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What Goes On TOA:

Lessons from Tāne Ora o Aotearoa (TOA) in High-Performance



A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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KUPU TANGI

Ka tanuku te tihi o Tongariro,
Wairingiringi aku roimata ki te awa o Rangitīkei.
Ko te tohu nei o te mate.
Ko te tohu nei o te aroha.

Kei aku irāmutu e PJ, koutou ko Rowe me Caleb,
Ia ahau e rangahau ana, kua tae moata koutou ki tōu wāhi i te pō.
E rangatahi tonu ana koutou.
Haere, hoki atu koutou ki te hunga e tauwhanga mai nā i te pō.
Ki te huihuinga o te Kahurangi,
Ki te urunga tē taka, te moenga tē whakaarahia ake.
Ki tō Nanny Judy, tō Koro Marty e tatari ana mōhau,
Nāu tēnei kaupapa!!

Tauāraia te pō
Tītoko ake ki te ao mārama
Tēnā tātou.

KUPU WHAKARĀPOPOTO (Abstract):

Disproportionately high burden of disease, social exclusion and deprivation among Māori men are well documented across most health and social indices, and they are reflected within a broad range of policy, strategy, and service delivery initiatives. The reasons underpinning these inequities are certainly complex though clear, as they are connected to a suite of social, cultural, environmental, historical, and structural factors that each coalesce to undermine the overall health status of Māori men. Despite this, there is a growing population of tāne (Māori men) who continue to buck these trends. They are referred to in this thesis as, “tāne ora.” The focus on tāne ora, rather than on Māori men’s health, is deliberate and emphasises the fact that while these two concepts share similar goals and objectives, they are founded on different principles and philosophies.

Like the renowned Gould et al (2002) study which interviewed 10 Olympic gold medallists revealing a number of common characteristics between them, this research is about *What Drives Tāne Ora* focusing on a specific subset of tāne who operate within high-performance environments. Grounded in Kaupapa Māori and Mana Tāne theories, a phenomenological and qualitative research design provided the framework for exploring the journeys of eight tāne within professional rugby aged between 20 and 36 years old. This thesis presents findings of the relationship between high-performance (one phenomena) and tāne ora (another phenomena). By taking this approach, these tāne offer insights into their childhood through to their present-day high-performance endeavours as current All Blacks and/or Māori All Blacks.

Three seminal findings were established from this research. Firstly, research into the health and wellbeing of tāne requires broader emphases and attention. Not to simply perpetuate health disparities and deprivation, but to cast a light on where opportunities for gains exist and how more bespoke solutions can be developed. Secondly, health and wellbeing of tāne should be informed by research methodologies which are equally as nuanced and framed. The need for a Mana Tāne Research methodology is overdue if not desirable.

Lastly, *what drives tāne ora* involves a complex interplay of conditions referred to in an acronym format as, MANA TANE. Notably, that any pursuits related to tāne ora needed to be *mātauranga-informed*, and *activated by mana* in the first instance. MANA TANE highlights that while all conditions are important, there are some (i.e., MANA) that are essential and others (TANE) that are complimentary. These illustrate the convergence of the conditions as an alternative pathway towards achieving tāne ora. One in which the rules of the sporting and Māori worlds are different with one being more transient and the other, enduring. And that those who are most successful are likely to be those that can have a positive relationship with both modes seamlessly.

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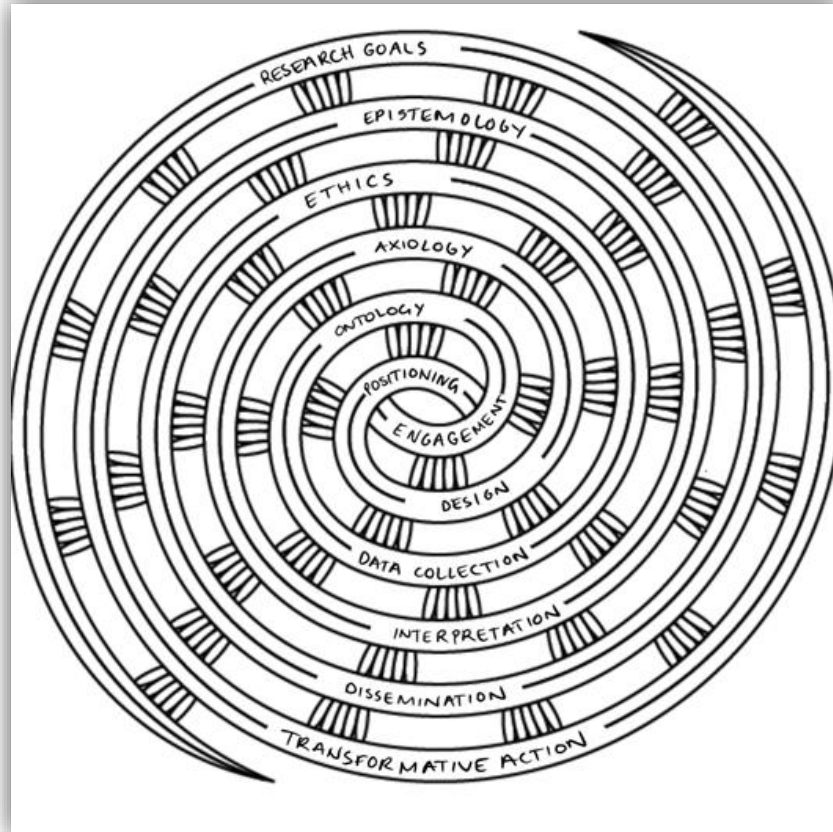
KUPU MŌ TE TOHU (a word on the cover image)

The source of the photo is unknown. But the athlete in the image will be recognisable at least to the rugby-trained eye and importantly, is one of the tāne within this research. The image gives the viewer a sense that there are several layers of meaning. On the one hand it speaks to the psychological characteristics often expressed by tāne in many settings and contexts. One that involves a degree of work ethic and being task focused. The tāne is holding a pair of rugby boots which highlights at a surface level a connection to this research, but also the importance of being 'fit for purpose' or having the 'right tools for the job.' His body language is geared towards the goalposts which could be either a metaphorical or literal reference to being goal-oriented and purposeful towards achieving his goals and aspirations. And on the other hand, this image tells us that to achieve excellence, one must view the dark as being just as much a source of energy and realisation, as the light. By dark I am indeed referring to the place at which stress, pressure, depression and/or anxiety exist. You will note the shadowed and solitary nature of the image which is unfiltered and perhaps reinforces the visual expression of the dark places that exist in life. And by energy, I am referring to the natural (and supernatural) forces required for motivation, movement, and execution of excellence.

KUPU WHAKATAKI (Statement of positionality):

"The role of a carver is to reveal what is already inside the wood."

(Ruka Broughton)



1

Figure 1 Takarangi Research Roadmap (WERO, 2023).

My research journey began almost two decades ago with a Master's thesis alongside a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology. In that thesis you will find a more detailed kōrero of my journey. For the purposes of this thesis however, you will also find the above quote in there which served as a positioning statement and beacon for both the thesis and more broadly, my clinical practice. It provided an important pou in the ground during times of disillusionment and confusion whilst undertaking the sometimes-gruelling clinical training. It has been quite some time since then, and despite the ensuing years of lessons, learnings, and countless professional development courses since, this statement of positionality remains as central to my practice now, as it did then. The need to ensure that my role as a practitioner

¹ As cited in the Working to End Racism and Oppression (WERO) Project 2023 www.wero.ac.nz

(carver) was to reveal the skills and strengths that already existed within the tangata whai ora, athletes and their whānau, continues.

The whakaaro identified throughout this thesis is much like the intent of the statement above. That is, I have positioned myself as the carver facilitating the emergence of knowledge. And like the carver, I have chosen the wood (the athletes/participants/tāne), the tools (the methodology) and how to hit the chisels (the methods). In keeping with the carving metaphor, as a tāne I myself am also made of wood. Arguably it is from the same tree as that which I am carving – albeit an older branch! I am in essence, identifying myself as an insider/outsider researcher which acknowledges my role as a tāne researching the experiences of other tāne – in sport no less.

This positioning does two things. Firstly, it recognises any potential blind spots whilst undertaking this research. For instance, the (re)production of male patriarchy within sport is not lost on me. The history of sexism and misogyny in the world of sport is well documented and continues to play out even to this very day with male football federation presidents thinking they can inappropriately touch female players. I am of course referring to the incident following the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup final. To reinforce this hegemony, he then doubled down on his behaviour by insisting that it was consensual despite the female player saying otherwise. Here's the kicker (pun intended); this was not his first incident having just days before whilst watching another game, grab his crotch in front of the Spanish monarch and her 16-year-old daughter. While it could be argued that this reflected one individual alone, I contest that this was instead, a representation of a broader male misogyny within sport. Especially since, in the early stages at least, he was still being endorsed by his (male-dominated) Board of Directors.

Within Aotearoa, this history of sexism and misogyny is also prevalent as both white patriarchies *and* white feminists tend to locate wāhine as the *other* (Smith in Pihama 2019). As Dr Moana Jackson rightly noted, any notion of a gendered hierarchy implying the lesser status of wāhine, remains intellectually incomprehensible and culturally impossible (Jackson, 2022). The need then, to develop a mana wāhine framework was critical to not just challenging these gendered notions but to also give power and validation to mātauranga wāhine. But this did not align with many Western beliefs and theory, so colonisers set about to destroy this (Mikaere, 1994). Māori men are also not immune to this issue and have been reminded over the decades not to align their interests with Pākehā at the expense of wāhine with such examples as the denial of key iwi leadership roles for wāhine (Pihama, 2020). Māori men must continue to reflect on and challenge the contemporary white patriarchy that they risk being seduced by (Te Awekōtuku, 1991).

Therefore, while the focus of this thesis is very much about tāne ora, it would be remiss of me not to recognise the mana of wāhine at the outset and offer a reminder of the balance that Mikaere (2022) and others implore all gendered research to acknowledge. That is, that

balance indeed existed between tāne and wāhine in pre-colonial times. Several pūrākau offer useful markers to the symbiotic relationship between tāne and wāhine and will be shared throughout this thesis. Perhaps one of the more relevant pūrākau in recent times occurred with the arrest and removal of Te Whiti o Rongomai and many other tāne at Parihaka following which he proclaimed “ko te tū tama wāhine i te wā o te kore.”²

The second benefit of an insider/outsider researcher positionality is that it recognises the opportunities that my dual roles of working professionally with these tāne as well as being a researcher, offers. Conventional research methodologies would consider this a ‘conflict of interest’ and while this position might be well intentioned, does not always serve the best research outcomes. As someone with a professional relationship with these tāne beyond the research realm, I am afforded certain insights that would otherwise not be considered or even identified without such a research position. As a kaupapa Māori researcher working at the multiple interfaces of sport, tāne ora, qualitative research, hauora and psychology, this position is unavoidable if not desirable. Key to ensuring that these opportunities are realised is the research principle of ‘relational’ – understanding how I relate to the kaupapa, the participants, my supervisors and the broader sector and being aware of the potential pitfalls.

To extend on my carving analogy earlier, the Takarangi Research Map (WERO, 2023) headlining this section reflects an extensive programme of work examining the impacts of racism in employment and income, housing and neighbourhoods, and institutional practices. The takarangi (or pitau) pattern adopted is a highly sophisticated, intricate, and prominent spiral carving pattern used extensively throughout te ao Māori. It is commonly found on the tauihu (the prow), and taurapa (stern post) of many waka, and on paepae and various other parts of the wharenuī. The significance of this pattern is highlighted not only by its use across carvings and bodies, but also by its location on points of movement – large spirals are often applied to shoulders and legs while smaller patterns can be seen on facial mataora (Witehira, 2013).

The significance of movement is critical to the application of the takarangi here in my thesis and reflects a much broader Indigenous and transformative research paradigm. As shown above, the takarangi spirals simultaneously inwards and outwards between interrelated layers of research positioning, ontology, axiology, ethics, epistemology, and research goals. In doing so, it highlights the importance of movement and in the context of my thesis, a recognition of the complex interplay between my positionality and ways of being and knowing.

² And while I only mention wāhine and tāne genders here, I also recognise the impact and privileging of heteronormative ideologies within Māori communities which continue to have damaging consequences for many Takatāpui (Māori LGBTIQ) whānau members (Pihama et al.2020).

Lastly, my professional career spanning hauora and performance, coupled with my time at Hato Pāora College, a Māori boarding school for tāne, has allowed me the opportunity to witness many tāne who were for all intents and purposes, *built different*. In privileging the ‘insider/outsider’ concept, I am more readily able to identify the critical characteristics that underpin tāne ora within the high-performance arena. Having these memories and professional experiences to draw from positions me well to undertake this important work. This, plus the very short ‘consultation’ with Tā Mason, whose wise words to me very early on in my career were simply “Luke, you will be researching tāne ora for your PhD one day. Just say yes and get on with it”. Not quite the typical consultation so much as a directive. Or was it a prediction?!

KUPU WHAKARITE (Preface)

*“Today was bigger than rugby”.
(TJ Perenara, 2019 Hurricanes captain)*



Figure 2. *Hurricanes and Chiefs, prior to their Super Rugby game, March 2019.* ³

During the time of undertaking this important work, I found myself working with sports performance teams like the Hurricanes Super Rugby franchise, where I continued to be exposed to many forms of *tāne*. In March 2019, Christchurch’s Muslim community was reeling from a horrific and inhumane attack by a lone gunman. Despite this, a super rugby game between the Hurricanes and Chiefs was about to be played only a few hours later. Some (rightly) said it shouldn’t have been played on what would become New Zealand’s darkest day in history. The incident triggered much rhetoric. Calls of “they are us” and “this is not who we are” just some of the few. Some weeks later, these very comments were revisited and challenged by many *tangata whenua* who reminded the nation of our deep and dark colonial history. Recollections of the earlier mentioned Parihaka in 1881 and Maungapōhatū in 1916 (and again in 2007) sparked reminders that this was indeed who we were and as confronting as that was, New Zealanders were cautioned with not forgetting their colonial history. The intergenerational effect of this trauma coupled with the compounding nature of disadvantage was significant and will be unpacked later in the literature review around how this has transpired for *tāne* today.

³ Hurricanes and Chiefs Super Rugby teams come together for a moments’ silence prior to the game commencing.

This ongoing tension with the Crown permeated throughout our colonial history. Among many tribal groups in Aotearoa, the hekenga-mai-i-raro (great tribal migration south) is a frequently referenced response to this very issue. For Ngāti Raukawa-ki-te tonga and Ngāti Tūwharetoa, there were two tono that led to their migration south. The first tono was by Waitohi (sister of Paramount Chief of Ngāti Toa, Te Rauparaha) in the 1820s. The second tono was around 1840 when Te Heuheu Manunui requested the help of my people, Ngāti Pīkiahū and Ngāti Waewae, to protect the southern boundary of Ngāti Tūwharetoa from the same abovementioned threats some years earlier. This resulted in Pīkiahū Waewae residing initially at Otara Pā then eventually at Te Reureu located along the Rangitīkei River between the Waitapu and Rangataua streams around the year 1842. Ngāti Pīkiahū Waewae along with a collection of other hapū have occupied these lands and maintained the mana and rangatiratanga till this very day. There are many marae located along this stretch of land including Te Kotukutuku Rerengatahi, Te Marae o Hine, Miria Te Kakara, Poupatatē, Te Tikanga and Te Hiiri o Mahuta.



Figure 3. *Ngā Marae o Te Reureu (Porirua ki Manawatū Waitangi Tribunal Claim, WAI2200)*

The Reureu Valley (hereafter known as The Valley) was an economically thriving and prosperous area but during the 20th century was well exposed to the national socio-political tensions with policy changes such as that of the Rogernomics era. Mass job losses and the closure of schools, marae and kāinga soon followed. The Valley was recovering slowly until one significant event in February 1993 altered the mauri of The Valley for years to come – a Police-sanctioned, illegal entry of seven kāinga in The Valley. Years later, a similar event known as the Urewera Raids would trigger memories and comparisons to The Valley experience. Such similarities between these two events included the Police uncovering the use of firearms, though these were used for practical purposes such as farming and hunting

livestock. Some firearms were family heirlooms dating back to the World War II. Likewise, in both instances, Police found support and vindication for their actions through *trial by media*. Lastly, both accounts demonstrated the sheer power and force of the Police to control Māori communities. As such, the impact on both accounts were very much the same.

While there were several similarities, there were also just as many distinctions. Despite the Solicitor General denying the Police permission to proceed with terrorism charges, the Terrorism Suppression Act (2002) (TSA) provided the framework (and excuse) for invading the Urewera. There was a 156-page Police affidavit that was effectively used as a term of reference for the justification of their raid there. There was no constitutional or legal basis to the raid of The Valley. The paperwork has since (and conveniently) disappeared. In her book '*The Day the Raid Came*', Valerie Morse, one of the 17 arrested described the various individual accounts of the Urewera raids. What stood out among these accounts was that they expected something was coming (Morse, 2010). They were after all, for the most part at least Māori rights activists and environmentalists. The people of The Valley were farmers and local freezing workers with little to no interest in the national political arena of the time. The Valley had no idea that the Police were coming.

