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# **Homes for Māori Language Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

A Māori development thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## Abstract

*Why, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is the New Zealand Government still in the business of making policy concerned with Māori resources, and why do Māori continue to allow this to happen?*

*This thesis looks at an important Māori resource, the Māori language, and reviews the role of both Māori and the State in its development. It questions the sense of Government controlling Māori language and cultural development at the national level, given that cultural survival, including linguistic survival, is a fundamental Māori development goal, and this has never been a priority for any New Zealand government.*

*The thesis suggests that while Māori might be achieving greater levels of self-determination at the iwi or community levels, the lack of an effective unified Māori body allows successive New Zealand governments to continue what is a very reluctant and reactive involvement in Māori language and cultural development.*

*The New Zealand Government and the wider society it represents is not yet ready for substantial constitutional reform which would recognise the Māori right to self-determination. This thesis suggests, however, that it is ready, and in fact, may welcome, greater input and leadership from Māori, particularly in the area of Māori language and culture.*

*Māori language and cultural development at the beginning of this millennium offers an opportunity for Māori to become involved in key policy development as a precursor to the inevitable time when Māori self-determination will be formally realised at the national level. While one day Māori will be wholly responsible for decisions relating to Māori language and culture and indeed all other Māori resources, for now, it must work with the Government to ensure that language and cultural development has a secure 'home' underpinning all Māori development.*

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## **A Word from the Researcher/Methodology**

This thesis does not purport to provide a definitive view on Māori development. It is simply my own perspective on a number of aspects of Māori development, informed by a wide range of sources.

A number of research methods were used in the development of this thesis. My studies as an undergraduate and post-graduate student of Māori Studies helped to inform the views presented in this work. So too has my experience as an employee of a range of Māori units within government agencies. In particular, recent experience as a policy analyst working on Māori language policy for Te Puni Kōkiri, provided me with an insight into how Government makes policy in relation to Māori resources, and this has been drawn on in this research.

At the outset a set of hypotheses was developed in order to provide focus, and to provide a useful framework upon which to proceed.

The thesis has also drawn on a wide range of literature on Māori, Māori language and indigenous peoples' development. The authors of these works are both Māori and Pākehā. The thesis therefore is informed by an eclectic mix of views.

Quotes from a variety of sources are used throughout the thesis to emphasise and or to support particular points of view. The thesis is particularly influenced by the work of Professor Mason Durie, with regard to overall Māori development. In particular, I have related one aspect of Māori development, that of Māori language development, to Durie's ongoing argument that the lack of a national Māori body politic allows the Government, rather than Māori, to control Māori resource development through policy making at the national level.

While much of the thesis is based on available literature, I have also used case studies to illustrate particular points. A case study into an example of Government policy making for Māori, the Government's 'Māori Language Strategy' was conducted. This involved an in-depth look at the development of the policy and its implementation to date. The policy was analysed against a Māori development framework and against what experts in the field of language revitalisation prescribe for successful minority language revitalisation. Discussions with public servants involved with Māori language policy at the time that the Strategy was under development helped to inform this case study.

In addition, two small case studies were conducted into iwi language planning. One was based purely on information publicly available. However, due to the general lack of information as to the types of language planning and activity being undertaken by many other iwi, the second case study involved a piece of primary research with one particular iwi, Ngāti Manawa. A trip was made to Murupara, where discussions with the appropriately mandated representative of Ngāti Manawa took place.

In keeping with convention, a definition is provided in brackets immediately following a Māori word, when it appears for the first time in the text. A glossary listing all Māori words/terms and their definitions, in the context in which they appear, is provided as an appendix, for additional reference.

This thesis is submitted with a great deal of humility and respect for the kaupapa, and was approached with significant caution, in particular with regard to issues surrounding a researcher, not of Māori descent, conducting research in relation to kaupapa Māori.

# INTRODUCTION

## Overview of the Thesis and its Structure

This thesis is a study of Māori language development one-year into the new millennium, and the respective roles of both Māori and the State in that development. Inevitably, this has meant placing the language in the broader political context of overall Māori development.

