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**NGĀ KAIPARA MĀORI: NGĀ PŪMAHARA O TE TUAKIRI
MĀORI ME TE AO HĀKINAKINA**

**Māori Athletes: Perceptions of Māori Identity and Elite Sport
Participation**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
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TUHINGA WHAKARĀPOPOTO

This research explores how Māori athletes experience, interpret and negotiate their Māori identity while competing in elite sport. Since its arrival, organised sport has become an integral social phenomenon in Aotearoa New Zealand society for Māori and Pākehā. This increased appeal of sport has provided Māori an avenue in which to escape deep-rooted colonial ideologies that described Māori in deficit ways. As such, the number of Māori participating in elite sport is proportional to the Māori population as a whole. Although the field of sport is a vibrant area of scholarly inquiry in Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori athlete participation in elite sport with respect to Māori identity remains relatively unexplored. This research responds to that void by discussing the experiences of 10 Māori athletes who illustrate that a variety of challenges and implications exist when Māori identity is examined within the context of elite sport.

A kaupapa Māori qualitative strategy in the form of oral histories and storytelling referred to as pūrākau was used. Participants were selected based on two criteria: a) they either currently, or had in the past, represented Aotearoa New Zealand in their chosen sport or similarly achieved professional status as an athlete; and b) self-identified as Māori, through personal communication with the researcher. Five male and five female Māori athletes aged between 19 and 48 years were interviewed. Four participants had retired, seven had participated in team sports, and seven had represented Aotearoa New Zealand at either the Olympic or Commonwealth games.

There were several key findings. The first is that all Māori athletes express a direct association of their Māori identity through tūrangawaewae and/or whakapapa, yet

some exemplified an acute self-awareness that they exhibit few specific Māori cultural behaviours associated with it. As a part of this, nearly all discuss that te reo Māori remains a critical Māori cultural element that influences how they perceive their Māori identity. Second, participants highlight the impact of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge and cultural practices), that when integrated during competition at world events, such as the Olympic/Commonwealth games provided a sense of solace and pride with respect to their Māori identity and invoked feelings of membership, belonging and national identity that in this research is referred to as kaupapa whānau. Third, participants revealed how participating in iwi and Māori sporting events, engaging with the public via television and the media, the role of their athlete-coach relationships and social responsibility influence their perceptions of Māori identity. Several participants also shared private traditional rituals and cultural practices they employ while competing in elite sport, and how these practices assist in creating meaning of their Māori identity.

A metaphorical depiction referred to as Te Whāriki Tuakiri-the identity mat, is presented to illustrate the convergence of these themes and to better understand the diversity of Māori identity that exists for Māori athletes.

TOKU MĀMĀ

Ki a koe toku māmā,

Ka uri to aro ki te maunga tītōhea ngā manu e rua.

Whakawaewae ana te tū o Taranaki.

Te tuku karanga nei ki ōna mōrehu.

Whakarongorongo ai te taringa te haruru.

O te rangatahi kimi kōrero,

O te rangatahi kimi kupu,

O te rangatahi kimi ora,

Mo ngā reo o Taranaki ee.

You performed miracles every day and I never really understood that till later in my life. I will never forget your hugs of comfort, your words of wisdom and most importantly what you taught me about what it means to be Māori. You will always be my inspiration.

[In memory of my Mum who passed away 14 September, 2015.]

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Finally, to the Māori athletes who allowed me to collate their taonga and voice their rich pūrākau. I am overcome with immense feelings of appreciation for your time in sharing your experiences of elite sport. I hope that my study will honour your narratives, leading to positive outcomes for all those who might be involved with Māori athletes in elite sport.

As an act of appreciation to my whānau, the academy and my participants I offer the beginning segment of a well-known whakatauki spoken by King Potatau Te Wherowhero at his coronation in 1858:

“Kotahi te kōhao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro ma, te miro pango, te miro whero.

“There is but one eye of a needle, through which white, black and red cotton are threaded.

(Brougham, 1975, p. 62, Mead 2004, p. 246)

His statement alludes to the view that individually the white, black and red threads are compromised and weak, yet when they are brought together through a process of interweaving they are resilient, durable and robust. His expression emphasised the bringing together of the various faiths, religious denominations, and the diverse ethnic groups present in Aotearoa at the time. Hence in a contemporary sense his words have been metaphorically understood as representing strength, security and unity. The notion I draw upon in respect to my study, is that my whānau is represented by the white thread; the academy is resembled by the black thread; and my participants

signified by the red thread, who, united through this work - “the eye of the needle”, has resulted in the completion of my doctoral study. I am indebted to you all.