There was speculation as to the rationale used to invade the Urewera. The police and Members of Parliament may have wanted to test the applicability of the TSA. The government were looking to reaffirm their relationships with the USA (who drafted the TSA), and this would provide a useful leverage point. Government was becoming increasingly concerned with the Urewera aspirations and sovereignty. Similarly, the government targeted specific activists to reassert power and control. For the people of The Valley however, it was much more simplistic and consistent story – the simple theft of a car in rural Manawatū which was believed to have contained weapons and was later found burnt out at the bottom of a cliff. No weapons were ever recovered. Back in the Urewera, not all the 17 arrested were Māori. Some were tangata moana and Pākehā allies who supported te mana motuhake o Tūhoe. Conversely, all the houses raided in The Valley were Māori owned and occupied. Interestingly, nestled in between these houses were several Pākehā homes none of which were included in the raids. This was a deliberate focus on Māori whānau.

In returning to that untimely rugby game above, one in which the Hurricanes were heavy favourites to defeat the Chiefs having recently come off the back of a Championship-winning season and several finals appearances. In the end, the game played on and somewhat fittingly, concluded in a 23-all draw. It was the post-match captain's speech that drew the most attention. With journalists circling like sharks critical of the Hurricanes performance and interrogating captain, TJ Perenara, his response was short and swift. He replied... "today was bigger than rugby." And with a stunning silence among the gallery, these few words helped to establish three things. Firstly, it put life quickly into perspective allowing the media to realise

what was truly important on that day. Secondly, these words found a way to unite people in the gallery, on the field (as per the image above) and around the country. Lastly, the words uttered by Perenara highlighted the need for elite sportspeople to ensure that their identity was firmly rooted in their belonging, and extended far beyond the realms of their performance, results and/or sport.

The story of what happened to my people in The Valley is by no means a comparison to what occurred in Christchurch on 15th of March 2019. But there are some parallels, one of which was the trauma experienced and likely to be intergenerational over time. And so, when exploring matters of health, one cannot and should not do so without first understanding the historical context within which such concepts are being investigated. In this case, New Zealand was founded upon a colonial agenda of land confiscation and dehumanisation, the effects of which are still occurring and continually being felt to this very day.

KUPU ĀTA TITIRO (a note on language and storytelling)

I was once asked by an elite athlete why we don't have a 'Pākehā Week' to celebrate this language like we do other languages throughout the season. His question was genuine and without humour. My response, however, was swift – “we already do that for the other 18 weeks of the competition” – pointing towards English as the all too often dominant discourse in most settings across sport and indeed society. This was met with mixed reaction from the rest of the team. He was after all, one of the most senior and decorated players in the team from an illustrious family line of athletes. It signalled to me less about him, but an indication that while the sporting industry is on the right track insofar as addressing issues of unconscious bias and racism, we still have much work to do as a society. This thesis therefore uses te reo Māori throughout to privilege and elevate its reverence. In doing so, the hope is that concepts which have traditionally used te reo Māori and English languages interchangeably will instead be deliberately distinguished to reflect their inherent differences.

An example of this is the use of hauora as opposed to health. There is an increasing awareness among Māori about the need to clearly distinguish the two as the meanings (and solutions) for each are vastly different. The kupu hauora is commonly broken down to hau, which refers to essence, vitality, breath, essential spirit. And ora, which refers to being alive, healthy, well. When unpacked further, the term hau is understood as wind or air which Māori perceive as the “quality that pervades the whole being of humans” (Best, 1982, p.51). It originates from two words, hā (breath, essence) and u (instil) and during the act of pronouncing this word a person experiences both the outward breath and the inner vitality in the same moment. Hauora notions, therefore, incorporate values and knowledge that are integral to a Māori worldview and a Māori understanding of health and wellbeing (Durie, 1985). Māori health on the other hand, is a paradoxical construct typically referring to Māori health conditions within the context of illness, which as mentioned earlier, is not the interest of this thesis.

Another is shifting from using New Zealand to Aotearoa. This is intentional and reflects two things in this thesis and perhaps more broadly in society. Firstly, when using New Zealand, I am referring to a Pākehā concept, and a particular time in our settler-colonial history. And secondly, I use Aotearoa to reflect both the original name of this country as well as an aspiration for socio-cultural maturation as a country. That there might be a genuine partnership and obligation to all who call Aotearoa home, to uphold the mana of te reo Māori. So, where it says New Zealand, it reflects a particular time in our country's history as opposed to Aotearoa.

Tāne (the atua) and tāne (the male/athlete), simply denotes the former as a proper noun in the context of this thesis. This is not to suggest that tāne or Tāne should automatically defer to the male gender (and wāhine with woman for that matter) as these are constructions of more recent social realities informed by colonial engagements (Hamley, 2022). Also, there

were many examples of tupuna who carried variants of male-oriented names and were wāhine (*Tamatea-upoko*, chieftainess of Ngāti Porou, and *Tāneroroa*, daughter of Turi). Instead, it may suggest that te ao Māori was more fluid around concepts such as tāne and wāhine, and that both contributed equally to the everyday needs of the community (Walker, 1990). Hence, if/when such words are used, I am referring to its tenets and concepts independently. Where appropriate, English translations have been provided and carefully considered. However, they will never fully encapsulate the true wairua or cultural nuances of te reo Māori.

Lastly, the practice of storytelling is an art and central to the 'tone' of this thesis. You will have already noticed my use of storytelling to help navigate the reader through the material whilst holding onto a central narrative. This is because when we hear a fact, a few isolated areas of our brain are stimulated, translating words into meanings. But when we hear a story, our brains light up tracing the chains of cause, effect, back to meaning. The 'creation story' is one which can be found in many Indigenous peoples across the globe and is a common form of storytelling with similar themes, symbols and narratives running across it, but also one in which should be quickly dismissed as mere universality. Lahad (2017) described storytelling as being closely linked with survival. Etching stories into the walls of caves or telling the tragic tale of Icarus' fall from the sky, was less about 'myths and legends', and more about managing uncertainty and fear. People tell stories as a way of making sense of the world in the face of difficult circumstances.

In Aotearoa, Māori refer to storytelling as *kōrero pūrākau* (Cherrington, 2002; Lee, 2009, Wirihana, 2012) where such traditional narratives are a vehicle for constructing, sharing, and interpreting *mātauranga* (Māori knowledge). *Kōrero pūrākau* are "deliberate constructs" (Marsden, 2003, p. 56) preserved to house stories, philosophical thought, and culture codes (Hikuroa, 2017). These would then be extricated out at an iwi and hapū level (usually by way of haka, waiata and *mōteatea*) for specific oral history pertaining to these areas. Accordingly, *pūrākau* were seen as traditional forms of narrative that comprised "philosophical thought, epistemological constructs, cultural codes, and worldviews that are fundamental to our identity as Māori" (Lee, 2009, p.79). *Pūrākau* are also known as an Indigenous pedagogy and are often the source of a range of specialist knowledge, wisdom, and teachings for Indigenous people, outlining the relationships and responsibilities between people, the environment and *ngā atua*.

The *pūrākau* pertaining to *Tāne-i-te-wānanga* is referred to within this thesis as a metaphor for the development of new beginnings, ideas, or approaches. Like Indigenous peoples globally, ongoing Māori enhancements in energy, strength and awareness precipitates a further search for wisdom and enlightenment that draws on our metaphorical, physical, and psychological links to spaces, places, and peoples (Waitoki, 2016b, p.286). Though, Lee-Morgan (2005) explains that traditional storytelling was a communal activity where the storyteller was conscious that the stories being told, or retold, were not their own (although the

way it was told may have been an individual act) or in isolation to other people or their environment. Rather the stories belonged collectively to the whānau, hapū or iwi and/or involved other people within whānau, hapū, iwi and whakapapa relationships. Therefore, as a storyteller, I have the responsibility to get the story 'right' otherwise it might get corrected at some point and potentially in a public arena.

WĀHANGA TUATAHI: Introduction

With the modern-day challenges of sedentary lifestyle and food insecurity, comes increasing chronic illness and ongoing health inequities. But there are also regions around the world where people appear to enjoy a longer, healthier life expectancy. These pockets have been referred to for almost two decades as Blue Zones where researcher Dan Buettner and a team of anthropologists, demographers and epidemiologists, cross-referenced multiple sources of data to narrow down just five areas (Buettner & Skemp, 2016). Buettner originally presented his findings in a 2005 National Geographic article, then described them in greater detail in a book, *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest* (Buettner, 2012). In these regions, residents statistically lived the longest and produced nonagenarians (ages 90–99) and centenarians (100 years old and above) at relatively extraordinary rates. The specific regions identified were Okinawa (Japan), Sardinia (Italy), Nicoya (Costa Rica), Ikaria (Greece) and the Seventh-Day Adventist religious community in Loma Linda, California (USA) (Poulain et al., 2013).



Figure 4. *The Blue Zones* (Image Source: www.athletenetwork.com)

Since then, research on these regions has ranged from eating etiquette to the social and psychological characteristics of its residents. Findings to date have included specific nutritional differences such as the tofu-laced menu in Okinawa and the predominant beans and rice base of the Costa Rican village of Nicoya (Pes et al., 2022). Likewise, the way in which eating rituals were observed by these zones were noted. The Loma Linda people for instance, tended to eat their largest meals early in the day, and the Japanese elders of Okinawa, practiced a mindful approach called *hara hachi bu* (eating until you are only 80% full) (Fastame, 2022). Even the geographical layout of each region was considered. It appeared there was a consistent flow and engagement with the natural environment with such activities as gardening, fishing, pounding corn by hand to make tortillas, practicing tai chi daily and shepherding livestock in the hills (Kreouzi et al., 2022).

The Blue Zones (and other longevity-based research) teach us that there are some common threads that bolster health and happiness and help secure an above-average life expectancy. These threads show us that it is about more than winning the genetic lottery. That, among many other things, the Blue Zones suggests that the more important threads are related to patterns of behaviour, practices, habits, rituals, and rites that can be adopted to live well, for longer. For developed countries, this might mean for example, redesigning our approach to lifestyles that revolve around the 40-hour (or more), five day-a-week (or more) way of living that gets its roots from the industrialisation industry.

For Indigenous peoples, these patterns of behaviours and practices are of no surprise. Māori especially, refer to these ritualistic practices and patterns as *kawa*. These are often observed in many modern-day contexts in Aotearoa and expressed through *tikanga* such as the offering of *karakia* (incantations) prior to food intake and the undertaking of important tasks. Many organisational settings have since adapted the use of these *kawa* and *tikanga* such as the health sector. The first of such activities in health at least can be traced back to Whaiora, a Māori-specific mental health unit in Tokanui Hospital (Durie, 1994). It was established by the then Superintendent of the Hospital, and first Māori Psychiatrist, Dr Henry Rongomau Bennett. He noted the absence of Māori ways of knowing and being to be of great concern to the mental health sector and thus introduced the practices of *karakia*, *waiata* and *harirū* as traditional solutions to mental wellbeing.

Kawa, therefore, existed as a regulatory role to ensure among many things, a state of balance within the wider ecosystem known as the *taiao*. The *taiao* would produce various environmental *tohu* to indicate optimal times for undertaking activities. And for Māori, this is best understood through the application of the *maramataka* which is a Māori system for observing environmental signs, rhythms and conditions underpinned by the lunar cycle (Matamua, 2017). Traditionally, the *maramataka* was used to inform daily activities such as

planting, harvesting, and seafaring (Harris et al. 2013). In more contemporary times, it is likely that such a system could be used to better inform optimal health (Warbrick et al. 2023), physical exercise (Muriwai, 2022), and sport and performance (Muriwai et al. 2021).

Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009) assert that the natural, physical, and cultural environments ought to be considered to facilitate desired sporting performance. So, in extending on the natural environmental considerations, understanding Tangaroa (the last quarter of the end of the final lunar cycle) would be crucial to this exploration. It is ancestrally accepted as a time for great productivity and energy which might then influence how and when specific physical and/or athletic pursuits are undertaken. Achieving this successfully and within the right timeframes of this lunar cycle would also be in accordance with good kawa and mātauranga, rendering potential performance results previously unknown to aspiring athletes (i.e., achieving personal bests).

In relation to cultural environmental considerations, the use of taonga within sport provides Māori opportunities to achieve success and where their culture can be embraced (Hapeta et al., 2018). Arguably the most prominent and visible use of tikanga and kawa within sports is through the haka which is often referred to as a spiritual dimension of expression underpinning Māori ways of being (Fisher, 2021). The expression of haka then reflects kawa and tikanga, where “the eyes are the windows of the soul and say much that the rest of the body can’t. The tongue is the avenue whereby the thought of the mind is [sic] conveyed to the audience (Karetu, 1993, p.29-30).” Rituals such as Haka bring unity to teams where it connects mind, body, and soul.

In much the same way that the Blue Zones tell us that the ‘number of centenarians by location’ was a useful indicator of health and wellbeing, this thesis seeks to reveal any kawa, habits, and/or rituals from some of the top Māori male athletes in Aotearoa. It is not an attempt to impose a settler-colonial standard of living upon tāne. But simply to suggest that by studying these practices and habits of tāne engaged in high-performance, insights into cultivating hauora pursuits among tāne will be identified. As the title to this thesis subtly suggests, I am interested in ‘what goes on TOA’ with tāne. It is a play on words to the adage, ‘what goes on tour, stays on tour’. But rather than the knowledge ‘staying on tour’, it will be drawn out to help inform among many important groups of people, the coaches and administrators who work tirelessly and intimately with these very tāne.

This thesis, therefore, has a dual focus: It is about tāne ora (as opposed to Māori men’s health), and in particular the critical success factors that underpin tāne ora. But it is also about a specific subset of tāne who operate in sport performance, and what we can learn from these tāne. The first aim is to explore a central research question: **‘What Drives Tāne Ora?’** The second aim is to explore the relationship between sports performance (one phenomena) and tāne ora (another phenomena). The focus here is deliberate in that it not only draws upon my

own professional interest and expertise, but likewise an area where participation by tāne is high, and opportunities for engagement are significant.

Structurally, this thesis has four parts to it. Wāhanga Tuatahi (Part I) is underpinned by the pūrākau of Tāne through the lens of the Te Kore-Te Pō-Te Whaiao-Te Ao Mārama stages. It includes the introduction, literature review and methodological sections and provides an overall context to the thesis followed by a rationale, drawing from historical and contemporary data, and examines patterns in relation to tāne, what is known, and what is implied. This section draws from literature across three key disciplines – mātauranga, hauora and sport. It outlines relevant methodological considerations, the assumptions that have been made, the approaches selected, and the process through which the objectives of this thesis will be met. It begins by outlining why a certain approach was selected for research design followed by the justification of a narrative inquiry in search of an observable phenomenon.

Wāhanga Tuarua (Part II) of this thesis focuses on the tāne interviewed and their stories. It is for all intents and purposes, the results section. It provides some of the sociohistorical experiences reported by each of the tāne with some demographic data to help contextualise the reader to their personal experiences as the genesis to their knowledge, health, and skill development. The next section then examines specific characteristics and aspects that relate to the development of knowledge for the purposes of high-performance across each of the tāne.

Wāhanga Tuatoru (Part III) focuses on the meaning of the stories provided by the tāne and what they potentially tell us about tāne ora. This section draws on some of the key themes from the interviews and offers three distinct but interconnected areas – the people, performance and the pā – as a basis for exploring these contributions further. This section then ends with a summary of thoughts providing the reader with a useful segue into the final part of the thesis.

Wāhanga Tuawhā (Part IV) is the final component of this thesis and is essentially the discussion and conclusion where interpretations of the findings are made with some concluding remarks, statements, and recommendations. It outlines a schedule for tāne interested in sport performance. The conclusion chapter simply identifies key contributions that the research makes to understandings of tāne ora and the advancement of tāne within both high-performance and health settings. It draws from the previous chapters to highlight the insights revealed, the new knowledge created, and (re)locates the importance of this work back to health, to Māori development, to Indigenous people and new approaches to tāne ora.

Te Kore (The Potential):

The following is just one telling of the creation pūrākau known to Māori. It is an acknowledgement that many versions of this story exist be it at an individual or tribal level pointing to the depth and breadth of available pūrākau. The following represents one of the most fundamental and well known pūrākau with the addition of *Te Ao Hurihuri* (the many evolving realms of knowledge). The addition of this realm helps to stitch together yet another thread through time and space more commonly known as, 'the present day'. In doing so, it holds *Te Ao Hurihuri* within the context of the creation pūrākau as a way of allowing emerging knowledge from this thesis to continually evolve within this space.

Te Ōrokohanga o Te Ao (the Creation of The Universe)

Te Kore (The Many Realms of Unorganised Potential)

|

Te Pō (The Many Realms of Night/becoming)

|

Ranginui - Papatūānuku

(The Sky Father) (The Earth Mother)

|

Tangaroa (atua of the seas, rivers, lakes and all the life therein)

Tāwhirimātea (atua of the winds and of storms)

Tānemahuta (atua of the forest and all that dwell within them, especially the birds)

Rongo-ma-tāne (atua of the kumara and all cultivated foods. Also, the atua of peace)

Haumiatiketike (atua of wild food)

Tūmatauenga (atua of war)

Whiro (atua of evil)

Rūaumoko (atua of earthquakes and volcanoes)

Plus, many more tamariki (children)

|

Te Ao Mārama (The Many Realms of Light/knowing)

|

Te Ao Hurihuri (The Many Evolving Realms of Knowledge)

(adapted from: Ware, 2019)⁴

⁴ As cited by Māori ethnologist Sir Te Rangi Hīroa Peter Buck who provides an early Māori account of the creation narratives. First published in 1949.