Although it might now seem in the distant past to many of us, the passing of one millennium and dawning of another, was, in New Zealand, as no doubt all around the world, a time for reflections and predictions. It was a time for thinking about our country's past and possible future. Central to the discourse in New Zealand was discussion about the current state of Māori development and where that might be heading, given emerging development trends amongst the world's indigenous peoples. Some believed the new millennium held promise as a turning point into a new stage of Māori development.

As we entered the new millennium, key commentators on indigenous development called for an end to the adversarial, grievance based relationships that had come to characterise so many of the relationships between indigenous peoples and their Governments over the last part of the twentieth century (Coates/McHugh 1998, Durie 1999 b. et al).

They suggested that these difficult relationships had come about because Governments and their indigenous populations have continued to pursue different development goals, and were therefore, often talking at cross-purposes. They claimed that cultural survival, self-determination within the confines of an established nation-state, and partnership with the non-indigenous populations, are indigenous peoples' fundamental development goals, while Governments, at best, simply want to acknowledge past injustices and to make full and final settlements with their indigenous people.

The same commentators called for new partnerships between States and their indigenous peoples, based on agreed, or at least mutually acknowledged, development goals and recognition of the fundamental right of indigenous peoples to control their own future.

This thesis looks at Māori language development, within the context of Māori development in general. It explores whether cultural survival, in particular linguistic survival is a key Māori development goal, and the importance it is being accorded by the New Zealand Government. It explores whether the current Māori-State relationship is conducive to Māori language development.

There is significant evidence to support the assertion that the Māori language, as a key factor in cultural survival, remains a central development goal of Māori. The Māori

language, while still endangered, has been brought back from the brink of extinction, largely due to the ongoing efforts and determination of the Māori people.

Yet Māori have from time to time been criticised for either not caring enough about the language or for focussing on economic resource development at the expense of social and cultural development. While Māori continue to develop and implement initiatives aimed at revitalising the Māori language, they appear to be localised, sporadic and lacking in overall planning and coordination. Socio-economic disadvantage and difficult Māori-Māori relationships also appear to hinder any unified Māori language efforts at the national level and these are also explored.

On the other side of the divide, the New Zealand Government appears to be content in pursuing a Māori development policy which focuses on concluding the Treaty settlements process and on attempting to achieve social equity between Māori and non-Māori. Māori language and culture development seems to take a marginalised position within Government, ranking low in Government priorities. The other key related Māori development goal, self-determination, has at least at the national level, scarcely made it onto the Government agenda.

The following hypotheses are tested throughout the course of this thesis and are used to inform the final summary and conclusion:

- That power to ensure cultural survival, including the survival of the Māori language, has always been, and remains a key Māori development goal;
- That survival of the Māori language and culture has never been and is unlikely ever to be a key priority for the New Zealand Government;
- That the Māori –State relationship has historically been weak because it has never been based on agreed development goals, including language and culture goals, or clear strategies and plans for achieving those goals;
- That the current Māori –State relationship is based on a structuralist model and is focused on historical grievances and risk aversion, and that Māori language development is a prime example of this approach;
- That until Māori and the State move towards developing a new ‘relational’ partnership based on common development goals, (including Māori language development goals), Māori development will continue to be stilted and adversarial;
- That in spite of the ongoing difficulties surrounding the nature of the Māori-Crown relationship and intra-Māori difficulties, there is much to be optimistic about and the next 25 year period of Māori development will see a continued strengthening of the Māori language, as Māori continue to pursue self-determination and cultural survival.

The thesis begins with an overview of Māori development until 1975. It reviews the impact of colonisation on the Māori language and the responses of Māori and the Crown over the years. It examines the priority that was given to Māori language and culture by both Māori and the State, and examines the nature of the relationship between Māori and the State, prior to 1975.

It then moves to look in more depth at the recent period from 1975-2000 in which the endangered state of the language and calls for its revitalisation became more prominent within the context of indigenous development worldwide. It examines the State's reaction, in particular, the instigation of a process to settle grievances relating to breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the type of relationship that this established between Māori and the State.

This is followed by an examination of the trends for indigenous people's development in the years leading into the new millennium. The thesis considers whether a new phase of development is emerging in New Zealand and, if so, what its characteristics are. In particular, it asks whether Māori and the State are showing signs of developing a new relationship based on agreed development goals, or whether both are continuing to work in an adversarial manner.

The thesis then turns to an in depth look at Māori language development in New Zealand today. After providing a snapshot of the current health of the Māori language, it examines whether Māori and the State are working together or in isolation from one another on Māori language development. It examines whether any agreed Māori language development goals exist, including, most fundamentally, the goal of revitalisation.

The next two Chapters look at language activities currently being undertaken by the Government and by Māori. Firstly, Government's current approach to Māori language development is explored to consider whether the language is being accorded any priority on the Government's agenda. A case study into the Government's 'Māori Language Strategy' is conducted to find out whether it is a bold new direction by Government towards Māori language development into the new millennium, or whether it is little more than a continuation of previous approaches. Secondly, the thesis looks at the current approach/es being taken by iwi/Māori to Māori language development and the priority it is being accorded. It explores whether iwi/Māori have clear Māori language goals and strategies and plans for achieving those goals. It also considers what factors, apart from the Māori-State relationship, might be hindering progress in this area. Two case studies into iwi language planning are conducted.

The final section summarises the thesis, and reviews the original hypotheses to inform the final conclusion.

While this thesis focuses on Māori language development, it is, in fact, a thesis about Māori development. It contends that the health or otherwise of the language can be used as a barometer for overall Māori development. If Māori language development is not

progressing well, then there should be concern for the state of overall Māori development. This is because the revitalisation of the Māori language is a critical component of Māori cultural survival, and therefore Māori development. If, on the other hand, the Māori language is flourishing, or at least shows signs of being revitalised, then we can take heart that Māori development is progressing positively.

## **Homes for Māori Language Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – An Explanation**

The title of this thesis, ‘Homes for Māori Language Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ conveys many of the central themes of the study.

This thesis attempts to show that the retention of the Māori culture, through the survival and revitalisation of the Māori language, remains a key Māori development goal. It also shows that the New Zealand Government has accepted that it has obligations and responsibilities to support Māori endeavors to revitalise the Māori language. Yet, why is it that neither Māori nor the Government has secured a safe ‘home’ for language and culture development at the national level, as part of their development policies? Is this a weakness that is hindering not only Māori language development, but overall Māori development?

While Māori are leading a range of language revitalisation activities at the whānau (extended family), hapū (sub-tribe), iwi (tribe) and Māori organisation level, this thesis argues that the lack of Māori unity overall, is preventing meaningful Māori involvement in language policy development and associated resource distribution at the national level.

As a consequence, the Government continues to take, what has traditionally been a rather reluctant leading role in the cultural heritage sector, particularly Māori cultural heritage. This thesis shows how the lack of a strong national Māori voice can result in ineffective policies for Māori, such as the Government’s Māori Language Strategy.

This thesis supports the need for a mechanism to be formed which would ensure Māori lead policy development relating to Maori resources such as Māori language and culture. It also suggests that the Government should ensure that Māori language and culture development is a core factor underpinning its Māori development policy.

On another level, international research clearly indicates that, more than any in any other domain, language revitalisation must take place in the homes and communities of those who belong to the language. Yet to date, both Māori and the Government have tended to focus on the education and broadcasting sectors to revitalise the Māori language, neglecting Māori homes and communities as the key domain for revitalisation. The thesis supports the need for both Government and Māori to make homes and communities the focus of future language revitalisation activities.

Finally, this thesis advocates a new Māori Language Strategy be developed. A Strategy developed and led by Māori and supported by the Government in the joint recognition that the survival and vitality of the language and culture is a key goal for Māori.

## **Key Definitions**

Before beginning, it will be useful to define some of the key terms used frequently throughout this thesis.

### ***Māori development***

‘Māori development’ is a term that has become en vogue in this country’s more recent history. In the past, successive New Zealand Governments used phrases such as ‘Native Affairs’, ‘Māori Affairs’, or even the ‘native/Māori problem’ to describe any matters relating to Māori development. Māori themselves, on the other hand, have talked about development in terms of protecting and advancing tribal, and more recently pan-Māori mana (power, prestige, authority) and rangatiratanga (self-determination).

Māori development is not a trendy new phenomenon but has existed since the time iwi first arrived in this country, and is part of our nation’s history and progress. It simply hasn’t always been called Māori development. For a long part of our history the dominant culture sought to assimilate Māori into their culture and later pursued a policy of integration. This meant that the notion of Māori development, as something distinct from the overall development of the country, was not acknowledged amongst the dominant culture.

Today ‘Māori development’ appears to be the politically correct jargon, used by both Māori and non-Māori for describing the ongoing process by which Māori live and progress in this country.

The lengthened phrase, ‘positive ‘Māori development’ was coined at the Māori development conference, Hui Taumata (summit conference), held in 1984 and has today also become commonly used alongside ‘Māori development’ and ‘indigenous peoples development’ for describing the development of Māori and other indigenous peoples in the wider societies in which they live.

### ***Self-determination***

This thesis argues that self-determination is a key Māori development goal and the term recurs throughout. For the purpose of this thesis, Durie’s understanding of self-determination, as explained by Fleras is used. “Mason Durie equates tino rangatiratanga with self-determination – that is, the advancement of Māori as Māori through the implementation of mechanisms for governance of Māori resources” (Havemann 1999 Pg. 207).

### *Language/language and culture*

While this thesis concentrates on Māori language development, it is based on the assumption that language is an integral and essential part of any culture and that it is difficult and sometimes impossible to separate the two. To look in depth at cultural issues, other than the language, would simply be outside the scope of this research. As the thesis develops, it will show how Māori attempts to retain and revitalise the language are part of the overall development goal of cultural survival.

### *Survival of the language/language revitalisation*

Another term central to this thesis, which may be useful to define at the outset, is 'language survival'. This thesis equates the term 'language survival' with the notion of a healthy living language. In other words, a language that can be used as the chosen language of communication for the whole range of everyday topics, within a range of language domains or communities.

The process by which a language moves from being an endangered language to being once again a healthy living language is referred to by linguists as 'language revitalisation'. The two crucial components of language revitalisation are that intergenerational transmission of the language is restored by those people for whom the language is part of their culture (reversing language shift) and that the maintenance and development of the language is controlled by those same people (Fishman 1991). Language revitalisation is discussed in more depth in Chapter Four.

### *Language status, corpus and acquisition development*

Language status, corpus and acquisition development are terms commonly used by sociolinguists with reference to language development and are referred to in this thesis. As defined by Baker, status planning is concerned with "raising the status of a language within society", corpus planning concerns "the vocabulary, spelling, grammar and standardisation of the minority language", and acquisition development is concerned with "creating language spread by increasing the number of speakers and users (via empowerment) by, for example, language teaching (Baker 1996 Pg. 65).

### *Kotahitanga/Unity*

The words kotahitanga and unity are used frequently in this thesis, in particular in relation to the argument surrounding the need for a united national Māori body politic. This is not intended to convey the unrealistic expectation that iwi/Māori should at all times and in all matters be 'united'. Māori, like Pākehā and all other ethnic groups, will have diverse opinions on any given topic. The argument is not that a national Māori body politic would or should bring 'unity' as such, but that it would be a vehicle for reaching consensus on issues of common importance and agreed courses of action.

### *Structural/ Relational relationships*

Finally, this thesis argues that the current Māori-State relationship is based on a 'structural', as opposed to a 'relational' model. A structural relationship is described as being one in which the State deals with its indigenous people at a number of levels or structures such as "nation, state, tribe and family" (Coates/McHugh 1998 Pg. 111). In the New Zealand context, the Government has tended to deal with Māori at the iwi, hapū, or Māori organisation levels.

A relational model, on the other hand, is referred to as one in which the relationship is based on ethnicity rather than tribal identity. McHugh describes it as the post-structuralist approach saying 'This approach is founded upon the principle of 'ethnicity' and sees the tribe not as the source but as an expression (the major but not exclusive one) of aboriginal identity (Coates/McHugh 1998 Pg.113).