Nāku me ngā mihi maioha ki a kōutou kātoa.

RĀRANGI UPOKO

TUHINGA WHAKARĀPOPOTO	i
TOKU MĀMĀ	iii
HE MIHI	iv
NGĀ TŪTOHI	xii
NGĀ WHAKAAHUA.....	xiii
HUINGA KUPU MĀORI	xiv
UPOKO KOTAHI: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 CONTRIBUTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	2
1.2 TAKU PŪRĀKAU: MY PERSONAL STORY	5
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	12
1.4 RESEARCH PROCESS.....	13
1.5 THESIS ORGANISATION	14
UPOKO TUARUA: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	17
2.2 MĀORI IDENTITY	19
Māori migration and settlement.....	19
Te tiriti o Waitangi (the treaty of Waitangi), assimilation, urbanisation and Māori revitalisation.....	21
Race	28
Nationality	29
Ethnicity.....	31
Evaluating Māori identity: Te Hoe Nuku Roa (THNR) and the Multi- Dimensional Model of Māori Identity and Cultural Engagement (MMM-ICE)	33
Tūrangawaewae, whakapapa and mauri	41
Section summary	46
2.3 MĀORI SPORT: IDEOLOGIES, PARTICIPATION AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MĀTAURANGA MĀORI.....	48
Eurocentric perspectives of Māori activity.....	48
Racialised perspectives of Māori participation in elite sport	52
Māori sport competition environments.....	55
Mātauranga Māori in elite sport	58

Section summary	63
2.4 MĀORI SPORT PARTICIPATION	64
Section summary	74
2.5 INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE: INDIGENOUS ATHLETES AND ELITE SPORT PARTICIPATION	75
Taiwan	75
Canada	78
Australia.....	84
Section summary: Comparisons	89
2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY	93
UPOKO TUATORU: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STRATEGY	95
3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	95
3.2 TE POUTAMA RANGAHAU: KAUPAPA MĀORI THEORY AND PŪRĀKAU.....	97
Kaupapa Māori Theory (KMT)	99
Pūrākau: Māori oral histories and storytelling	102
Section summary	107
3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY	108
Ethical considerations and approval	108
Establishing researcher credibility.....	111
Participant recruitment	112
Participant description	113
Participant pūrākau process	116
Data analysis: Robustness	119
Data analysis: Transparency	122
Limitations of the study	123
Section summary	124
3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY	125
UPOKO TUAWHA: MĀORI ATHLETE INTERPRETATIONS OF MĀORI IDENTITY - WHAKAPAPA, TŪRANGAWAEWAE, AND TE REO MĀORI.....	127
4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	127
4.2 NGĀ PŪRĀKAU: PARTICIPANT/MĀORI ATHLETE INTRODUCTIONS	128
Rimu	128

Miro	132
Nīkau	135
Pōhutukawa	138
Kahikatea	141
Karaka.....	144
Matai	147
Totara.....	150
Tawa	154
Kauri	158
Section discussion.....	161
Tūrangawaewae and whakapapa	161
Māori identity as hierarchical, incidental and/or integrated with athlete identity	162
Whānau	164
4.3 TE REO MĀORI.....	165
Feelings and perceptions of te reo Māori	166
Section discussion.....	172
4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY	173
UPOKO TUARIMA: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MĀTAURANGA MĀORI IN ELITE LEVEL SPORT CONTEXTS.....	176
5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	176
5.2 TOTARA AND KAURI’S EXPERIENCES OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES 179	
5.3 MISAPPROPRIATION OF MĀTAURANGA MĀORI AT THE OLYMPIC AND COMMONWEALTH GAMES	181
Sydney 2000	181
Manchester 2002.....	183
Torino 2006	184
Section discussion.....	185
5.4 INTANGIBLE EXAMPLES OF MĀTAURANGA MĀORI	188
Pōwhiri.....	188
Mihimihi	189
Haka.....	190
Haka misappropriation	193