To better understand the concept of tāne within the context of this thesis, it is important first to explore the origins of Tāne the atua within the creation pūrākau, as he is arguably considered the most recognised of the Polynesian pantheon (Taonui, 2017). In Tahiti, Tāne is the son of Ātea (Sky father) and Papa (Earth mother) who travelled between the heavens and the earth. In Tuamotu, Tāne is the son of Te Hau (winds and peace) and Metua (parent) and lived in one of the higher heavens waging war against his lower decile siblings. Further afar, historians have identified more references to Tāne. Among the Dyak people of Borneo, there is reference to 'sky lifting Tāne' where the daughter of a deity, Tanacompta, is said to have separated the heavens and earth and held them apart with supporting props (Tsuji, 1998). These key traditions are said to be 6000 years old or older, as they appear to date from before the time of the Lapita people in the Bismarck Archipelago (Taonui, 2017). These different accounts of the formation of Tāne around the world, reflect the different ontological traditions that continue to co-exist and influence how socio-cultural practices are understood, performed, and constituted to this very day.

In Aotearoa, Tāne is regarded as the god who separated the heavens and earth, the tutelary deity of birds, trees, and other forms of life, and in other traditions he is a progenitor of human life (Taonui, 2017). The island/s in Polynesia upon which one identifies with the most will determine which of the 70 (or more) atua are of most importance and relevance (Mila, 2016). For example, in some islands Tangaroa (Kanaloa) was looked upon more favourably than other atua (even Tāne) perhaps because of the function that certain off-spring of his (e.g., ika, pāua, kina) served for those islands. Equally, Rongo (Lono) appears to have been viewed as superior in Hawaii. In Aotearoa, it seems Tāne held a high position among the atua and though he was not the first born (Uru-te-ngangana held that position) he occupied a significant amount of mana among the atua (Taonui, 2017).

For Māori, the stories of Tāne are also grounded in whakapapa (Royal, 1998) and follows several kōrero pūrākau best understood through the sequential whakapapa of stages, space and time known as, Te Kore (The Many Realms of Unorganised Potential), Te Pō (The Many Realms of Night/becoming), Te Whaiao (The Many Realms of light) and Te Ao Mārama (The Many Realms of Knowing). It describes among many things "how darkness became light, nothing became something, earth and sky were separated, and nature evolved" (Forster, 2022). The beginning of these stages is known as Te Kore which in te ao Māori, is the primal source of existence where all things originate from and are traced back to. Te Kore then, is the foundation of all knowledge and allows us to understand knowledge through an evolutionary perspective known to Māori as whakapapa (Royal, 2005). As per the sequence below, the role of Tāne in the stage of Te Kore is yet to truly revealed:

Ko Te Kore (the void, energy, nothingness, potential)
Te Kore-te-whiwhia (the void in which nothing is possessed)
Te Kore-te-rawea (the void in which nothing is felt)
Te Kore-i-ai (the void with nothing in union)
Te Kore-te-wiwhia (the space without boundaries)

Te Pō

Nā Te Kore Te Pō (from the void the night)
Te Pō-nui (the great night)
Te Pō-roa (the long night)
Te Pō-uriuri (the deep, unfathomable night)
Te Pō-kerekere (the intense night)
Te Pō-tiwhatiwha (the dark night)
Te Pō-tē-kitea (the night in which nothing is seen)
Te Pō-tangotango (the intensely dark night)
Te Pō-whāwhā (the night of feeling)
Te Pō-namunamu-ki-taiao (the night of seeking the passage to the world)
Te Pō-tahuri-atu (the night of restless turning)
Te Pō-tahuri-mai-ki-taiao (the night of turning towards the revealed world)

Te Pō is the second phase of creation and is concerned with the transition from potential to realisation (Ware, 2019). It was understood to symbolise the phase of distress and chaos (Brittain, 2022). Importantly, the sequences of Te Pō highlighted above locate among many things, the timeframes at which key atua such as Tāne are introduced to the creation narrative. For instance, at the stage of Te Pō-nui is when the mātamua (eldest) of the siblings, Uru-te-ngāngana was born. A number of other children were then born between this stage and Te Pō-uriuri at which time, Whiro-te-Tipua was then born. The intensity of this stage of Te Pō was too much to bear for Uru. Feeling confused and overwhelmed he decided to withdraw/remove (tango) himself from the whānau and is how the next phase of Te Pō-tangotango gets its name. During this stage, another atua was born, Tāwhirimātea. By the end of the stages of Te Pō, there were upwards of 70 atua born all vying for space including Tāne who was born in the final stages of Te Pō. Thus, this stage of Te Pō is widely regarded as the earliest account of discontent and suffering among the atua (Kopua et al, 2020). This is understood in te ao Māori as 'I noho tata pū ngā atua'. When analysed closely the origins of the word 'tapu' can be found from this early account 'I noho tapu ngā atua' (Rangihuna & Kopua, 2014). The appropriate translation is therefore 'the gods were in a state of restriction'.

Uepoto (atua of curiosity) noticed a speckle of light known as te hinātore which was given to describe the only form of light during this period of darkness. This glimmer of light was that of the glow-worm known as 'te hinātore o te moko huruhuru'. Te hinātore created curiosity because it was the only variant at that time. Some stories refer to Uepoto convincing his siblings to explore the idea of another existence outside of their position. In any case, the small glimmer of light represented hope that the atua could overcome their struggle by finding meaning within the potential. Those who feared the light however also feared change and would try to maintain status quo. One of the atua who did not want to take any notice of the light was Whiro. He wanted his siblings to remain within the dark realm and to ignore the hinātore so that his reverence could be maintained during this time. This caused a great wānanga between Tāne and Whiro which was recognised as the first conflict. During this time Tāne believed that in order to extinguish te hinātore, more light must be introduced.

Tāne and Whiro began to lobby their siblings through various methods. Whiro adopted a threat-based approach warning siblings such as Peketua and Rangahua that if they sided with Tāne, he would scalp them and use their hair as an ornament for his tātua (belt). Peketua managed to escape via his centipede form. Rangahua was not so lucky and met his fate accordingly. He can now be seen in all the form of smooth rocks near rivers and streams. Tāne adopted a more diplomatic approach instead by creating curiosity among the atua about what the separation might mean and what the light might look like. Haumiatiketike had already been impressed by the ability of Tāne to outwit Whiro. And it was not long before Tangaroa and others conformed. Tāne eventually won favour from the atua who remained curious of the lights' potential, and therefore prevailed over Whiro. This then became the genesis to the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku and the early battles between their atua offspring.

Te Whai-ao

Ki te Whai-ao (to the glimmer of dawn, of light, let it unfold)

Te Whai-ao represented the transition stage from darkness to light (Barlow, 1991). Tāwhirimātea played a crucial role during this phase of creation as like Whiro, also wanted to maintain a status quo, but for different reasons. He simply disagreed with the separation of their parents. He had support from other atua including Uru, Rongo-mā-tāne, Tangaroa and Te Ihorangi. Te Ihorangi who was recognised for his loyalty, often sided with Tāwhirimātea. Uru-te-ngāngana eventually withdrew from the argument – a decision that would be significant given his mātāmua role among the siblings. This outraged Tāwhirimātea further setting off the first of a series of pakanga that would prove catastrophic and fatal for some atua and their offspring. Conflict continued among the atua particularly between Tāne and Whiro-te-Tipua. Both were vying for ascendancy over the increasingly volatile situation.

The separation attempts varied in method with several atua failing in their respective attempts. After noting the various methods, Tāne assumed the pēpeke position lying on his back against his mother and his legs and arms stretched out against their father and began to push. Light rushed in as Tāne pushed his legs upwards thus separating his parents. This then ended the state of tapu from which came 'noa.' The genesis of the word 'noa' comes from this pūrākau by breaking the word down with 'no' meaning 'from' and 'a' meaning 'light' (Kopua, 2015). As the separation process was occurring, Tāne realised that extra resources would be required to complete the task. Paia-te-rangi was one who accommodated by providing specific karakia. Realising that he would require a particular power and strength that could only be found in wind, and already wary of Tāwhirimātea and his anger towards him, Tāne instead approached Huru-tea-a-rangi, a female custodian of winds. She gifted Tāne four of her children (Tokohurunuku, Tokohururangi, Tokohurumawake and Tokohuruatea) also known as 'ngā hau e whā' (the four winds). With these four winds placed at the four corners of the universe, and Paia-te-rangi again providing karakia to hold them in their place, light was permanently introduced into the world.

Te Ao Mārama

I riro iho ai (he brought back down)
Ngā Kete o te Wānanga (the Baskets of Knowledge)
Ko te kete tuauri (the Basket called Tuauri)
Ko te kete tuatea (the Basket called Tuatea)
Ko te kete aronui (the Basket called Aronui)
Ka tiritiria, ka poupoua (Portioned out, planted)
Ki a Papatūānuku (in Mother Earth)
Ka puta te Ira-tāngata (the life principle of humankind)
Ki te Whai-ao (comes forth into the dawn)
Ki te Ao-mārama (into the world of light).

Te Ao Mārama is the next phase and often referred to as the final phase of the creation story (Kopua, 2023). It is focused with transition and transformation into the world of knowing. For Tāne his prominence in the pūrākau grows stronger as this involves his ascension to the great heavens. During this time, he is known by the name of Tāne-nui-a-Rangi. By this time also, a new world was emerging, so it was becoming increasingly clear what was required for this world to thrive. These requirements were contained in *Ngā Kete o te Wānanga* (the baskets of knowledge) (Waitoki, 2016), which were housed in the great temple, Rangiātea.

Te kete tuatea contains knowledge related to technology and agriculture. It also holds modern day maliciousness of human nature such as afflictions, suffering, violence, warfare,

natural and human made destruction (Te Taura Whiri, 2008). Perhaps the challenges that both Tāne and tāne broadly face generally also reside within this kete. Te kete aronui houses knowledge pertaining to physical, spiritual, and mental welfare such as social connections, culture, arts (whakairo, kapa haka), philosophy and literature (Te Taura Whiri, 2008). Many pūrākau can trace their whakapapa of knowledge back to this kete for instance, Niwareka and Mataora (the art of Tā moko), Hine-rēhia (music) and Tāne-rore (haka). And lastly, Te kete tuauri contains all the knowledge related to the natural sciences such as karakia (incantations), tohi, tapu, wairua, kawa and tikanga (Te Taura Whiri, 2008). It is focused on the “natural world and the patterns of energy that operate behind the world of sense perception and the realm of the tohunga” (Moorfield, 2016. p.1).

This pūrākau then, begins at Tikitiki-ō-rangi (the upper most heavens) where Io commanded his three generals, Rēhua, Ruatau and Aitūpawa to meet with descendants of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. Their task was to hear the various proposals from the atua on how they might achieve this monumental feat of acquiring the baskets of knowledge. The meeting also served as an opportunity to perform a tohi (ceremonial blessing to dedicate individuals to a certain task) over this occasion to see who had the fortitude and resilience to undertake this task. Several atua sent ‘expressions of interest’ for the role and thus presented their proposals. One atua who wasn’t the slightest interested was the mātāmua, Uru-te-ngāngana. Though he conceded he had no interest in the role, he was still concerned by the intentions of those who might be. One of those was Whiro-te-tipua.

The tohi were undertaken by Rēhua, Ruatau and Aitūpawa and the hearing of proposals ensued. The hearing eventually came down to two final proposals, Whiro-te-tipua and Tāne. Whiro and his proposal on how he would ascend to the heavens were both compelling and confident though seemingly simplistic and lacking in detail. The response from Rēhua, Ruatau and Aitūpawa was swift – “tae hiti, tae wawa” (what you put together will fall apart). In other words, the plan you have put together is doomed. Next to present his proposal was the newly named, Tāne-nui-ā-Rangi. Contrastingly, the proposal offered by Tāne was comprehensive, considered, and clear. He intended to go via ‘Te Toi Huarewa o Tāwhirimātea’ – the spiralling pathway of Tāwhirimātea detailing along the way, his support networks and crew including ‘te whānau titi’ (the wind family) and Paia-te-rangi, all of whom had significant roles to play. Tāne had also considered the time of the year to undertake this task. This centred around the time of the year known as Ōrongonui. Tāne foresaw the need to consider how/where he might house these baskets of knowledge once acquired which would require a particular type of temple. After seeking permission from Nuku-te-āio to adopt his whare as the prototype for such a temple, Tāne then sought his son Ruatēpupuke to help construct this temple. Rongomaraeroa assisted in this great construction, and after time was gifted this great whare thereafter known as ‘te whare o Rongomaraeroa’ (the temple of peace). This then

became known as the very first whare wānanga (house of learning) in the Ranginui heaven (Kopua, 2023).

Rēhua, Ruatau and Aitūpawa were so impressed with the depth and consideration that Tāne had taken with his proposal that he was awarded the honour and duty of acquiring the baskets of knowledge. Whiro-te-tipua, having once again been defeated by Tāne's intellect, took exception to this rejection by summoning his war party known as 'Te-tini-o-Poto' tasked with sabotaging Tāne and his supporters as they journeyed towards the highest heaven. This occurred for many years and in different forms including insects, bugs, and germs. Today you can see the inheritances of these afflictions in humankind. The battle known as 'Ururangi' occurred at a place called 'Taumata'. Tāne along with his Company, and by this time joined by Rongo-mā-tāne and Tūmataunga, persevered through this war and onto Tiritiri-ō-Mātangi – the heaven just before the upper most. They were met by Rēhua who informed the entourage that only Tāne could travel on to Tikitiki-ō-rangi – the upper most heaven. The path known as 'te-ara-tauwhāiti' was narrow and not for the faint hearted. This is the genesis of the karakia, "Tēnei au, tēnei au te hōkai nei." Tāne eventually arrives at Io-matua-kore-anake to the house known as Tāwhhirangi. His arrival was announced through the pūkaea (trumpet) known as 'te whakaara-ā-rangi' which sent soundwaves through all the heavens and signalled to all that Tāne had achieved his mission. He was eventually taken by Io into Rangiātea where he was not only gifted te kete tuauri, te kete tuatea, te kete aronui but also the two mauri stones named Te Whatu-kura, Huka-a-tai (ocean foam), and Te Whatu-kura, Rehu-a-tai (white-sea-mist) (Smith, 1913-1915).

The great expedition was not quite complete. Tāne and his return to Ranginui continued much as it did his ascension – filled with obstacles, distractions, and sabotage mostly at the hands of Whiro-te-tipua again. Tāne and his supporters arrived at Rangitamaku where they were met with another resounding noise, this time the pūtātara (conch shell). The pūtātara signalled two things to all the atua. Firstly, that Tāne had returned successfully to Ranginui with the important packages in hand. And secondly, it represented a 'call to assemble' at Wharekura, the house now owned by Rongomaraeroa, and which was a particularly fashioned temple unlike any other in Ranginui. Standing towards the rear of Wharekura, Rongomaraeroa welcomed Tāne and his Company into Wharekura, hence the back post of a meeting house is now known as 'te-pou-tū-ā-Rongo'. In one last ditched attempt to acquire the baskets, Whiro ignored the protocols of Wharekura and its many karakia, attempting to overthrow the occasion by taking the baskets for himself. Standing outside of Wharekura however, were all the domains of Tū acting in essence as, 'security guards' thereby thwarting Whiro's hasty escape. Whiro was banished to Tahekeroa – an outer island on the pathway to Rarohenga. Ironically, it was Rongomaraeroa (the Peace warden) who undertook the banishment. Tāne buried the

kete and stones safely within Papatūānuku and lit a manawa ora (sacred fire) above it to guard against any further theft or vandalism (Barlow, 1991).

Within te kete tuauri contained the primal energy source of ora, conveying the necessary ingredients for *hauora* (Barlow, 1991). Mauri ora and hauora are both subsets of ora and common expressions for health. Mauri ora emphasises the energy of the life principle, whereas hauora is physical wellbeing, strength, and conditioning (Henare, 1988). Ora then, is the element that promotes and strengthens mana and mauri. These narratives pertaining to Tāne remind us of several key messages that are relevant to this thesis. Firstly, a vision is necessary to create change. The case for change and a plan for undertaking this change must be clear and compelling. The desire for a new way of doing things must be underpinned by a central purpose. The actions undertaken to achieve the vision and purpose must include interventions/activities from a variety of sources (e.g., the karakia of Paiaterangi). The interventions/activities must be relevant and transferable across time, place, and people. Lastly, these narratives remind us of our whakapapa as tāne to the atua himself, as well as our whakapapa to the sources of hauora which for tāne, exist within these baskets of knowledge as does everything else.

Te Ao Hurihuri

Te Ao Hurihuri is the present stage of existence and is where concepts such as 'Māori health' and 'men's health' are positioned often alongside unhelpful narratives of poor health status, and individual blaming (and shaming) regarding poor lifestyle choices (Harris et al., 2006). It is also where you will find Western notions of health, wherein most parts of the world, the rates on morbidity and mortality among men are substantially poorer than among women (Meyers et al., 2021); access healthcare services less than women (Cameron et al., 2010); are more likely to incur physical injuries (Sorenson, 2011); tend to have their abuse ignored and be under-reported (Drijber et al., 2013); tend to have lower educational achievement and higher drop-out rates than women (Hjorth et al., 2016); experience higher rates of incarceration (Ministry of Justice, 2020); subjected to greater homelessness (Demographic Data Project, 2018; Statista, 2018); and are more likely to commit suicide (United Health Foundation, 2019).

Similar inequities were also found here in Aotearoa with references to poorer education educational outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2020), and homelessness where 83% of homeless people in New Zealand were men (Statista, 2018). Perhaps the greatest indicator of injustice for men in Aotearoa is found within the hugely disproportionate Corrections figures, where 79% of those who are incarcerated were men (Ministry of Justice, 2020). Additionally, court sentences tended to be systematically harsher for males (Jeffries, 2002), and men found it more difficult to find employment opportunities post-prison than women (Morrison et al., 2018). Compounding these trends further in Aotearoa is the reality that such statistics are worse for Māori and Pasifika men (Jeffries, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2020; Ministry of Justice, 2020). Specifically, access to primary healthcare services (Hefford et al., 2005) and cardiovascular disease-related support (Tukuitonga & Bindman, 2002).

The accumulative effects of these exacerbating men's morbidity and mortality rates include longer appointment wait times; lower access to relevant assistance and information; lower care coordination; lower likelihood of being screened for obesity, hypertension, diabetes, cancer, eye problems and kidney problems; lower likelihood of being monitored for the use of high-risk medications; lower likelihood of having an ambulatory or preventive care visit; delayed hospitalisation for cardiac arrest; lower likelihood of receiving mental health support and of being treated with antidepressants; and delayed treatment for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and rheumatoid arthritis (CMS Office of Minority Health, 2017; Mesa, 2018; Saunders, 2000).

Comparison-based research such as the above however, only serve to perpetuate colonial agendas and draws attention away from the true social and environmental determinants of Indigenous ill health (Bécares et al., 2013). The study of men's health then, tends to fall into two broad discourses. The first follows the above gender-based inequities and disparities discourse, though is completely devoid of culturally embedded thinking. The second

category and the one within which this thesis is positioned is the increasingly exciting field of *tāne ora* where bespoke initiatives are guided by tikanga and motivated by kaupapa. Solutions which resonate with the cultural and contemporary realities of tāne, but that account for hauora perspectives and in doing so reverse the decline of the health status of tāne. And so, instead of reviewing the literature around 'men's health' and/or 'Māori men's health' further, this thesis turns towards tāne ora and the political, social, and environmental factors that have attempted to undermine and compromise tāne ora the most. Solutions to these many factors will also be explored accordingly.

Pre-Te Tiriti o Waitangi

*The Natives of this Country are strong, raw boned, well-made active people, rather above the common size. Especially the men... They seem to enjoy a good state of health and many live to a good old age.*⁵

Though the abovementioned gender and race-based inequities provide a useful position for better understanding the contemporary challenges faced by tāne, exploring the systemic factors underpinning these circumstances are even more critical. Among many potential factors, explicit or implicit discrimination, the disproportionate burden of care among health professionals, and cultural and diversity training not being mandatory for employment, tend to be the most prolific (Ellison-Loschmann & Pearce, 2006; Sheridan et al., 2011). The above quote from James Cook for instance, highlights two important points that underpin this section. On the one hand, there appears to be a genuine sense of admiration and respect for tāne by early Pākehā observers, albeit based on largely physical indicators (i.e., body size and strength). And on the other, these comments must be couched within the context and 'lens' upon which they sit. It is both a lens of surprise and condescension that such an Indigenous race could exist. It is this same lens that notes these observations against the White supremacist backdrop of the Doctrine of Discovery where Indigenous superiority was not only unexpected, but unwanted. As Borell et al (2009) noted, "the writings of these explorers, among others that followed, would shape the Western world's perceptions of Māori for many years to come" (p. 167).

Not only were they present, but evidence at the Wairau Bar, an archaeologically significant location for Māori, revealed that tāne flourished in the pre-colonial era. Physically, they were characterised by an impressive stature, averaging nearly six feet in height, possessing a "long-bodied" frame with broad shoulders, wide hips, and a robust build

⁵ James Cook quoted in Beaglehole (1968, p.278)

(Anderson et al., 2014, p.38). The surrounding natural landscapes primarily consisted of coastal and mountainous terrains, suggesting that they were ideally suited for a labour-intensive way of life, necessitating strong musculature. Tāne engaged in various activities such as fishing, bird hunting, agriculture, the creation of nets, structures, and tools for men, while also participating in shell-fishing, gathering fern-root, and cooking. Fishing required substantial physical exertion, not only for traveling, catching, and cooking, but also for felling the timber essential for constructing waka (canoes) (Cram et al., 2019).

*The men are of the size of the larger Europeans, stout, clean-limbed and active, fleshy but never fat, as the lazy inhabitants of the South Sea Isles, vigorous, nimble and at the same time clever in all their exercises.*⁶

Intellectually, tāne were well measured with specific activities such as fishing, hunting, and gardening often all in alignment with the wider ecosystem referred to earlier as the maramataka. These activities were informed by Indigenous knowledge systems related to the taiao and were tribally based. Thus, tāne relied on their relationship with the taiao for understanding where and how to reach hunting/fishing grounds, and for some coastal iwi also accessing forests for boatbuilding materials. Although there is evidence of overall good health among tāne, the challenges posed during that era (colonial wars and infectious diseases), meant that the physically demanding nature of their environment likely led to degenerative issues, particularly osteoarthritis (Houghton, 1980). Additionally, their gritty and fibrous diet likely resulted in frequent dental problems, which could have been common and sometimes even fatal. The same archaeological findings suggested that Māori were not exempt from non-communicable diseases such as cancer, gout, kidney disease, and heart disease. But despite these challenges, life expectancy was still comparable to that of Europeans with the presence of Māori possibly ranging between 60 and 70 years of age during that period (Hanham, 2003).

The recognition of how these early identities were first constructed with the influence of colonial masculinities over Indigenous populations, is also critical to both this literature and thesis. For Māori, such perceptions of Māori identities were no different and as noted above, were heavily influenced by a Pākehā lens. These can be dated from as early as 1642 through the accounts of explorers such as Tasman and Cook where “colonial masculinities arose to violently control and replace distinctive gender systems among Indigenous peoples (Morgensen, 2015, p. 38).” Early explorer observations drew unhelpful comparisons not only between Māori and Pākehā men, but also between tāne and wāhine. A common thread among

⁶ Banks quoted in Hooker (1896, p.230).

the countless accepted masculine archetypes was physicality. Masculine identity therefore became a narrowly accepted concept largely of physiological difference: strength, speed, and size (Borell, 2015; Chen, 2014; Hawkes, 2018; Jolly, 2008; Tengan, 2008).

The women are... more lively, airy and laughter-loving than the men, and with more volatile spirits. Formed by nature to soften the cares of more serious man, who takes upon himself the laborious and toilsome part, as war, tilling the ground etc, that disposition appears even in this uncultivated state of nature, showing in high degree that, in uncivilised as well as in the most polished nations, man's ultimate happiness must be placed at last in woman. ⁷

A deeper evaluation of tāne would instead uncover much stronger social systems of interactions, behaviour, and cognitive stimulation. The rituals for seeking, catching, and processing kai for instance, required specific intellectual and spiritual considerations (e.g., knowledge of the maramataka) with many tāne undertaking many rangatira and tohunga roles. Likewise, the division of such sources of sustenance among hapū also required careful guidance and leadership. Hokowhitu (2004, 2009, 2015) further dismantles the influence of colonialism on Māori masculinity and how tāne were systematically destined for labour as opposed to academic pursuits. Observations typically followed a physiological, visual and/or masculine assessment of Māori. For instance, the same early historical impressions also described tāne to be a *dynamic* population group with descriptions of a kind and gentle disposition. Specific reference was given to the warm and doting parenting styles and respect for wāhine, on the one hand. Whilst on the other, scribes were also reminded of the implacable and hostile nature of tāne towards their enemies with reference to principles of war and revenge.

They are kind and hospitable to strangers; and are excessively fond of children. On a journey, it is more usual to see the father carrying his infant than the mother; and all the little offices of a nurse are performed by him with the tenderest care and good humour. In many instances (wherein they differ from most savage tribes), I have seen the wife treated as an equal and companion. ⁸

⁷ Banks again quoted in Hooker (1896, p.233).

⁸ Earle's early observations of Māori rearing of children while on a nine-month residency in New Zealand. These observations are in accordance with their own 'caregiving spectrum' as cited in Earle (1832, p.257).

Walker (2004) further noted that the role of tāne was diverse and when not focused merely on the provision of sustenance, all adults in the collective were in loco parentis. Likewise, Salmond (2019) revealed through Samuel Marsden's personal journal an observation that tāne were surprisingly kind and doting towards wāhine and tamariki. In particular, he recalls never observing neither a mark of violence upon wāhine, nor a child struck (Salmond & Lythberg, 2019). This suggested a counter-history to the assumed 'savagery', 'violent' and/or 'physical beings' of tāne. An early missionary, Rev. Yate, extended on this counter-history by describing tāne as being characterised by an oral quality beyond the sensibilities of Western thinking:

"Their most delightful recreation is talking, and telling wonders, which exercise occupies most of their idle hours, and many of those which are shrouded in darkness and ought to be devoted to sleep" (Rev Yate, 1970, p.112)

This counter-history is likely to have been as Hokowhitu (2007) describes, one of balance and harmony where tāne already located their masculinities with an oral culture that manifested in many forms. Such forms included the formalised oratory rituals of whaikōrero, karakia, mōteatea, pātere, and waiata. The recitation of whakapapa, kōrero pūrākau, mihimihi, and general wānanga is likely to have also informed these tāne masculinities. As shown in the quote below, the balance mentioned did not just exist between tāne and wāhine, but also extended to their tamariki and rangatahi. Their involvement in these oral rituals such as wānanga, was expected if not encouraged by kaumatua as a way of promoting their mauri. This is likely to have led to a regulation of their conduct (i.e. mauri tau).

"Considering how little the Maori children are subject to restraint, their quiet and orderly conduct is especially remarkable. In bringing them up, the parents seldom have recourse to personal chastisement, believing that it has the effect of damaging the spirit of the child. At an early age, the Maori children acquire great self-respect; and at the public discussions of their elders, they may be seen seated around the outer circle, attentive, grave, and thoughtful listeners."

Unfortunately, as will show in the next section, the growing Pākehā male population led to the adoption of the 'gentleman-like' British qualities by tāne. The performance of tāne masculinity in a setting framed by a growing Pākehā epistemology started to differ markedly from the masculinity typically accustomed to within te ao Māori (Hokowhitu, 2007).

Tāne Ora (post Te Tiriti o Waitangi)

The colonial perception of gendered relations started to shift as the prioritisation of the tāne voice (over wāhine) was occurring. The role of tāne both good and bad, in the process of Te Tiriti o Waitangi signing is worth considering here. But it was not long before both tāne and wāhine were being 'othered'. And by the 1890s, Pākehā males were living to 55 years old whereas for tāne, this life expectancy was in the low 20s. The rapid change in ethnic distribution was matched only by the impact on gender rates which favoured Pākehā males to the tune of 197 males per 100 females in the South Island alone. The male population for Pākehā at this time was 25,356 attributing its predominant male increases to the immigration largely of British soldiers (Pool, 2015).

The initial two decades following the signing of Te Tiriti were positive for some rohe across New Zealand (Petrie, 2006). Attorney General William Swainson noted that Māori in the Tūwharetoa rohe of Taupō, tāne cultivated vast amounts of land in the years following the signing, including over 3,000 acres for wheat, 3,000 acres for potatoes, nearly 2,000 acres for maize, and more than 1,000 acres for kumara (Swainson in Petrie, 2006). Tāne in these areas possessed a substantial number of livestock and were known to own infrastructural equipment such as watermills and ploughs. As the predominant owners of vessels averaging around 20 tons each, Māori supplied the major markets between Auckland and Sydney with their goods. In 1859 alone, these Tūwharetoa and Te Arawa suppliers with almost 2000 canoes entered the Auckland harbour bringing to market thousands of tons of meat (pigs), fruit (peaches), vegetables (potatoes and onions), fish, maize, firewood, harakeke, poultry, and kauri gum. It appeared that "the two races were dwelling together in uninterrupted harmony" (Swainson, 1859, p.65-66).

By the early 1860s however, Māori fortunes began to regress significantly, especially for tāne. The systematic manipulation of the Māori economy, alongside the unlawful taking of land throughout the country (especially in targeted areas such as, Auckland, New Plymouth, Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury, and Otago) led to many tāne taking up arms to defend the mana of their whānau and whenua. This coupled with the increasingly lethal introduction of diseases to the country, led to the first of a series of significant demographic transitions within Aotearoa and especially for the tāne population. In his book entitled *The Maori Population of New Zealand, 1769-1971* (Pool, 1991), renowned demographer Ian Pool uses the earliest known Census data to explore the trends and trajectories of the Māori population. Aside from the methodological questions around what constituted Māori identity at the time, Pool (1991) offers some compelling insights into the impact of colonisation on the tāne population. As a total population, Māori had gone from 200,000 prior to this time, to making up just 9% at the turn of the century.

Occurring suspiciously alongside this time was the introduction of several key policies under the newly formed Westminster constitutional system. The first was the Native Lands Act (1862) and the other less known though equally harmful Suppression of Rebellion Act (1863), the latter of which, essentially allowed Māori to be imprisoned and/or killed at will if resisting authorities. Despite this, many hapū and iwi remained open-minded to Crown relationships and the potential that could arise from this. New medicines were especially sought to combat the now untenable rates of infectious diseases. In some cases, land was traded for various health resources and facilities such as the establishment of hospitals (Ngāti Piki, Ngāti Tararua, Ngāti Tahu all in the 1850s) (Dow, 1999). However, this was not reciprocated by the Crown with hospitals either not being built until the 1890s some four decades later, or not established at all with said lands remaining in Crown hands. Instead, Māori were to use public hospitals, since they were equally available to Māori as to Europeans, setting up the first instances of structural barriers such as discrimination, transport and funding preventing many Māori from access to health services (Dow, 1999).

Underfunded and undermined health and education for tāne would remain a consistent feature well into the 20th century with unsuitable access to health and education resources for Māori. Missionaries and native school teachers played significant roles in implementing assimilationist policies towards Māori, often utilising mission stations as makeshift hospitals, providing them with additional opportunities to promote Christian and Western values (Tawhai, 2016). This trend continued as government policies underwent changes and transformations within more secular institutions. The distribution of smallpox vaccines among Māori exemplified how the colonial administration failed to acknowledge that they were not merely comforting a dying population (Dow, 1999, p.48). An early instance occurred in 1845 when missionary William Williams vaccinated Māori in Taruheru (near Gisborne). Three years later, a migrant ship carrying passengers infected with smallpox arrived in Wellington. Although vaccinations were made available, initial scepticism among Māori persisted (Dow, 1999, p.51).

Māori quickly realised the creeping erosion of their authority and growing pressure to sell land. They began meeting in certain regions to form a response to those challenges. Hui were held in Waikato, Hawke's Bay, Poverty Bay, and Rotorua. With assimilation came literacy and the power of letter writing. Through various campaigns Māori sought to spread knowledge, news, and garner support for their political movements of resistance. Demands were made for Māori to have equal political status but to no avail. It is from this that in 1858, the Kīngitanga emerged in the Waikato under the leadership of the Pōtatau Te Wherowhero (Anderson et al., 2014, pp.250–1):

"I say, stop trusting the Queen. Consent to the King. Thus I write to you. Taiaroa has consented to King; also, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Whakauē, Tūhorurangi and Ngāti

Kahungunu; that one at Te Wairoa has also agreed to the King. Thus, I write to you. Hear this. End your support of the Queen. Do not persist in selling land; leave the land for our children. Soon everyone will support the King (McLean Māori Letters, quoted in Head, 2006, p.31)."

By the mid-nineteenth century, native schools emerged and by 1879 specifically, there were approximately 57 native schools, mainly in the north and eastern parts of the country (Matthews, 2006). Education in New Zealand at the time was fast becoming a platform for social control among tāne (Borell, 2022). Again, some areas of Māori society were still bucking the trends despite the challenges. The achievements of tauira at Māori boarding schools such as Te Aute College for instance, were on par if not superior to many other schools at the time in the country (Graham, 2009). A renowned school for producing scholars such as Tā Apirana Ngata (Ngāti Porou), Tā Māui Pōmare (Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Toa), Tā Te Rangi Hiroa (Ngāti Mutunga), Rēwiti Kōhere (Ngāti Porou), and more recently the Durie (Rangitāne and Ngāti Kauwhata) dynasty of Rāwiri (Senior), Eddie, Mason and their many offspring. They were prominent for integrating education with other 'special characters' like religion and te ao Māori.

The growing success of Māori male boarding schools would soon come under much attention from various native schools Inspectors such as its architect, James Pope. While Pope was well regarded by some rangatira at the time, he insisted that these Māori education institutes should be where tāne are "taught agriculture, market gardening, stock farming, poultry keeping and bacon curing" (Barrington in Hokowhitu, 2004). Other Native School Inspectors were less regarded such as William Bird, who in 1906 following the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Te Aute Trust, declared that Māori were unsuited to academic subjects and unable to compete with Europeans in trades and commerce (Simon, 1990). Within the next decade, the impact of Bird's direction was clear: "In none of the secondary Māori schools is there any attempt or desire to give what is usually understood by a college education. The boy's school in English and manual training, woodwork, elementary practical agriculture, and kindred subjects and that is all" (cited in Barrington, 1988, p. 53).

As a result, many of the academic subjects from these schools were removed from the curriculum. By the mid-1900s, there were now four Māori male boarding schools in service (eight in total). By the time fellow Māori male boarding schools Hato Pētera and Hato Pāora College had commenced in 1928 and 1947 respectively, the earlier curriculum decisions had run its course with many if not all of the colleges' first intake of tauira being ill-prepared for secondary schooling (Lawton, 1996). Most had suffered marginalising and demeaning primary education experiences resulting in the inevitable challenges later in adolescence. Thus, by 1965, "nearly 90 percent of Māori men were employed as farmers, foresters, labourers, transport operators, factory workers, or in other skilled and unskilled occupations" (Watson in

Hokowhitu, 2007). In his 1949 editorial, founding Rector of Hato Pāora, Fr Gupwell summed up the dire situation as follows:

"Our curriculum is arranged with the special needs of Māori boys in view. Not many are likely to achieve even the limited distinction of a School Certificate, and to force all along the restricted path that leads to it would be nothing but an intolerable drudgery for teachers and pupils alike. We have found it necessary to keep a finger on the pulse of the Māori boy and adjust the curriculum accordingly."

(Lawton, 1996)

Noticing these inequities unravelling well into the mid-1900s was the then Māori Minister, Tā Apirana Ngata. In his book, *The Price of Citizenship* (Ngata, 1943), he described the need for tāne to look for opportunities to achieve equality. While the Third Article of Te Tiriti o Waitangi was meant to guarantee Māori the full rights of British citizens, Ngata and many of his contemporaries felt this was not occurring as was originally intended and saw that fighting in the war could be seen as respecting this. Also, Ngata saw participation in the war effort as a prerequisite to being able to have a say in how the future of New Zealand could be shaped following the war (Soutar, 2008). Many tāne were quick to answer the call when war broke out in 1939 and as a response to calls from Ngata and the other Māori MPs for an all-Māori unit, the government agreed to the formation of the 28th Māori Battalion. The impacts of colonisation were so entrenched that treatment of returned servicemen was significantly different between tāne and Pākehā men. In the WAI2500 Military Veterans Kaupapa Inquiry, evidence given by Dr Moana Jackson testified that while Māori revelled in the glory of the exploits of tāne in the Māori Battalion, they were also well aware of the costs of this war on tāne. It was Dr Jackson's belief, and those shared by many other whānau of the Battalion that the war killed his father "it just took him another 30 years to die" (Jackson, 2015, p.243). The implication being, the cost of war was far too high with returned servicemen no better off on their return, and in some cases, worse with the loss of their lands, and the rise of mental illness thereafter.

Maea te toi ora (Kingi et al., 2018) provides a full historical breakdown of Māori experiences of mental ill health. Specifically, it was not until the 1960's that the mental ill health for Māori changed markedly with first-time admission rates to psychiatric facilities increasing 200% between 1960 and 1990. Between 1980 and 1991 suicide rates of Māori males increased by 162% (Kingi, 2017). Modern day challenges such as alcohol and drug misuse were evident throughout this period. Kingi (2017) also indicated that many of the admissions occurred under compulsion through the justice system rather than the conventional medical referral system. The rapid migration of tāne away from their marae to urban area's left them increasingly isolated from their extended whānau, traditional homes and cultural practices,

making them more vulnerable to mental disorders (Durie, 2001, Gillies, 2015, Harpham, 1994, Kingi, 2002).

Following the failed health and education systems came sport as a means of social order among tāne. The earlier identified rhetoric that tāne were merely a 'physical being' (Hokowhitu, 2003a; Hokowhitu, 2003b; Hokowhitu, 2004) resulted in success for tāne being restricted to just these physical pursuits alone. The expression of physicality and being capable at physical activity or sport continued as the primary avenue for tāne to experience respect and inclusion. The construct established by early settlers therefore, rendered tāne as only experts in the physical realm, thereby essentially excluding them from success in other areas. The impact of colonisation on tāne also extended to fatherhood and fathering with tāne being defined by the traits that aligned more with the Western concept of masculinity. These perceptions of tāne were not only wrong, but it propped up fatherhood stereotypes that negatively impacted Māori society (Salmond, 2016) resulting in a disruption of intergenerational bonds and transmission of knowledge and culture.

For all of these changes and efforts, experiences of disproportionately high burden of disease, social exclusion and deprivation were not unfamiliar for Māori. Likewise, health inequities and disparities between tāne and their non-Māori counterparts continued to grow also. Thus, the legacy of this colonial history continues to affect Māori today and is reflected in the many markers of today's socioeconomic status. The drip feeding of resources for Māori continued well into the 21st century through various policies and documents which served as a convenient obscuring of the ultimate goal of tino rangatiratanga. More recently, two significant documents have paved a new and exciting way for Māori health. The first was the Kaupapa Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry WAI2575 (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019) that focused on the legislative and policy frameworks under primary health care services. The task was to ascertain its compliance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles in meeting Māori health needs. This claim continues to hear grievances relating to health services and outcomes of national significance to this day. And secondly, the Health and Disability System Review Report (2019). Both documents found significant flaws and failings of the Crown in its duties and obligations to Māori.

Tāne Ora (today)

Despite the systematic undermining of tāne ora, strategies to combat the subsequent disparities faced by tāne continue to be designed and delivered. One such strategy was the development of models of health specific to Māori. Arguably the most widely recognised of the lexicon has been Te Whare Tapa Whā. Tāne ora was also explored in the report commissioned by the Māori Women's Welfare League titled *Rapuora: Health and Māori Women* (Murchie, 1984) where the first references to promoting the idea of tāne ora occurred. Critical to this was the increasing concern of partner violence and the desire for this hui and report, to highlight support for Māori men as a key recommendation. This challenge went largely unheeded and while various efforts have been made to examine and address Māori men's health, there has been a lack of comprehensive research activity on a national scale (Jones, McCreanor & Crengle, 2006). However, what was occurring during this time was the weaving together of a set key themes comparing them to the four sides of a wharenui by Professor Sir Mason Durie (Heaton, 2015).

"I had developed the model, Te Whare Tapa Whā, from an analysis of Māori views enunciated at gatherings on marae (tribal meeting places) and tested with Māori communities in a range of settings" (Durie, 2011, p. 29).

Tupuna Te Hira opened the conference highlighting the importance of wairuatanga (the spiritual essence or life-force of a person) in health for Māori. Dr Henry Bennett, the first Māori psychiatrist and superintendent at nearby Tokanui Hospital, followed with a particular focus on hinengaro (the capacity to communicate, to think and to feel). Dr Jim Hodge, a specialist in renal failure focused on tinana (the domain of physical growth, development, and health). While Irihapeti Ramsden, who was one of the architects of cultural competency and nursing practises, viewed whānau as being the foundation of Māori wellbeing. Taha whānau also concerns relationships extending beyond the nuclear family to relationships with persons in their wider social network, including sports groups, church, and other community initiatives (Durie, 1985).

It became apparent very quickly that for each of these experts, their own respective areas were declared the most important aspect for each of them. The challenge then fell upon Durie who had already observed many professional practices himself having amassed some 20 years of clinical experience by this time. Durie was able to avoid any professional calamity by asserting that each of the core areas of health above, were just as essential to the other in achieving a state of wellbeing for Māori. He did this by using the metaphor of a wharenui and emphasising the holistic and relational nature of health from a Māori perspective. The symbolism of the whare represented the interdependence of all dimensions. All four taha

therefore, were necessary to maintain strength, ensure shelter and give coherence (Johnstone & Read, 2000). Widespread agreement at this hui was that balance was required to enjoy hauora, and illness was considered a breakdown in harmony between the elements, the individual and the social and physical environment (Durie, 1985; Love, 2005). Not only did Durie articulate what would become a foundational symbol of Aotearoa health, but he averted professional warfare among the four experts... and their followers.



Figure 5: *Te Whare Tapa Whā* (Durie 1994, as cited in *Te Ara*).

Domains of Tāne Ora: Taha Whānau

Underscoring tāne ora within te taha whānau has been the role of Whānau Ora as both a policy and an approach (Turia, 2016). Built off the work of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives in 2009, Whānau Ora is an intersectoral approach to enabling whānau to identify their own strengths, needs and priorities. Whānau Ora works in a range of ways, influenced by the approach the whānau chooses to take and is thus deliberately designed to be flexible to meet whānau needs. The overarching aim of Whānau Ora is to promote best outcomes for

whānau. As tāne operate withing the context of whānau, Whānau Ora then appropriately considers how this might apply to tāne ora.

The application of psychotherapeutic support groups or 'Men's Groups' (Reddin & Sonn, 2003) is one example of tāne ora within the context of whānau. They tend to vary in their frequency, duration, focus, use of modalities and intensity, but the primary objective of these groups, however, tends to remain consistent. That is, they cultivate greater levels of introspection, emotional awareness and insight, emotional regulation skills, communication and interpersonal skills and emotional support, and foster a sense of community (McNab, 1990; Reddin & Sonn, 2003).

Psychotherapeutic support groups are about creating a 'brotherhood' where such groups have typically been shown to improve men's health. Likewise, they have been shown to develop leadership skills, be better equipped to integrate and fulfil their (especially emotional) needs, engage in helpful storytelling, feel belonged, accepted, and related to (i.e., have a greater sense of emotional safety), and resolve gender-role uncertainty and conflict (Chambers & Martin, 2002; McNab, 1990; Reddin & Sonn, 2003). Thus, in leading to the abovementioned outcomes, especially a greater sense of emotional connection, purpose in life and feeling of being belonged, accepted, and related to Men's Groups can contribute strongly to cultivating a strong sense of identity. Several such programmes have been adapted for tāne and implemented across Aotearoa with some still operating to this day. The following 10 collectives are such examples:

One Heart Many Lives

One Heart Many Lives (OHML hereafter) was developed by the Pharmaceutical Management Agency in Aotearoa known as PHARMAC in 2002 (Leow et al., 2011). Focused on knowledge transfer, OHML targeted Māori and Pacific Island males with the knowledge of having a lower life expectancy of 14 years in comparison with other ethnicities but that they could make lifestyle changes to close that gap. A New Zealand-led campaign to keep cholesterol in check and prevent heart disease among Māori and Pacific Island men, this strategy targets women as key influencers to get the men in their lives checked. It was implemented with a regional focus and encouraged men to get a cardiovascular risk assessment and seek help and medical management if needed; improve awareness of heart disease; improve lifestyle habits as part of self-management; and take long-term cholesterol-lowering medication to help decrease the risk of heart disease. Several evaluations of the programme have occurred since (CBG Health Research LTD, 2003; FCB New Leand LTD, 2004; Sinclair, 2006) as well as a 'critical appraisal' in 2008. This was then followed by Leow et al (2011) review which was led by a 4th year medical student. It found that the programme rested on sound theoretical bases with good potential for upscaled impact across communities

– especially in the social marketing industry. Unfortunately, with the number of evaluations, critiques and reviews it was unsurprising that not long after these, the programme was discontinued.

Tāne Ora Alliance (TOA)

Tāne Ora Alliance (TOA) was established in 2015 by Te Tihi o Ruahine Whānau Ora Alliance and was focused largely on service/programme delivery and social marketing. Central to the vision of TOA was the importance of Māori determinants of good hauora such as te reo, whakapapa and social cohesion. It is well understood that a person who participates in society (i.e., engaged in employment, education, or other pro-social activities) is likely to demonstrate greater health and wellbeing. Through prioritising such connections, other healthy lifestyles can occur (i.e., engage in sports clubs, gym activities, healthy nutrition). Commissioned by The Movember and delivered by Te Tihi o Ruahine, TOA focused its strategic direction on upscaling and globalizing activities for greater social movement. The priority areas were knowledge transfer (Give men the facts); the role of digital media and connecting communities; and networking/marketing by bringing the brightest minds together. The programme was evaluated in 2017 with several positive findings and recommendations provided. One was the funding for sustainability following the cessation of the Movember funding. Aside from merchandise sales, and self-funded commitments, the programme lasted for several more years post-funding before it was also discontinued.

Mana Tāne o Aotearoa

A coalition born out of a desire for Māori men to manage their own personal development, Mana Tāne o Aotearoa was established. The vision for Mana Tāne o Aotearoa was for a National Māori Men's Health Coalition to proactively respond to the poor health statistics and lower life expectancy of Māori men. This included the need for bespoke approaches and strategies to address the health and social issues of Māori men in Aotearoa. As such, Mana Tāne o Aotearoa became deliberately focused on high level strategic and policy concerns whilst ensuring relevant service delivery activities were appropriate and robust. The kaupapa was effectively positioning itself appropriately as a potential governing body for issues related to Māori men's health with specific regional bodies aligned to the vision. Also, dependant on external funding, this kaupapa has morphed over the years into different kaupapa for different regions. With some such as Waikato and Tai Tokerau very active, and others such as Waipounamu (the birthplace of the kaupapa) no longer active.

Bros for Change (B4C)

Founded by ex-professional rugby league player, Jaye Pukepuke, Bros for Change (B4C), a kaupapa Māori education programme, was set up as a charitable trust offering male

rangatahi skills in self-esteem, self-awareness, self-respect, and self-management through various role models (The Hui, 2020). By incrementally increasing goals from day-to-day objectives through to long term goals B4C ensures that goal setting is realistic and achievable so that young people are not set up to fail. Using this approach B4C creates a clear individual pathway to the major functional goals such as a driver's license, apprenticeship training or becoming a member of a sports team. Funding wise, B4C attracts incremental government funding as well as a Givealittle (crowdfunding approach) function.

PATU Aotearoa

Originally designed in 2012 by Levi Armstrong (Ngāti Kahungunu) to target Māori and Pasifika men, PATU grew quickly into a social enterprise (a business that addresses a social issue) for both men and woman of all ethnicities (Forrest et al., 2014). Appropriately named, PATU is used as a visual metaphor to ensure that audiences attack and 'hit' their target (usually a weight related goal) through group exercises, physical inactivity, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and healthy lifestyle education. It incorporates te reo me ōna tikanga. PATU was developed by Māori for Māori and is continually responding to the needs of whānau, placing a large emphasis on whanaungatanga (connectedness, community involvement, and cultural awareness). The PATU programme targets local tamariki (children), big boys and girls, kaumātua (elders), and mothers, along with a variety of marae (Māori meeting houses), prisons, and workplaces, and has grown rapidly since. Unlike the fate of other tāne programmes around the country, the shift in focus from being specifically about tāne, to being about whānau, has allowed this social enterprise to continue to this very day.

MAN UP / TŪ TANGATA

MAN UP was founded in 2015 by Caine and Jamie Warren, elders of Destiny Church. It is a 10-week programme focused on supporting men in their healing and transformation journey by validating their manhood and fostering positive connections within families and communities. Born out of a response to the increasing concern for domestic violence, there are now around 300 groups across the country, aimed at strengthening men to become better fathers, husbands, and leaders in their home and community.

Farmstrong

Farmstrong is a nationwide rural wellbeing programme aimed at helping male farmers and growers live well while in the farming industry. Though not specifically focused on Māori men, it was launched in 2015 by founding partners, Mental Health Foundation, and rural insurer FMG with support from the Movember Foundation. There were later joined by ACC as a strategic partner and together have helped to design initiatives to help farmers identify health and lifestyle changes they want to make. It is based on collaboration and partnerships between

individuals and organisations to educate, inform, inspire, and motivate. The initiative undertakes research to better understand the health and wellbeing needs of farmers and growers and offers practical ways to help them make improvements.

Manline

Manline is a counselling and education service run by men, for men over the age of 13 years. Manline is the only counselling and education service working between Tauranga and Wellington and aims to reduce all forms of violence and abuse, whether perpetrated by men, or against men; and promoting healthier lifestyles and relationships by providing services to men in an individual, whānau or community context.

Prostate of Origin

Like Movember Foundation, Prostate of Origin started out as gimmick with a catchy name, at least for lovers of rugby and rugby league. This novel initiative utilised an 'events-based' approach targeting Māori and Pasifika men in local pubs during the annual State of Origin rugby league series. They were encouraged and incentivised to register with a GP (as this is the highest population group with the poorest registration rates within the Manawatū rohe) and given GP checkup chits to redeem at their next GP visit for free. By reaching them in their own environments, this became a novel if not practical way of highlighting the realities of men's health to them.

My Father's Barber / She Is Not Your Rehab

Using a barbershop chair as a metaphor, My Fathers Barber was established to promote a safe space for male vulnerability, healing, and connection. In 2018, My Father's Barbers partnered with the Ministry of Social Development as an ambassador for their 'It's not OK Campaign' to increase awareness about the role of barbers in creating safe spaces that allow men to talk. The barbershop then becomes a cornerstone of the community, and the barber chair a safe place for men to change not only their looks, but their lives. Following the popularity of My Father's Barber came the co-founders (Matt and Sarah Brown) second brainchild 'She Is Not Your Rehab. A movement simply inviting men to acknowledge their own childhood trauma and to take responsibility for their healing so that they can transform their pain instead of transferring it onto those around them.

Domains of Tāne Ora: Taha Wairua

The elegance of Te Whare Tapa Whā is in its simplicity and ease of use (Glover, 2005; McNeill, 2009). However, the one-dimensional model found in many texts and papers understates the holistic and multi-dimensioned aspect of Te Whare Tapa Whā, which connects layers of meanings with a Te Ao Māori perspective. Te Whare Tapa Whā by nature is holistic,

yet the oversimplification and misinterpretation of the model in contemporary settings can limit its use, especially in relation to te taha wairua (Heaton, 2015). In her doctorate thesis, Brittain (2022) notes the significance of wairua for its duality (Kohu-Morgan, 2018) and complementary energies, two waters (Pere, 1997). These dualities exist in the natural world and is echoed throughout Māori narratives. Central to Māori and perhaps broader Indigenous conceptualisations of wellbeing are the themes of balance and harmony. Individual health is considered in the context of the environment and wider systems and as such, have no clear-cut distinctions between spiritual, psychological, physical, and collective (Durie, 2001).

The notion of wairua in the context of tāne ora is becoming clearer. At one end of the spectrum there is tāne and experiences of grief. In their highly sensitive but crucial research, Edwards et al (2009) guided by cultural experts, Nick Tuwhangai and Manga Ormsby followed the stories of nine tāne impacted by sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Central to this research was the recognition that wāhine and tāne grief processes were significantly different and that with the onset of colonisation and urbanisation resulted in a shift in these expressions. Specific examples including tangi apakura and uhunga were mentioned. Importantly, the research emphasised that regardless of the type of expression (by wāhine or tāne), that the overarching objective was the attainment of mauri tau (an emotional state of being settled). And that the excretion of grief through hupe and roimata (Dansey, 1992) has been replaced with more modern or contemporary alternatives such as sweat (hupe) through physical assertion (tangi).

Somewhat fittingly, and at the other end of the spectrum is wairua in relation to physical exercise programmes and activities. Warbrick et al. (2018) have provided crucial scholarship in this area with the recognition that beyond traditional forms of physical exercise exists the opportunities for performance enhancement through cultural practices and approaches. Specifically, they identify the utilisation of karakia to acknowledge the influence of spiritual and culturally relevant forces within the physical and 'man'-made environments. In doing so, several factors were occurring. Firstly, there was a layer of motivation for participants and trainers occurring as they experienced a deeper and more meaningful engagement in the physical exercise. Before and after every workout, the tāne in these programmes would hongiri (a traditional relationship building through the pressing of noses). This highlighted a second critical factor within these culturally-informed programmes – the role of mauri (life force and vitality). The sharing of this energy emphasised a higher commitment to the exercise, and to each other in the attainment of individual and collective goals and aspirations. In doing so, there was a conscious reinforcement that being a tāne, was both a strength and an advantage, rather than a source of illness or weakness (Warbrick et al. 2014).

In addition to the overt cultural practices facilitating wairua (e.g., karakia), there was also the more subtle experiences of wairua being generated among tāne in such physical

activity programmes and groups. The mere fact that they were collaborating in group-based activities links to the earlier mentioned findings around men's health and psychotherapeutic groups. However, for tāne, this connection was deeper and spoke to the notions of whakapapa and whanaungatanga – the interconnectedness of the tāne. This lifelong connection between tāne meant that the shared accountability extended beyond the individuals and included their whānau, hapū and iwi. The term used more generally here was 'brotherhood' (Warbrick et al. 2018) and should not be underestimated. It is just as much a facilitator of wairua as it is taha whānau or taha tinana. Importantly, in the current climate of 'self-management' approaches to health and hauora, this research might instead suggest that tāne ora is best achieved through the activation of cultural values and practices. And alongside of this, access to other tāne of similar goals and aspirations.

Domains of Tāne Ora: Taha Hinengaro

Underpinning taha hinengaro has been the role of psychology within Aotearoa. The history of psychology here shares a familiar pattern to that which has already been expressed throughout this thesis. One where there was an imposition of a Western imperialism incapable of solving local problems (Nikora et al., 2004b; Nikora et al., 2006; Nsamenang, 2006). Certain criticisms were that psychology was a Western construction of social reality that overlooked alternative views on life and politics of knowledge, thus maintaining its privileged position (Staeuble, 2006). Associated with this dominance was ongoing resistance to the legitimate inclusion of Indigenous knowledge bases within psychology; claims that mātauranga Māori psychological knowledge lacked validity; inappropriate generalisation of psychological theories onto Māori; and indifference to the colonising agenda of Western psychology (Nairn et al., 2012; Nikora et al., 2017). The impact of an expansionist agenda has meant that Indigenous peoples are not regarded as autonomous and with their own knowledge systems. Despite this, Indigenous Psychology emerged as a vibrant, cutting-edge discipline representing a vast range of peoples who have survived colonisation and retained their therapeutic knowledge systems (Waitoki et al., 2018). Defined as a locally sourced psychological knowledge, people, constructs, language, practices, epistemologies, and philosophies are applied throughout (Adair et al., 1993; Allwood & Berry, 2006; Berry et al., 2002; Hwang, 2016; Kim, 1990).

An important feature of Indigenous psychology is that it is more than a cultural adaptation of Western psychology. And while cultural adaptations have also occurred within Māori psychology, this is only because Māori have had to operate in a Pākehā and a Māori world and have adapted their knowledge to suit each setting (Durie, 2012). Durie (2012) further argues that centring Māori knowledge aligns with the process of centrifugal thinking. Centrifugal thinking is characteristic of Māori marae encounters: invitation, discussion, determining speaking order, clarifying relationships, and describing relationships to understand

the bigger picture. The application to Indigenous psychology is that the search for knowledge starts at the centre and goes outwards, constantly drawing more discussion inwards. Conversely, as an exponent of that science, Western science and psychology uses centripetal thinking where dissecting parts, examining details, and separating the part from the whole is the common practice (Durie et al., 2012). Using Durie's centrifugal thinking, Western knowledge systems can also be included and refined rather than automatically rejected.

For the past two decades especially, Māori psychologists have increasingly drawn upon mātauranga in their work with Māori. The range of psychology used shows a combination of Western psychology, culturally adapted psychology, and distinct practices that are an Indigenous psychology. It is important to clarify that many Māori psychologists operate within a bicultural worldview and that Western psychology has been beneficial to Māori people. However, as stated earlier, it is the way Western psychology is used, without considering the value of Māori knowledge and experiences, is concerning. In a groundbreaking book published in 2016, *Te Manu Kai i te Mātauranga: Indigenous Psychology in Aotearoa New Zealand*, it clarified that Māori psychology was growing and thriving (Waitoki & Levy, 2016).



Figure 6. He Paiaka Tōtara Māori and Indigenous Psychology Wānanga, 2023

The recent formation of a Māori psychology network of practitioners (and practitioners-in-training) called He Paiaka Tōtara, has led to a growing contribution to a Māori psychology discourse. The image above is of He Paiaka Tōtara members after the annual two-day wānanga. It is well documented that Māori psychologists show distinctly Māori cultural

knowledge and practices across different areas of psychology, including children and family trauma (Cribb-Su'a & Te Pani-Hemopo, 2016); cognitive-behavioural therapy for depression and substance abuse (Bennett et al., 2016); cross-cultural neuropsychology (Dudley et al., 2016); evaluation research (Masters-Awatere et al., 2016); educational psychology (Macfarlane et al., 2021); family and child protection (Cooper & Rickard, 2016); psychology and ethics (Cargo et al., 2016) psychology and curriculum development (Waitoki, 2016), Māori spirituality (Valentine et al., 2017; Brittain, 2022), Māori hauora (Pitama et al., 2018), and Māori within sport and exercise (Muriwai et al. 2022). Delving into Māori cultural norms and practices, Māori psychologists (and psychiatrists) also used Tā moko (Rangihuna et al., 2018); and Māori creation stories (Cherrington, 2003; Wirihana, 2012; Kopua, 2020; Clifford, 2023) as therapeutic modalities.

There have been several key contributions of relevance to tāne ora and taha hinengaro. *Tāne and the Indigenous Psychological Perspective on the Interconnected Self* (2017) by Associate Professor Mohi Rua (Tūhoe) found that Māori men's identities were not only crucial in and of themselves, but that they were required for negotiating interactions with whānau, practices and places. This was especially important to consider as the complexities of contemporary life become increasingly confusing. The role of kaumatua for instance was revealed as an expression of 'leadership potential' and therefore a 'social tool' to draw from rather than a social burden (Rua et al. 2017). Research several years later by King et al (2015) reinforced the above findings with the importance of identity, connection and belonging when investigating the experiences of elderly Māori men in the context of homelessness.

In his thesis focusing on rangatahi tāne identities, Dr Logan Hamley (Ngāti Rangi) extended on the role of taha hinengaro within rangatahi tāne. Utilising the metaphor of a pā harakeke for understanding the realities (and challenges) facing rangatahi tāne, Hamley (2022) explores the diversity of identities and the potential for both traditional and contemporary realities to exist. Through the pā harakeke metaphor where there are multiple strands, entry points, and therefore possibilities for rangatahi tāne to participate within, a sense of belonging and potential is the result. The result from this process might then be likened to the weaving component of the pā harakeke metaphor rendering a product (kākahu or korowai), to be the added value that rangatahi tāne might bring to society (Hamley, 2022).

Another kaupapa within taha hinengaro has been the revitalisation and application of mau rākau. Several schools of higher learning were established in response to the growing concerns facing tāne in the 1980s. These whare wānanga included Te Whare Tū Taua and Mokoia both of which are largely credited to Tā Pita Sharples and Koro Mita Mohi respectively with their genesis. And although both whare wānanga are underpinned by two distinct tribal styles and inclusive of wāhine, activities in both exposed tāne to a Māori martial arts form that was focused less on how to harm others but on the philosophy of balance within the mind. At

the time, it was considered a completely new way for many tāne, especially rangatahi to look at their behaviour, attitude and thinking towards others (Gilgen, 2010). In much the same way that the abovementioned approaches work, mau rākau instills a sense of belonging, connection and identity for tāne.

Domains of Tāne Ora: Te Taha Tinana

Studies on men's health in relation to taha tinana fall into two important fields of work. The first field is related to health inequalities and spans the disease spectrum which includes cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer and prostate cancer (Robson & Harris, 2007). This has already been covered in the previous section of this thesis and need not be retread other than to reinforce the poor focus on potential sociocultural issues underpinning challenges related to tāne ora and taha tinana. Such challenges as 'health seeking' behaviour which is better categorised under the second field of men's studies and draws on conceptual understandings of men. It too has two sub-categories – 'men's studies', and 'critical studies of men' within which theories of masculinities exist. The latter of these sub-categories is where you will find the highly regarded work of Judith Butler (1990) who analysed the ways in which masculinity and femininity were 'performed'. This concept of performativity then gave rise to the 'doing of health' where understandings of masculinity were less about fixed constructs (such as gender) and more about being dynamic and fluidity within physical health.

The 'doing of health' then led to a growing body of literature supporting the benefits of regular physical activity (PA) for well-being. PA is a broad term that describes bodily movement produced by the skeletal musculature, which achieves low to high levels of energy expenditure while being positively correlated with physical fitness (Caspersen et al., 1985). A related term, exercise, which is a subset of PA, is also positively correlated with physical fitness and involves planned, structured and repetitive bodily movement to maintain or improve physical fitness (Caspersen et al., 1985). The New Zealand Ministry of Health (2020) recommended adults perform at least 2.5 hours of moderate or 1.5 hours of vigorous PA spread throughout the week. This recommendation includes exercise as well as active recreation and sport, active transport, active work, and activities of daily living (e.g., gardening). This is considered the minimum amount of PA to achieve health benefits such as reduced risk for type 2 diabetes, some cancers, anxiety, depression, and stress.

For Māori, this notion of 'doing health' has been more recently referred to as a 'biological determinism' whereby Māori were considered inherently superior at physical play and sports, almost as if they were born with such traits (Hamley, 2022; Borell, 2015; Hokowhitu, 2004). It stems from a colonial history already discussed earlier perpetrating tāne as being more masculine and powerful at sports. In her PhD thesis titled *Ngā Kaiwhakaako, Whakapakari*

Tinana me te Hauora Hinengaro: Exercising Hauora - the contribution of Māori exercise professionals to wellbeing. 2022) however, Dr Muriwai (Te Whakatōhea) instead provided a snapshot of Māori graduate level research linking much broader Māori perspectives of physical activity specifically between 2018 and 2022. It is impressive and the research within, comprehensive, and since then (within the last 12 months), the number of theses has almost eclipsed that of the previous five years already. In doing so, they have sought to further validate and reinforce the depth in understanding how Māori conceptualise and connect with physical activity:

Ingoa	Whakapapa	Kaupapa	Type, year published
Meriana Haldane	Te Ātiawa Te-Aupōuri	Perceptions and experiences of kai and nutrition advice in young Māori rugby players in Ōtepoti	2022 MSc
Thandiwe Maia Keet	Te Whakatōhea	Eke Panuku Eke Tangaroa: How Black Ferns 7s Athletes Navigate Instagram and Inspire the Next Generation in Aotearoa	2022; MHS
Phillip Borell	Tauranga Moana	Polysaturated: Illuminating the experiences of Polynesian athletes in professional rugby league	2022; PhD
Maia Westrupp	Rongowhakaata Ngāti Awa	The importance of Māori identity for athletes and sportspeople within sporting contexts	2022; MSS
Apirana Pewhairangi	Ngāti Pōrou	I tāia tō moko ki te aha? Te hiranga o te ahurea Māori ki ngā kaitākaro Māori o te kapa Tama Toa	2022; Te Tohu Paerua (MA)
Emerald Muriwai	Te Whakatōhea ki Ōpotiki	Ngā kaiwhakaako, whakapakari tinana me te hauora hinengaro Exercising Hauora: The contribution of Māori exercise professionals to wellbeing	2022; PhD

Table 1 *An adapted snapshot of Māori perspectives of physical activity (2023)*

Perhaps of greatest excitement here is the thesis submitted by former National Rugby League (NRL) player and current Māori academic, Apirana Pewhairangi (2022) who's is the first within this kaupapa to be published fully in te reo Māori. Focused solely on Māori athletes within te kapa Tama Toa (NZ Warriors), his rangahau interviewed key informants (ex-professional rugby league tāne) about their experiences as Māori during their time at the club. This contribution is significant for several reasons. The focus on tāne ora, as well as the connection to taha tinana and especially the physical exercise component of their time at the club is noteworthy. But also, his voice as a former professional tāne athlete come academic, signals a shift in the perception of tāne as being merely professional players, and the potential they possess as insider voices for research.

There are two potential challenges for tāne ora and taha tinana to consider here. Firstly, the terms 'exercise' and 'physical activity' tend to be used interchangeably and are often narrowly conceptualised within physical health. Broader areas of discussion might consider the potential of cultural activities such as kapa haka as forms of exercise, PA, and competitive sport. The literature on kapa haka is extensive and spans the traditional (Best, 1976; Ngata & Te Hurunui, 1961; and Dewes, 1974), and more contemporary styles of kapa haka (Huata, 2000; Ka'ai & Moorfield, 2013). It also extends into areas of health (Johnston, 2007; Paenga, 2008; Te Kupenga, 2013; and Wirihana, 2008); and social wellbeing (Whitinui, 2007; 2008; 2010). Not only is kapa haka a primary source of cultural and/or spiritual connection but also a vehicle for physiological enhancement. While many tikanga were disrupted over the generations, kapa haka survived grew, and even evolved. For Māori, there is perhaps no greater expression of this than in the case of Te Matatini Kapa Haka festival (previously the Māori Performing Arts Festival).

"Kapa haka in my mind is a blended activity, and it's evolved. The kapa of my grandfather's generation is not the kapa of today. My son's Kura Kaupapa kapa haka... the 1st three noho, no kapa, just all physical training. And so, he's had that experience of what it's like to be in a good kapa haka, good tutors. So, [looking at] the synergies [between kapa haka and] sport, from community sport pathways [right through] into high-performance, [would be relevant]." (Pihama et al., 2014, p.63).

The second, albeit subtle challenge for tāne ora, lies in the crucial difference between the performativity of men's health and tāne ora. The performativity of men's health assumes that 'the doing of health' will result in a health gain, which as above, is correct for many individuals. For tāne however, the activities undertaken within tāne ora are more linked to

engagement in te ao Māori. The health gains then are simply incidental outcomes of a more primary objective. In his thesis on *Kawa Oranga* (2011), Professor Meihana Durie (Rangitāne, Kauwhata and Ngāti Porourangi) explores the Toiora programme for tāne led by Te Papa Tākaro o Te Arawa. He highlights, that while achieving a healthy weight through a range of activities might have been the goal, the emphasis on cultural strengthening, marae engagement and hiking over landscapes of tribal significance is of greater importance to the programme designers. The health gains are still met but are instead underpinned by culturally grounded activities and indicators of tāne ora. Understanding physical health through concepts such as Te Whare Tapa Whā allows for such Indigenous icons as kapa haka to exist within what is otherwise a largely Western conceptualisation including health (Love, 2005; Pitama et al., 2007; Purdy, 2020), public policy (Rochford, 2004), education (Averill, 2012), sport (Keung, 2018) and literature (Pistacchi, 2008).

Sport in Aotearoa

The intersection between sport and Indigenous peoples is an important one and has come to occupy an increasingly central space today. Historically however, it was considered harmful and much like other Western constructs already mentioned in this thesis, the sporting 'ideals' were, and continue to, be imposed on Indigenous ways of living and being (Fox & McDermott, 2017). Internationally, it's a familiar story with encounters of complexity and contention surrounding the need to address disparities and inequalities among Indigenous peoples within sport. The need to balance out the benefits of sport among Indigenous peoples alongside the negative historical, cultural, and socio-political impacts it grew out of, has since become a growing priority. Perkins et al (2000) review of youth sports programmes, particularly in Indigenous communities in the US found that they were increasingly marginalised and alienated from broader national and community networks and support. This was further endorsed by Hutchins et al (2007) undertaking on sport as a mechanism for building social cohesion. Findings from this research were that:

- 1) Sport is historically divisive and can create an 'us' and 'them' mentality strengthening intra-group bonds and oppositional identity.
- 2) Cohesion on the field may not translate to 'enduring' social cohesion in the broader community.
- 3) The internal logic and structure of sport is competitive with rules and regulations promoting winners and losers which can act against community-building and cross-cultural understanding.

The experience in Aotearoa has been no different with exercise, pastimes, games, sports, and other high-performance endeavours marked throughout history largely by Western observers and ethnographers. Perhaps where it differs is how sport was recognised culturally and socially in Aotearoa. Arguably the most notable in Aotearoa for recording historical accounts of Māori sporting activities has been Elsdon Best (1925). His introduction of the origins of sport in te ao Māori as residing in the pūrākau of Rongo-marae-roa and Hine-rēhia is an important feature. Specifically, during times of harvest (the domain of Rongo-marae-roa), Māori would engage in 'ngā mahi a rēhia' (the fine arts of joy and pleasure) providing our first clear whakapapa link between sport and te ao Māori. Additionally, Best (1925) does well to compartmentalise Māori leisure (of which sport is included) into three interrelated categories: exercises, games, and pastimes. Several other significant contributors to the Aotearoa sportscape have more recently emerged. Perhaps none more significant than the introduction of ngā taonga tākaro (traditional Māori games) by Harko Brown (2010), and the Atua Matua Framework by Dr Ihirangi Heke (2016). Both scholars remind us that Best's work, though

important historical pointers, was marked largely by a Western lens across one specific iwi scope of observations at the time.

It was the same Western lens that referred to traditional games, exercises, and pastimes as 'child's play' which may have been shortsighted as it is here that the first connections between Māori and organised forms of competitive sports can be traced back to (Borell & Kahi, 2017). Games were socially constructed as educational, psychological, and physical tools to enhance the resilience of tribes and prepare for pan-tribal activities. Rangatira (tribal chiefs and chieftains) in pre-European times, maintained peace using their arsenal of games and other strategies, and as such were accorded the highest mana (Brown, 2014). These activities showcased both physical prowess and cognitive guile to outwit their opponent and in doing so, also played a significant cultural role. Waka ama for instance, has been described by some as an avenue into te ao Māori that normalises Māori cultural practices and ways of te ao Māori into daily activities (Hippolite & Bruce, 2014). It was one of many traditional Māori sporting activities that encompassed practices such as karakia, waiata, te reo Māori and other cultural activities (Reweti & Severinsen, 2022).

With the arrival of British settlers in the 19th century, sports such as rugby, cricket, and athletics were adopted and utilised to both colonise tāne and promote camaraderie between them and their Pākehā counterparts (Borell, 2022). Through these sports, tāne gained popularity and gradually became ingrained in society. And as tāne gained popularity among settlers through their sporting prowess, it was at this time that discourses reinforcing racial stereotypes with Indigenous athletes being physical (Hokowhitu, 2003), 'naturally athletic' (Erueti, 2015; McCreanor et al., 2010), and 'peripheral' (Hapeta, 2018) beings, started to emerge. Disguised by the benefits that sport provided tāne, the avoidance of more important discussions regarding equity and racism, especially in rugby (e.g., Hapeta, 2018; Hippolite, 2010; Hokowhitu, 2008; Palmer, 2016), grew stronger. In doing so, this avoidance embedded a Western view of sports as the 'one true' perspective, and further marginalised Indigenous imaginations to the edges of the industry (Muriwai, 2022).

Today, the weaving of sport and exercise with mātauranga has grown alongside the evolution of the governing body for sports within Aotearoa. For much of the 1990s, this body was known as either the Hillary Commission or SPARC (Sport and Recreation). From 2009 onwards this entity was (and still is) known as Sport New Zealand: Ihi Aotearoa (SNZ hereafter). But this has not been without its challenges with these changes coinciding with changes in government and therefore mandate on what was to be provided. Central to this journey for Māori has been the role of He Oranga Poutama, the Māori-focused programme within SNZ, and a crucial shift from focusing on increasing the participation *by* Māori to participation *as* Māori. This subtle though important pivot was underpinned by the Te Whetū

Rehua framework – a bicultural assessment approach (Thompson, 2021; Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2022).

This bicultural approach though honourable in theory, has led to several challenges along the way not just for Māori but Indigenous peoples internationally. Non-Indigenous sport researchers for instance, have attempted to include Indigenous peoples' knowledge(s) and cultures as a byproduct of their 'scholarship'. For example, the establishment of cultural sport psychology (CSP), despite the earlier mentioned whakapapa of Indigenous sports knowledge already being well established, was referred to as a field "in its infancy" by Schinke and colleagues (2012, p. 35). CSP therefore, appeared largely reflective of their forefathers with a Western need to 'discover' and then disguising it behind language such as using "culturally sensitive methods" when working with people of other cultures (Schinke et al., 2012, p. 37). Unsurprisingly, these intentions served only the research agendas of the non-Indigenous academy (Muriwai et al., 2023).

Fortunately, calls for Indigenous-led scholarship that sustains Indigenous ontologies, methodologies and cultural practices while engaging in decolonising processes are well underway. Stronach (Gooreng Gooreng nation) and colleagues (2019), for instance found that sport could be a safe space for asserting identity and maintaining culture for Indigenous/Aboriginal women. Other Indigenous scholars have highlighted the bicultural and political skills Indigenous people possess in navigating sport and exercise. For example, Lavallee (Anishinaabe) and Levesque (2013) detailed the Mi'kmaq notion of "two-eyed seeing", as applied to how First Nations Metis and Inuit peoples engage in sport for "wholistic" health. The response within Aotearoa has also been strong with Māori researchers all sharing a common thread of decolonising the sportscape (Palmer, 2000; Hokowhitu, 2003., 2004., 2008; Hippolite, 2010; Heke, 2010; Erueti, 2015; Warbrick, 2016; Hapeta, 2019; Muriwai, 2023).

Professor Dame Farah Palmer (Tainui, Ngāti Maniapoto) who with her decorated sporting career as a former captain of the Black Ferns national women's rugby team, has been an unshakable figure in Māori sport with an equally distinguished academic profile. She has endured almost two decades of operating at the 'space between' Māori and national sporting governance entities (Webber, 2008). As an academic, she has published numerous on topics related to Māori, women in sport, leadership, and cultural perspectives in high-performance environments. Central to this research has been the importance of embracing cultural identity within high-performance sport. Maintaining a strong connection to cultural values, traditions, and practices while navigating high-performance environments was also highlighted. This includes recognising and respecting Indigenous knowledge, cultural protocols, and the unique contributions that Māori athletes bring to the sporting arena. This Indigenous-led research has helped to shed light on the unique cultural perspectives, challenges, and opportunities faced by Māori athletes and provides insights into creating greater cultural spaces within high-

performance environments. This has allowed for the gradual integration of rich Indigenous perspectives throughout the high-performance sportscape.

Domains of Sport: Game

In extending on Best's (1925) three categories of sport – Games, Exercise and Pastimes – this thesis is focused on tāne within the *game* of rugby. And in focusing on rugby there is an acknowledgement of this racially contested arena (Erueti, 2015) and the colonial agendas that existed in the past and in some cases, to this very day. As Hokowhitu (2004) appropriately discusses, rugby's positioning was used as a colonial tool to subjugate mostly tāne at the time by limiting them to just physical pursuits. This discourse of Māori masculinity sought to reinforce a position that Māori were inherently staunch, physical, and violent and "something to be conquered and civilised" (Hokowhitu, 2004, p. 259) by settlers. But as previously established, there were only a handful of arenas that tāne experienced equity within during the colonial period. The first was through war and the other through rugby.

Rugby in Aotearoa quickly became a popular contact sport. It was seen as the forerunner to several variants of the sport such as rugby league even though it was the latter that would be first to become a professional sport where players received compensation (Clark, 2018). By the mid to late 1800s, a tāne in Whanganui by the name of Wirihana is credited as being the first Māori to have engaged in the sport (Mulholland, 2009). While various types of traditional games and past times were well-familiar to him, rugby appeared to touch a more profound and primordial chord with his people. Offering what seemed to be a more civilised outlet for their inner tensions or frustrations, the desire to demonstrate one's physical dominance or prowess – and which could no longer be ameliorated through acts of war.

For Māori, the infamous NZ Natives Tour of 1888 became the first Māori sports team to compete against national and international sporting opposition. Captained by Joe Warbrick (Ngāti Rangitīhi) and supported by other highly credentialled players such as Teone 'Jack' Taiaroa (Ngāi Tahu), they continued to excel both on and off the field. For Taiaroa he would later become one of the first Māori solicitors. Together their 1888 NZ Native Representatives mammoth 107 match, 14-month tour of Egypt and the British Isles would later see them, and their fellow teammates recognised in 2008 when they were posthumously inducted into the International Rugby Board's Hall of Fame. To put the 1888 tour into perspective, that is the equivalent of playing two to three test matches per week today. Aside from winning an astounding 74 games and drawing six, the Natives Tour became rugby folklore for three significant reasons which would further reinforce the relationship between Māori and rugby: the black jersey and silver fern were first introduced to the world in convincing fashion by the NZ Natives; the NZ Natives would transcend the game with an enterprise that sent their international counterparts into disbelief and dismay; Mātauranga Māori (haka, karakia and waiata) was introduced as a mechanism for ensuring not only a Māori uniqueness, but also understanding of its relationship with physical endurance and performance enhancement.

Strength and conditioning coaches, physios and medical physicians did not exist in the late 1800s.

But the 1888 Tour wasn't an entirely successful expedition. It was marked largely by three key points. The first was that Māori disrupted the way the game was played at the time. The innovation they introduced (e.g. offload passes to keep the momentum and tempo of the game high) was a rather new phenomenon to the otherwise conventional style played by the English. The second was the introduction of culture as a high-performance tool, which was also unheard of in the North. The activation of haka and karakia as a means of preparing oneself for performance was a revelation. And lastly, the game was seen simply as a vehicle for exploring greater opportunities (e.g. travel and exposure to other sports). Generally considered sacrilege by Westerners whose promotion of the amateur ethos was built largely around the existence of privilege, as for many, rugby was considered a 'gentlemanly' game played only by a wealthy class of people. It came as no surprise then that many Māori took so eagerly to rugby league when it turned professional. This game was viewed as a career and a means of providing for their whānau – something which appealed to Māori more. It was also of no surprise then, that many tāne were seen as rejecting the 'gentlemanly amateur ethos' and thus, shunned from the rugby world like, Albert 'Opai' Asher (Ngāti Pikiao and Ngāti Pukenga) way back in 1907 (Mulholland, 2010).

Regardless of the history, rugby in a lot of ways was to fill a void which had emerged through the process of colonisation and offered a way in which ancient concepts, protocols and rituals could be expressed within a contemporary frame. Indeed, the idea of training for physical domination resonated well with the Māori psyche. As did the idea that this type of activity was best undertaken collectively, without a primary focus physical preparation – but which also considered psychological, spiritual, and even celestial domains. The alignment was not absolute, nor always deliberate. Nevertheless, the appeal of rugby was not only derived from the perspective of enjoyment or its ability to facilitate social engagement. And for Māori, deeper and more ethereal connections were to emerge.

Since then, rugby and Māori have become synonymous with each other leading to the establishment of the country's first Indigenous-based national team, the Māori All Blacks (Māori All Blacks). The merging of customary protocols and processes with contemporary challenges would not be too dissimilar to the preparation that an 'ope tauā' (war party) might undertake. Specifically, considerations of tapu which are typically guided by tohunga (subject experts) with clarity of roles and responsibilities for all involved. In the case of ope tauā, their preparation was so tapu that those who were not directly involved in warfare (usually koroua, kuia and tamariki – but not always) would vacate the villages so not to neutralise the energy levels (noa) required for the tauā to perform their elite tasks. The 'art' of Māori rugby over the coming

decades, however, would later be transformed from performance to competition as the game evolved into a professional sport, and with it, a new and different level of expectations.

With the onset of professional rugby, however, came an increase in perspectives, opinions, demands and expectations. What was considered a 'past-time' or something that enhanced status but didn't pay the bills, was quickly morphing into becoming a 'job/career/profession' that could boost people from poor to privileged financially and socially. This certainly appealed to tāne with the proportion of tāne playing professional rugby in Aotearoa was significantly higher than the percentage of Māori in the total population in recent years. In an independent review of the constitution, governance structure and processes of the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU) Incorporated, the participation rates were identified as being 27% (2023). Likewise, player power was growing increasingly stronger and at the forefront of this change were many tāne such as TJ Perenara notable for many public challenges of the game and country. And while this was once considered divisionary and destructive, it has led to the NZRU to accept this trend and explore a more nuanced, mutually beneficial relationship between players and administrators.

Perhaps central to the complexities of the professional game has also been the challenge surrounding self-identity within rugby (Moon, 2012). That is, that rugby becomes a significant piece of one's identity and therefore challenges resulting from this, become inevitable. The New Zealand Rugby Players Association (NZRPA) 2022 survey of former professional players allowed for better understanding the challenges, opportunities and issues faced by players as they prepare for, and transition from, professional rugby to life after their playing days. Responses from 123 past professional players were collated to gain insight into their rugby experiences both during and after rugby. The average age of the group was 36 years and almost all of them had played Super Rugby, with almost half (47%) of these players being former All Blacks. Key findings from this survey give insights into the experiences of tāne within this cohort perhaps explaining the average career span of a professional rugby player being nine years with the average retirement age being 32 years of age (Hume et al., 2022).

Domains of Sport: High-performance

High performers break the norms. The Gould et al (2002) study which interviewed 10 Olympic gold medallists through carefully designed interviews, assessments and observations revealed a number of common characteristics among them. Findings from this study were that these Olympians were characterised by a number of psychological variables such as the ability to cope with stress, high levels of confidence, hope and optimism, goal achievement, and adaptive perfectionism. It is the latter of these characteristics that are of interest here. Various definitions of perfectionism have been attempted over the decades. In the 1950s it was defined as "the tyranny of the shoulds" (Horney, 1950). In the 1960s it was defined as the "practice of

demanding of oneself or others a higher quality of performance than is required by the situation” (Hollender, 1965). By the 1980s however, this definition somehow tipped into the pathological space as “those whose standards are high beyond reach or reason, people who strain compulsively and unrelentingly towards impossible goals and who measure their own worth entirely in terms of productivity and accomplishment” (Burns, 1980). And unfortunately from this decade onwards, perfectionism remained banished to the ‘dark spaces’ where concepts such as excessive, obsessive and compulsive exist.

More recent studies on perfectionism within high-performance has found that there are more broader opportunities to be gained from understanding and contextualising the concept. This has led to greater acceptance of perfectionism as an adaptive trait that can be harnessed and drawn from. In other words, perfectionism is more like ying and yang (or tapu and noa) in that it possesses both dark and light features to it. The task-focussed, action-orientated, effort-driven approaches underpinning this construct can be utilised to provide greater opportunities for performing and therefore, thriving. This would seem to align with the original conceptualisation of perfectionism in the 1960s.

In essence, the above Olympians are unlikely to crash over the finish line in a heap. They achieve these feats rather *comfortably*. Usain Bolt for instance, in an interview with prolific ESPN College Football Analyst, Desmond Howard, explained that in the first 40 meters of a race he is “aware of almost everything” referring to the importance of always checking immediately for start and technique protocols. The rest of the race (usually) takes care of itself. So much so, that his finishes have a familiar look of ease and comfort to them. This begs the question – what does high-performance ‘look like’? Or what do we know about high performers?

High-performance sports can be defined as the competitive and elite level of athleticism through exceptional physical abilities, technical skills, and strategic capabilities (Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2013). High-performance sports and disciplines encompass the highest levels of achievement as well as achieving world and personal bests. Burchard (2022) extends on this with a more simplified perspective of high-performance sports – to *succeed beyond standard norms, consistently over a long period of time*. Burchard (2022) and his team also explored the characteristics underpinning high performers. These characteristics ranged from being generally more assertive, competitive, and confident that they will achieve their goals despite adversity. He attributed the sustained success of high-performance to their approach to living (Burchard, 2022). Where the general population may look at one slice of life in isolation from the rest, high performers create a high-performance life where they are fully engaged in areas that give them deep sense of joy and confidence. High-performance therefore is not about sustained excellence at all costs, rather it is about forming lifelong habits that are of a high standard and will assist you in fulfilling these high standards of behaving and living.

The challenge for high-performance in sport is that it remains generally orientated towards a market of results, medals, and records. This market influences how governing bodies resource sport (Houlihan & Zheng 2013; Sam 2012) and how athletes themselves perceive the purpose of sport participation (Barker-Ruchti, 2019). Actions are frequently investment driven. That is, stakeholders including national sporting organisations (NSO's), sponsors, coaches and even athletes become 'investors' with expectations on returns for money, time and energy spent on expertise and equipment. Coaches plan and then coach accordingly, setting up training sessions that train aspects of performance depending on stages of the year (pre-season or in-season). In many sports, performance targets create competitive structures and are sometimes bound by variables like age (such as in the case of women's artistic gymnastics).

The pressure to fulfil these expectations and other market demands has been linked, on the one hand, to an 'ethic of excess' (Johns, 1998), where much is done to secure performance and performance enhancement; and on the other, drop-out (Gustafsson et al., 2008). Neither outcome appears desirable, be it from an institutional or from an individual perspective. If marketable outcomes are prioritised and competition formats remain the same, potentially harmful and/or illegal practices and exclusion will continue (Kvalens & Hemmestad, 2010).

The commodity-based model of high-performance environments has since shaped the expectations and views of athletes with the outcome being linked to their objectification (Jones & Potrac, 2008). As athletes become commodities in the pursuit of measurable outcomes (i.e., winning), they are treated more like machines or resources than thinking and feeling individuals. This then comes into conflict with coaching philosophy and organisational priorities. With this commodity-based model then comes the role of recruitment and selection. Sports administrators and coaches are turning more increasingly (and alarmingly) towards the use of individual characteristics and measurements (e.g., body weight, size) to calculate and predict performance, and thus athletes' worth (McMahon & Penney, 2013). Depending on such predictions, athletes are included (or excluded), and training regimes and interventions planned. Athletic 'machines' are assumed to improve performance in a progressive and negative exponential fashion (Newell et al., 1981).

The international dominance of the All Blacks and Māori All Blacks later led to rugby being accepted as the country's national high-performance sport, achieving remarkable success despite the relatively small nation of under five million people. With less funding and resources than larger competitor nations, the All Blacks have won three of the nine quadrennial Rugby World Cups (played in five finals) since 1987 and more importantly have been successful in more than 75% of all games played for the last 100 years. Suffice to say, both

teams were known for their dominance, winning multiple competitions, and establishing a reputation for sporting excellence (Johnson et al., 2013).

Achievements in the Aotearoa sportscape later led to the establishment of high-performance systems and infrastructure to support athletes' ongoing development and success. High-Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) formed in 2011 aims to support high-performance sports through enabling and empowering world-class performance in an environment that is embedded in values supporting health and wellbeing. Olympic success soon followed with athletes enjoying triumph on their respective athletic pursuits. New Zealand first competed at the Olympics in 1908 and since then have earned numerous medals in various sports, including kayaking, sailing, cycling, and equestrian. To date, the most decorated and arguably greatest ever Olympian representing Aotearoa has been Dame Lisa Carrington (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki and Ngāti Pōrou) achieving consistent world-class results and amassing six Olympic medals (five gold and one bronze) across three consecutive Olympic Games. Yachting too gained global attention through the America's Cup, a prestigious yachting race, winning the cup in 1995, 2000, and 2017. These achievements have elevated New Zealand's reputation as a powerhouse on the water.

Sport New Zealand (SNZ) and High-Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) have provided support in areas such as talent identification, athlete development programs, coaching, sports science, and funding. The establishment of these systems led to the revelation of the multidisciplinary nature of high-performance and sport, incorporating insights from fields such as sports science, psychology, physiology, sociology, and ethics. Almost a dozen sub-disciplines have emerged highlighting both the complexity of the space and also the opportunities within especially for Māori. Where there have been advancements in the numerous studies exploring methods to enhance athletic performance (including training techniques, nutrition, and recovery strategies), ongoing research to deepen our understanding of the role that mātauranga has in athletic excellence could be explored. Understanding the physiological mechanisms underlying athletic performance is essential.

For Māori within rugby however, these advances signalled more philosophical challenges in the form of science versus mātauranga. In the early 1990s when rugby was still an amateur game, key media magnates were growing increasingly interested in the potential of rugby as a global commodity. Growing pressure from several corners forced the NZ Rugby Union into signing a 10-year, \$800m Sky TV broadcast deal and only a few years later, another \$100m Adidas sponsorship deal (Jackson & Sturm, 2021). This signalled the end of the rugby amateur era and the beginning of many misunderstandings. Now subject to wider global economic interests (and expectations) the first of these misunderstandings was that there was a tendency to separate out such concepts as high-performance from mātauranga. The haka for instance, was seen as nothing more than a great marketing opportunity by Adidas.

According to Howard Greive from 'Saatchi Primal Advertising Team', the All Blacks marketing was always centred around the haka with attempt to gain a 'scary', 'primal' sound design (Jackson & Hokowhitu, 2002).

Within the Māori All Blacks also, was the belief that the environment was not considered high-performance as the systems, structures, and processes in place (aka tikanga) were 'different' to existing rugby environments and expectations (Crawford, 2022). The relationship between performance and tikanga is not necessarily that they are 'different' but that they are not symbiotic, complimentary, or integrated. Either way, the subtle and systematic shift over time was ultimately noticeable in the environment – especially from 2009 onwards. The expectations were still the same (to perform and win), but there was a different arrangement of standards, practices and importantly, and therefore resourcing, set by the NZ Rugby Union (NZRU). One that seemed to favour performance over tikanga. This separation within rugby drove a significant wedge in the Māori All Blacks ability to continue to undertake proven high-performance practices in accordance with tikanga. The Rau Tau centennial celebration of Māori All Blacks was at risk of not occurring as the systemic changes left them vulnerable. A more global/dominant voice was once again imposing a Western set of ideals around sports and high-performance.

Domains of Sport: Wellbeing

The journey to becoming a professional athlete involves a long-term process oftentimes commencing in early adolescence. The development pathways, transitions, challenges, and support systems for athletes striving to reach the pinnacle of their sports is crucial. Athletes face the risk of injuries that can impact their performance. With advancements in technology, performance analysis has become a vital aspect of professional sport. Researchers explore the use of video analysis, motion tracking, wearable sensors, and data analytics to monitor and improve performance, tactical strategies, and injury prevention. This psychological dimension has become a growing phenomenon within sport. Standard topics of research within this industry include motivation, goal setting, self-confidence, concentration, imagery, mental toughness, and the impact of psychological interventions on performance and wellbeing.

The importance of wellbeing perspectives in sport has also undergone significant transformation in recent years. In the infancy stages of professional sport, the wellbeing priorities were largely focused on the biological issues presented by athletes. As a physical game, injuries are a part of rugby and with professionalism, the focus on conditioning and the physicality of the contest has increased exponentially. In fact, rugby has one of the highest injury rates of all sports with players more likely to sustain serious injuries that require hospitalisation and surgery than athletes from non-contact sports (Williams et al, 2013). During their career, rugby players could be expected to average 14 major injuries (defined as being

sidelines for 1 month or more, or hospitalisation of 1 night or more). The most common injury areas were ankle/foot and lower leg, followed by shoulder, wrist/hand and lastly, head. Consequently, the average career span of a professional rugby player, at least in Aotearoa was nine years. Interestingly, this nine-year career was made up of five years in Aotearoa, and four years overseas, likely speaking to the highly physical nature of the game in Aotearoa (NZRPA, 2022).

It is widely expected that anyone competing in sport at a high level will experience medical challenges later in life. Data from the NZRPA Survey on Retired Players in 2022 suggested that 37% of players were suffering major medical problems post rugby career while 51% believed that injuries suffered during their career have impacted negatively on their current health and well-being. Of those who have post playing medical problems, joint pain (59%), cartilage damage (44%), joint immobility (40%) and neck/spinal problems (36%) were the most common medical issues players have post-retirement. Importantly, 29% of retired players believed they suffered from arthritis (with 12% requiring ongoing medical treatment) compared with only 7.5% of all NZ males aged 35-44 suffering from arthritis (Taylor, 2005). Similar results were found in rugby league where a rare study on the longitudinal health effects of retired ex professional Māori rugby league athletes found that when grouped into years post-retirement (0–5-year, 6-10 year and 11-15 year), players experienced significant physical setbacks (Clark, 2018).

Advances in professional sports have since extended on physical dimensions of wellbeing with numerous media articles raising public awareness of mental health issues among high-performance athletes. The current evidence varies widely in the prevalence of depression, but a systematic review conducted in 2016 found that up to one in three elite athletes reported symptoms consistent with a depressive episode after a clinical interview this was based on the globally applied Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders-Fourth Edition (DSMIV) criteria (Golding et al., 2020). This research however, was not confined to rugby and a more detailed focus on rugby would be necessary given that 43% of rugby players suffered at least one head injury, with a large proportion of these players suffering multiple head injuries. Importantly, 22% of all recorded head injuries within rugby required hospitalisation.

A vital phase along the 'career pathway' has been the transition from playing to retirement. The same NZRPA Survey also highlighted that 35% of retired players experienced depression or feelings of despair. This increased to 43% of players if their retirement was due to an injury. And approximately 30% experienced high levels of anxiety and stress, alcohol or substance abuse and relationship issues. It would suggest that the transitions for professional rugby players is experienced more strongly than for the general public.

One possible explanation for the intensified experience of mental health issues among elite rugby players especially is the reality that for almost half of the players (48%), retirement from the game was unexpected and that for almost two thirds of players (58%), this was due to an injury (NZRPA, 2022). And as the game has become so intertwined with the identities of many individuals, the need to emphasise the importance of holistic wellbeing was considered especially crucial. That is, considering not just the physical and/or emotional, but also the spiritual and social supports systems that prioritise well-being, cultural values, and the development of positive sporting identities that extend beyond the athletic arena. A pragmatic reality for many professional rugby players was that half (56%) will earn less than \$60k in their first two years after retirement. And while this sounds like a substantial amount of money, the transition from their previous career (and salary expectations) to the new, was a significant shift:

	<i>Final 2 years of playing</i>	<i>First 2 years after playing</i>
<i>\$200k+ per year</i>	48%	7%
<i>\$100k+ per year</i>	79%	24%
<i>\$60k+ per year</i>	93%	56%

Table 12. *Incomes of retired professional rugby players reported by NZRPA 2022*

Another challenge when navigating the wellbeing and high-performance interface is the distribution of resource for mental health support within these environments. Following the sudden death of an athlete, an inquiry into Cycling New Zealand and HPSNZ was commissioned and found that the funding model did not give sufficient priority to athlete wellbeing (Heron et al, 2022). The model instead, generally prioritised medals over wellbeing. Participants within this review expressed that these issues were not necessarily unique to Cycling NZ and that this was endemic of a high-performance ‘system’ that prioritised performance over wellbeing. The consensus from participants in this review was that where there was good process and leadership, wellbeing and performance outcomes would follow. Putting the primary focus on results (e.g., medals, placings) over-emphasises that which is uncontrollable and uncertain, which puts severe stress on everyone, most of which cascades downwards to land on the shoulders of coaches and athletes (with athletes shouldering the cumulative system pressure). Ensuring environments that provide psychological safety by focusing on relationships of trust and confidence and ensuring that all personnel understand the need to create a safe and secure environment, rather than an environment focused on winning.

Paradoxically, there is growing momentum for the idea that the (re)inclusion of stress within sporting environments can be conducive to learning and performance (Rudland et al., 2020). In health settings, the two concepts of stress and distress have come to be interconnected over the years and perhaps need to be distinguished for greater understanding. The term 'stress' was historically applied to the contexts of physics and mathematics as a verb to 'give particular emphasis' whereas the term 'distress' was used to describe physiological phenomena such as respiratory and cardiac issues. The Yerkes–Dodson law has been previously used to describe the association between stress and performance, highlighting both a linear and an inverted U-shaped relationship between arousal and rates of learning. The inverted U proposes that learning increases with physiological stimulation (stress) to a point at which the stress becomes too great and performance decreases (Rudland et al., 2020).

The tendency of coaches and systems to lean too hard on physiological stimulation (because of the abovementioned external pressures) has led to the rise of literature relating to 'psychological safety' in sports. Arguably the greatest and most recent contribution to this literature is the work of Vella et al (2022) who undertook a systematic review on psychological safety in sport. The review provided good conceptual clarity as well as a model for greater application of psychological safety in sport. Unfortunately, it appears that ongoing research will be required as confusion (and fear) around this concept continues with the net result being the exclusion of stress from sporting conversations altogether.

The next step in the wellbeing journey will be to understand how the learner/athlete *moderates* the 'stressor'. How individuals interpret that stressor will in turn influence their general reactions to stress. That is, whether the individual interprets the stressor as challenging or hindering. This will be mediated by several factors such as individual protective factors (e.g., pre-existing coping strategies), personality characteristics (e.g., fear of failure), contextual (e.g., complexity of the situation), and environmental (how the environment is set up for best learning). Once this moderation occurs, actualisation becomes the endpoint. That is, learning within the context of stress is accepted otherwise there is no positive role for stress in the learning process. Kegelaers and Oudejans (2022) study details this further in their Pressure Training programme.

Domains of Sport: Leadership and Coaching

Leadership literature has diversified over the decades and has been informed not only by business/management discourse, but also cultural studies, Indigenous perspectives, the arts, humanities and performance (i.e., music and drama). Symbols have been found in Egyptian hieroglyphics, in the Hebrew scriptures (House, 2012, as cited in Boyer et al. 2019), in Polynesian explorer Kupe's exploits in the south pacific. Yet, the word leadership is a relatively new addition to the English vocabulary, appearing only 200 years ago in writings

about political influence in the British Parliament (Grint, 2011). Definitions of leadership since then have varied in function, form, and cultural context. The first formal study of leadership appeared in the American Journal of Sociology in the 1930s, where Kurt Lewin characterised a particular type of leadership style known as autocratic leaders. In this article he found that these leaders: generally, do not solicit or accept input from others for decision-making purposes; make all company or group decisions; mandate all workplace methods, policies, and procedures; can exhibit a lack of trust in the advice, suggestions, ideas, and decision-making ability of others (Cherry, 2006).

Since then, leadership behaviour patterns have differed widely across countries. Whether it's an emphasis on individualist versus team orientation; singularism versus universalism; performance versus participation; authoritarian versus democratic orientation, the breadth of these continues to expand. Behavioural leadership theory was centred upon the idea that great leaders are groomed (as opposed to 'broomed') suggesting that people can learn to become leaders (Lewin et al., 1939). Participative leadership theory (Anthony, 1978) proposes that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. Similarly, contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967) and situational theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988) both focus on aspects that are related to the environment that may influence which style of leadership is best suited for the situation. An emerging leadership approach gaining momentum is the transformational theory (Bass, 2015), which focuses on the connections that exist between leaders and followers. This theory builds on the premise that leaders motivate and inspire people by helping team members see the importance of the tasks and destination ahead. Such leaders are focused on the performance of their team members but may also want each member to fulfil their own potential.

And while coaching deserves its own academic discussion in and of itself (not necessarily from within this leadership literature), the above theories typically underpin effective coaching styles which also play a critical role in optimising performance. Studies investigate coaching behaviours, leadership styles, communication strategies, and the influence of coaches on motivation, performance, and athlete well-being. Neil Paine, a sports columnist, and aspiring statistician set out to determine who was the best National Basketball Association coach of the modern era using an algorithm he devised based on player performance metrics (e.g., how many games a team should win). He crunched numbers for every NBA coach since 1979 to measure the number of wins above expectation. That is, the number of times a coach's team won a game that, measured by their players' skills, they had no business winning. He then plotted the results on a graph. For the most part, Paine's graph portrays an orderly and predictable world. Most coaches won roughly the number of games they should have, given their players' abilities.

One coach however defied the above numbers. Gregg Popovich, coach of the San Antonio Spurs, registered a greater number of wins than expected given his team's roster and win expectation. Walker's (2017) interrogation of leadership within the context of sports teams also considers the role of the coach as it is the coach/s who often oversees the teams' technical and tactical strategies. Though he cautions that history shows attaching a winning coach to a team with no internal leadership makes barely any difference, and that the dynamics of the team are more closely linked to the quality of captains rather than coaches. This may speak more again to the notion of a relational approach to leadership with specific importance being placed on the coach-athlete (or captain) relationship and the facilitation of high-performance therein (Jowett, 2007; Jowett & Cockerill, 2002).

Thus, excellent coaches are not only required to be knowledgeable in their craft, but aligned with their captain, and constantly seeking to learn new ways to meet the increasingly diverse needs of their athletes (Erickson et al., 2007). A major learning opportunity for many coaches is the understanding of the different coaching styles that exist. An autocratic approach is one such style familiar to many coaches. This coaching style tells the athlete how they want something done, expecting the athlete to perform a technique a certain way every time. This coach is always in control with little to no feedback from the athlete. It assumes that their way of doing things is the only way to succeed. The autocratic style does have both advantages and disadvantages. Vince Lombardi, the head coach of the Green Bay Packers came from a strict military background and believed that excellence and perfection was the best approach to shape his football team. He believed that the emphasis placed on winning took a great deal of discipline, education, and commitment to being perfect, and that his techniques and systems were the only way to be successful in the National Football League. It was perhaps why the driving mantra behind his approach was "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing" (Maraniss, 1999).

An athlete-centred coaching style is another frequently used coaching approach. Literature to date found that athletes are more likely to gain and take ownership of knowledge, development and decision-making that will help them to make the most of their performance (Kidman, 2010). This approach to coaching has the added benefit of providing athletes with the opportunity to be involved in the development of the vision and values of their team. Former All Blacks and Black Ferns World Cup winning coach, Wayne Smith was a strong advocate of the athlete-centred coaching philosophy stating that "the areas that we have needed to work on as coaches are developing our ability to grow self-awareness, understanding and problem-solving. We have had to become questioners instead of instructing all the time" (in Johnson et al., 2014, p. 196). The rise in numbers and dominance of Māori and tangata moana players in Aotearoa team sports has elevated the need for those coaches not of these ethnic backgrounds to ensure that they continue to evolve their learning in this space. While an

'athlete-centred coaching' style appeals to the humanistic philosophies of the world, this still falls short of the unique cultural differences and experiences of these athletes. Coaches therefore run the risk of minimizing or worse, dismissing the impact of experiences such as colonisation, racism, and discrimination on these athletes.

For Māori, the literature on the relationship between coaching and athlete is sparse. Wrathall's (1996) study provided much needed impetus into this space with among many findings, the fact that non-Māori coaches "had little understanding of the Māori ways and values and often were not interested in them as people, other than what they could produce on the playing field" (in Thompson, Rewi & Wrathall, 2000, p. 246). Some of this is about the internal working models that coaches bring to their craft. And some of this is about the external pressures (e.g., time limitations, commercialisation, and results) placed upon coaches. McCausland-Durie (2007) demonstrates these further in both practice as a head coach where she strongly advocates an athlete-focused and coach-led internal working model, as well as in her own academic research on the retention of Māori playing netball. In short, if not carefully navigated, cultural differences lead to misunderstandings and interpersonal conflict resulting in relationship breakdowns between coaches and athletes or worse, players leaving the game.

Other relevant and more recent literature since includes Schaaf (2006) who examined the experiences of elite Pacific rugby players, providing insights into their perceptions of professional rugby, which led to greater understanding of coaching practices and athlete development. Likewise, Keung (2018) used talanoa (a conversational method) to explore the psychosocial development of Māori and Pasifika young men in rugby league. It highlighted the importance of understanding the interconnected cultural and social contexts influencing these athletes. