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**EXPLORING PERSONAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES OF  
IDENTITY FOR WHITE MAORI WOMEN**

**WHAKATORO TE TORANGAPU ME TE AKE O NGA  
KAUPAPA TUAKIRI MO NGA WAHINE MAORI MA**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Philosophy in Social Policy and Social Work at  
Massey University

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## **KARAKIA TIMATANGA**

TENEI KA WHAKARORANGI KA NOHO,  
KATI RA TE WHAKAKEKE NOA!  
E RUA AKU RINGA TE TUKI, TE TAHEKE,  
TE KAUNGA TE MATA ARIKI O WAI  
TE AKI KAU ANA MAI TENA  
TE WHARE WHANAUNGA TANGATA

TUTURU WHAKAMAUA KIA TINA, TINA, HAUMI E HUI E  
TAIKI E



Breastfeeding

For many Maori women the artistry of Robyn Kahukiwa is symbolic of the traditional and historical struggle of Maori women within Maori society. Although this piece of her work was not originally created for use in this thesis, it depicts for me a contemporary vision of nga matatini or Maori diversity which are central to issues of Mana Wahine and Maori development.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to explore the personal and political issues of identity for white Maori women in Aotearoa. This was inspired by recognition that the lives of white Maori women are not accounted for in our present society. The life stories of eight women from multi-tribal backgrounds were gathered in semi-structured, in-depth interviews. My life story was written and incorporated both as a reason for conducting this research and as data.

The focus of the study is on Maori women, which reflects my gender and cultural identity. Hence my Mana Wahine and Kaupapa Maori values influenced the methodology and theoretical concepts used to add meaning to the narratives. A desire to produce research which would empower and not further colonise those I was researching led me to utilise a structural analysis framework for the structure and analysis of the research. The strategy of 'researching back' was used to locate colonising aspects in the theoretical and historical literature. The design is qualitative, the method is kaupapa Maori and a strategy of multiple triangulation is used. I utilised storytelling in gathering data and content analysis to locate the narrative themes.

The participants identify as tangata whenua. The findings support this chosen position and highlight the influential social, political and legislative factors which have shaped their identification processes.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ko Tararua te maunga  
Ko Waikawa te awa  
Te Rangitawhia te hapu  
Ko Ngati Tukorehe raua ko Ngati Raukawa nga iwi  
Tainui te waka

He mihi nunui tenei ki taku kuia, ki taku whanau kei Wanganui. Ko nga iwi o Tukorehe, Wehiwehi, a ko Ngati Raukawa hoki, tena koutou katoa.

I would like to thank my mother for her love and support, also my friends and other family members who have listened to and encouraged me.

I am grateful to all the women, particularly nga kuia who bravely agreed to share their personal stories with me and allowed them to be incorporated in this thesis in the hope that this action would create change for others.

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