement is likely to

be high and enthusiasm for research will be buoyed by the ready identification of a place to stand.

This development recognises the disruption of Māori knowledge and suggests a new relationship between western and Māori (and other indigenous peoples) science and practice. The schema reflects the arguments of the chapters, moving from Māori as researched on, to the use and integration of Māori people and knowledge to more equitable positioning, where relationships and partnerships are valued and explored.

A major barrier to developing equitable relationships is the way that we position ourselves and others in unequal power relationships as, for example, advanced versus primitive, scientific versus unscientific, normal versus other, and factual versus mythical. The ways we decide, measure and evaluate these use the dominant paradigm as the standard. Māori frequently fail to measure up and Māori development is seen as one way for us to attain these standards.

The schema positions the valuing of Māori science, knowledge and practices as a non-Māori developmental goal. It assumes that equity and mutual respect are desirable goals for non-Māori to work towards, not something that Māori alone value and strive for. It is a schema for non-Māori to be measured by and for Māori to evaluate.

As a result, although it could be viewed as a broad research agenda for Aotearoa, I have somewhat ironically, although with serious intent, framed it as a schema for a western research agenda; this is in order to place the responsibility for change on the shoulders of those who work within dominant paradigms and structures.

### Schema for a western research agenda in Aotearoa\*

Māori are excluded from real science  Māori are subjects or objects of research	Māori are involved as lay workers; as insiders  Cultural knowledge is used to expedite the research  Māori are participants mainly in terms of what knowledge can be gained from them; as data sources	Māori involved to make the research more appropriate  Māori knowledge is valued to varying extent as an insider's view; as a cultural add on or perspective  Māori knowledge has potential to be harvested or used by mainstream	Māori knowledge and involvement is valued and seen as needed in order to develop more equal relationships and research processes and to treat the knowledge gained and used appropriately	Equal knowledge systems and equitable relationships
<p><b>Continuum of development for non-Māori researchers</b></p> <p>Research on/power over      Research involving/control over      Power imbalances/shifts      Power negotiations      Partnership</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Support Māori led and controlled research: e.g. Kaupapa Māori</p>				
<b>Māori responses and reactions</b>				
Resistance Rebellion Compliance Denigration of own culture (belief that the way to survive is through the ways of the coloniser)	Co-opted Disenchanted Cynical Generous Pessimistic Optimistic	Co-opted Unsafe environment Exploring trust	Trust Belief that knowledge is valued See benefits from the research	Collaboration and mutual respect Knowledge valued without defence or explanation of positioning

\*These are not exhaustive lists, but indicate some of the key features of these developments

This schema calls for a paradigm shift, one where Māori specific strategies or Māori individuals or units being charged with bringing about embedded and effective change is limited, with gains not necessarily entrenched within the organisational system. In this paradigm, strategies and responsibility for change sit firmly within the structures, leading to an examination of power (or coming about through an examination of power) and the concomitant assumptions of the normal and dominant.

Although this schema encourages us to view research development in terms of broad western cultural shifts and agendas, it has some salience at individual and group levels. Equitable relationships based on mutual respect and trust are represented towards the end of the continuum. As suggested by *Māori and Research: Some Issues to Consider*, “even if the research is supported by Māori, partnership and significant engagement are not always appropriate or possible.” This situation can apply when an individual researcher (commonly a student) conducts a study using members of the general public. Recruitment processes, through not actively excluding Māori, may result in Māori participation. In this case they are conducting research involving Māori and their values, agendas and processes may have significant impacts on Māori responses and reactions to their work.

Towards the end of this continuum, Māori led and controlled initiatives are located, such as the Kaupapa Māori approaches described in the final chapter, where science and research can equally and equitably operate within Māori paradigms and where Kaupapa Māori and Māori scholarship are normalised.



## **Where I got to in the territory**

Writing this thesis has been, for me, about valuing and reclaiming our scholarship tradition through a process of gaining, gathering and reflecting on knowledge in order to articulate and bring about new understandings within the framework of an academic degree.

The idea of theory as generalisable and applicable across a range of situations has been a powerful tool of colonisation and is essentially about speaking for others and creating a more universal way of seeing the world.

As I progressed I became increasingly aware of Māori and other indigenous peoples' passion for making sense of who we are and how we see the world. I also became aware of the frustrations and the battles inherent in attempting to articulate and advocate for these understandings in the context of ongoing colonisation and globalisation. This is about knowing the world you live in in order to challenge it, as well as acknowledging that we are working against powerful interests and entrenched views and practices, such as western science, western laws and ideologies and powerful financial drivers.

At the risk of creating an antithesis, although we recognise shared histories and experiences, indigenous peoples are often wary of generalising (Shoemaker, 2002). Even generalising to the point of using the term Māori is fraught, with some preferring their tribe as the widest generalised identity. The pervasiveness of definitions and descriptions of Māori, particularly the framing of otherness has been one reason for my emphasis on reflection and experience as a basis for these chapters.

I have been cautious in what I write, constantly thinking “who am I to speak for others?” As noted in the introduction, generalisation is one of the reasons indigenous peoples are wary about theory and often speak to more localised concerns and contexts. It is also one of the reasons that indigenous ways of making sense of the world, including an emphasis on the inward, reflective and spiritual journey fall short of most notions of theory.

It has occurred to me through writing these chapters that values, principles and a desire to bring about change are more likely to guide us than externally imposed notions that may be inappropriate. In the writings and discussions that have assisted me in my journey, a range of theories, disciplines and methodologies have acted like tools, to be selected, adapted, discarded and reflected on, not to be steered by.

In thinking about the significance of this thesis, I have found Aluli-Meyer’s (2006: 275) statement useful:

“*Your* rendition of your own experiences is now the point. Who are you then? What do you have to offer the world? How can we work together?”

Transformation of the ways that we see and operate in this world, and this is what I hope to contribute to, is, at best, slow. As stated in the introduction, the overall aim was to contribute to Māori research theory and practice. We rarely have the opportunity to reflect on and articulate our understandings and experiences, but this is a necessary part of a journey of survival, reclamation and celebration. The difficulty in detailing impacts

is one of the reasons I undertook this journey; the thesis has provided me with an opportunity not afforded by output driven research.

The success of what I have done is partly measured by participation in discussions and by having and witnessing those “aha!” moments. I have had the opportunity to present all of these chapters at least once and this has led to lively discussion and further invitations to present and write papers.

The processes involved in writing the chapters have provided me with a clearer understanding of my own approaches to knowledge, science and research. I have learnt about myself through the act of articulation, affording me a greater understanding of my position as a Māori woman researcher. This has led to increased confidence in presenting this positioning to others.

This thesis forms the basis of several conference papers and fora planned for 2008 and beyond, these include: Indigenous perspectives on ecohealth presentation and discussion (Western Canada), International Knowledge Transfer meeting (Vancouver Island), indigenous learning circle presentation and discussion (Canadian national video network), The Oral, Written and Other Verbal Media Conference paper (University of Saskatchewan), international ethics network discussion (Middlesex University, United Kingdom), and the International Conference on Social Science Research Methodologies session on Postcolonial/Indigenous Research Methodologies paper (Naples).

Prior to writing this thesis I would, if the opportunity arose, have attended these events.

With this work completed I will go into these environments feeling clarity of

understanding that I had not felt previously. Gut reaction and experience is now enhanced by wider reading, debate and reflection, as well as written articulation. Papers have been sent to these forums in order to provide a starting point for discussion and so that there will be an understanding of my position. I go into this hoping that discussion will not merely be a reiteration of the thesis, but that there will be challenges. This can only move me forward. Publication of the papers will also afford opportunities for greater contributions to international discussions.

My interest is not only in furthering discussion and debate, as outlined in this section, but also in looking more deeply at our knowledge systems, past, present and future and how we might advance and apply these. This entails a greater understanding of what holistic means in a scientific and research context. I am working on projects that are enabling me to explore these concepts, alongside international indigenous collaborations, particularly in ecohealth, and in light of developments in social determinants of health (CSDH, 2007).

### **Arguing for the spirit in the language of the mind**

Finally, I would like to discuss some of the fundamental challenges I encountered in articulating my thoughts in the written English language. I see these challenges as paralleling the struggles I describe in this thesis. Working in the field of Māori wellbeing derives from a desire to contribute to te iwi Māori; for me this is inextricably linked to wairua, which drives our choices. However, in articulating a part of this journey in this thesis, I have had to be selective in my choice of language and in how I frame the issues presented, focusing on what would be the most widely accepted as a reasoned argument. For this reason, the title of this section is also the title of the thesis.

I have argued for the spirit in the language of the mind. This has been the way I finally came to conceptualise my discomfort in using the written English language to express what was in my mind, including the ways that I understand and experience the spiritual. This section deals briefly with some of the tensions and, at times, the grief of writing in one way to try and articulate and advocate for another way.

The first challenge for me was the difficulty of expressing Māori concepts in English. I understood that, if I was to write papers for journals and international audiences, I would be required to provide explanations of these concepts. Because language and culture are interwoven, meaning is more than the translation of words. As a result, I was cautious in my interpretations and provided meanings that were contextual and indicative.

I also grappled with how to describe what I intended. Dictionaries are not definitive tools for translation. As we live the culture we come to understand nuances and diverse meanings to varying concepts. What was described in the dictionary was not necessarily what I understood some of the terms to mean in the ways that I was using them. However, I am not a Māori first language speaker and, in some and varying ways, we become, through colonisation, outsiders to our concepts, or at least feel considerable caution in our understandings. I was helped and heartened in this journey of expressing and checking my understandings by other writers, particularly Reverend Māori Marsden (2003), and through the korero of kaumātua<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> I would particularly like to acknowledge Naida Glavish and Nau Epiha.

When writing I was aware of the various journal audiences I was writing for and was constantly tailoring my writing to those expressed and unexpressed requirements. Spirituality was always present, but my feeling was that it was not a norm that could be taken as a given without considerable argument and explanation. In the final chapter I was able to bring more of these threads together in discussing Māori relationships with whenua, looking forward to a time when we don't have to leave at least some of our culture at the door of the academy, but can bring the gift of spirituality. Kapu'uwailani Lindsey (2006) writes about a prophecy that indigenous Hawaiians will rise again with wisdom from the land, born of humility and pono. She writes of a rich past and knowledge, calling to wind, rain and fish, that have been forgotten and need to be remembered. She calls for a wholeness that includes the spiritual.

The papers could have been written with greater inclusion of spirituality if they had been written for different audiences; generally this means indigenous or indigenous friendly journals. But, I chose to write in particular ways in the hope that each journal would reach different audiences. At the same time, underlying each paper, and acting as a fertile substrate, at least for myself, is a spiritual element that has not only given rise to the gist of each paper and its importance, but has also acted to motivate the inquiry and unleash the energy necessary to transpose spirit into particular forms. This process was always susceptible to distortion or, at the very least, compromise.

Did I compromise others or myself? I don't know the answer, but suspect that I probably do so on a daily basis. I hope to change the climate of acceptability of spirituality and, although I would like to change the world, I can only hope that the small contribution I might have made will provide a jumping point that will enable

others to position Māori paradigms as integral to an emerging research agenda in Aotearoa.

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## Glossary of Māori words

<i>Māori</i>	<i>English</i>
Aroha	love, empathy
Hapū	kinship group of multiple whānau
Hauora	health, wellbeing
Hauora Tāne	men's health, wellbeing
Hui	meeting or gathering
Iwi	tribe
Kaumātua	respected elder, male or female
Kaupapa	platform, underlying base
Kaupapa Māori	a theory of research and practice based in Māori worldviews
Koha	a gift, often monetary these days, but can be food or taonga
Mana	prestige, integrity and honour; a spiritual force bestowed on people
Marae	gathering places
Mātāpuna	principles
Mauri	relates to the life force, life principle or energy that attaches to each thing
Mihi	forms of address, acknowledgement, greetings
Pākehā	people of European origin
Pono	honest, true, transparent
Pou	post, stake in the ground, also a support
Rangahau Hauora	Health Research
Taonga	something that is highly prized
Taonga species	highly valued, as opposed to, for example, introduced or exotic species
Tapu	a state separate from the mundane or everyday, frequently and inadequately rendered as 'sacred'
Te reo Māori	Māori language
Tika	right, correct
Tikanga	Māori practices or processes

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Tohunga	skilled person, expert, priest, healer
Uara	values
Wairua	broadly interpreted as spiritual/spiritual essence
Whākapapa	line of descent from ancestors
Whakataukī	proverbial saying
Whānau	extended family

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Please note that the Māori words used in this thesis carry full concepts behind them that are not readily translated, therefore meanings are indicative only.

## **Appendices: Copies of papers as published**