Waiata.....	196
Te Reo.....	198
Māori athletes feelings of mātauranga Māori: Kaupapa whānau, whānaungatanga and kotahitanga.....	200
5.5 TANGIBLE EXAMPLES OF MĀTAURANGA MĀORI	208
Kākahu, mauri stone and pounamu	208
Pou.....	209
Section discussion.....	211
5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY	212
UPOKO TUAONO: MĀORI IDENTITY AND SPORT PARTICIPATION INTERSECTIONALITY	216
6.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	216
6.2 MĀORI SPORT COMPETITION ENVIRONMENTS	217
Section discussion.....	220
6.3 MEDIA INTERACTION.....	221
Section discussion.....	227
6.4 ATHLETE - COACH RELATIONSHIPS.....	227
Positive athlete-coach experiences	228
Negative athlete-coach experiences.....	233
Section discussion.....	238
6.5 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, CONTRIBUTION AND LEADERSHIP	239
General community contribution.....	239
Giving back to Māori.....	244
Section discussion.....	248
6.6 PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS OF TRADITIONAL MĀORI KNOWLEDGE IN ELITE SPORT.....	250
Section discussion.....	254
6.7 CHAPTER DISCUSSION	255
UPOKO TUAWHITU: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	259
7.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	259
7.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	261
Distinctive challenges Māori athletes face with respect to their Māori identity when participating in elite sport	263
7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	268

REFERENCES	274
APPENDICES.....	303
APPENDIX A	303
Pūrākau Prompts (Interview Plan).....	303
Section 1: Exploring the development of their Māori identity.....	303
Section 2: Exploring foundational sport experiences.....	303
Section 3: Examining the ways elite sport participation and Māori identity intersect	304
Section 4: Future participation in Māori world	305
Concluding comments	305
APPENDIX B.....	306
Information Sheet for Participants.....	306
APPENDIX C.....	309
Interview Consent Form	309
APPENDIX D.....	311
Research Outputs / Publications	311
Journal Articles (Peer Reviewed)	311
Book Chapters	311
Conference Presentations	311

NGĀ TŪTOHI

1. Ethnic identity of Athletes supported by New Zealand Academy of Sport –
Team Sports (Palmer, 2006).....71
2. Ethnic identity of athletes supported by New Zealand Academy of Sport –
Individual Sports (Palmer, 2006).....72
3. Research Participants.....114-115

NGĀ WHAKAAHUA

1. New Zealand Sport on the Cultural Competence Continuum (Hippolite & Bruce, 2013, p. 89).....	68
2. The Research Process: Te Poutama Rangahau.....	99
3. Te Whāriki Tuakiri: Tuakiri Māori.....	172
4. Te Whāriki Tuakiri: Mātauranga Māori.....	214
5. Te Whāriki Tuakiri: Te Ao Hākinakina.....	256
6. Te Whāriki Tuakiri: The Identity Mat.....	267

HUINGA KUPU MĀORI

Ahakoā he iti he pounamu	A well-known whakatauki (proverb) translated as, “Although it is small, it is greenstone”. It represents a humble way to deliver a small gift. As such the word pounamu (greenstone/jade) stands as a metaphor for something precious or a treasure from the heart.
amo	Upright supports of the lower ends of the maihi (angled posts) on the front gable of a house. In regards to the waharoa (gateway) these were represented as the side vertical posts.
Aotearoa	The Māori name for New Zealand, translated as ‘Land of the Long White Cloud’. For this thesis the unified term of Aotearoa New Zealand is used.
aroaha	Unconditional love.
awa	River.
haka	Ritualistic dance.
hākari	Celebratory feast.
hapū	Sub-tribe.
he kanohi kitea	A term used in Kaupapa Māori research translated as “the face that is seen” (see Te Awēkotuku, 1991), referring to the importance that researchers be ‘seen’ as part of the interview process and in the community.
hōhā	Be boring, tiresome, bored, wearisome, fed up with, annoyed, agitated.
Iho whenua	The spiritual nature and meaning of land.

iwi	Tribe.
kaiako	Teacher.
kaiāwhina	Helpers.
kaitiaki	Carers, creators.
kaitiakitanga	Caring.
karanga	Ceremonial call of welcome to visitors.
karakia	Blessing.
kaumātua	Elder.
Kaupapa Māori	Māori ‘perspectives’ - Kaupapa Māori Theory (KMT).
kāwanatanga	Governorship.
koha	Donation/gift/contribution.
koriporipo	The waves caused by a waka (canoe) as it travels through the water.
koro	Elderly male/Grandfather.
kotahitanga	Community or unified vision.
kuia	Elderly female/Grandmother
Kupe	Explorer who discovered Aotearoa New Zealand.
maihi	Facing boards on the gable of a house. In regards to the waharoa (gateway) these were the angled posts that form the apex in the centre and connect to the amo (side posts).
mana	Integrity, charisma, prestige.
manaakitanga	Hospitality.
manawa	Heart.
manuhiri	Visitors.
manu tukutuku	Kite flying.

Māori	Indigenous person of Aotearoa New Zealand.
Māori pā	Villages.
marae	Ancestral home.
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge and cultural practices.
maunga	Mountain.
mauri (also mauri ora)	The essence, the vital ingredient of power that permits living things to exist within their own realm and sphere. For my study I employ it as a way to clarify Māori identity expressed as “I breathe, therefore I am” (Penetito, 2005, p. 104).
mihimihi	Greeting formalities.
mokopuna	Descendant/grandchild.
mōteatea	Chant.
Ngāti Ranana	Literally translated as London Tribe that describes a group of Māori expatriates who have created a Māori identity in London.
Ngāti Toa	The tribe whom have legal proprietorship of the haka ‘Ka mate Ka mate’.
ōritetanga	“Equality” (see Wyeth et al., 2010).
Pākehā	A person in Aotearoa New Zealand primarily of European descent.
patu	Club-like weapon.
pepeha	Tribal sayings.
poi	Ball on a string.
pounamu taonga	Treasured gift/prized possession. In this context it came in the form of a greenstone pendant gifted to Olympic athletes.
pouri	Sad.

pōwhiri	Welcoming ceremony.
pūrākau	Ancient legend, myth; any incredible story; legendary, mythical. For this study it represents the method of storytelling I employed to capture the experiences of Māori athletes.
pūtea	Money, financial support.
rangatiratanga	“Chieftainship” (see Wyeth et al., 2010).
tāngata whenua	Host, people of the land.
tau	A prefix indicating that something is strange or unusual.
tauiwi	Foreign people.
tautangata	Stranger.
tauwhenua	Strange land.
taonga	Prized possession, gift.
Te ao hākinakina	Translated as ‘The world of sport’. For this study it assists in clarifying participants perceptions of mātauranga Māori in elite sport.
te hiringa i te mahara	“The power of the mind” (see Royal, 2002).
Te Māhutonga	The name of the ceremonial cloak worn by the New Zealand flag bearer at the Olympic and Commonwealth Games. It is named after the Māori designation of the ‘Southern Cross’ constellation.
Te Poutama	Is a traditional Māori art form representing the various levels of learning and intellectual achievement that were attained by Tāne-o-te-wānanga in his quest for superior knowledge.
Te Poutama Rangahau	For this study the design symbolises the amalgamation of the methods I have employed to collect the pūrākau of Māori

	athletes two major concepts of Māori human development.
te reo Māori	Māori language.
te reo Māori me ngā	Māori language and traditional cultural practices.
tikanga	
Te Rūnanga O Ngai Tahu	The iwi (tribe) organisation that gifted the precious greenstone to the New Zealand Olympic Committee.
tikanga	The correct Māori procedures and conventions as a general guide in Māori traditional customs.
Toi	Explorer who arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand after Kupe.
tukutuku	Wall boards that adorn the inside of whareniui.
tupuna	Elder.
tūrangawaewae	Place, origin, land to ‘stand’.
waharoa	Gateway.
waiata	Song.
wairua	Spiritual significance.
waka	Canoe.
whaikōrero	Oratory.
whakapapa	Genealogy, ancestry.
Whakapūmautanga	Māori Advisory Board of the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU)
whakatauki	Proverb.
whānau	Family.
(whaka)whānaungatanga	Developing family ties, building relationships.
whangai	To nurture or to adopt. In the Māori world it involves placing a child within a family to be raised by another member of the

	family if the parents are unable to raise the child themselves.
Whātonga	Explorer who arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand after Kupe and alongside Toi.
whareniui	Traditional Māori dwellings.
whāriki	Mat.
whenua	Placenta or umbilical cord / land.
whenua tipu	Sacred or ancestral land.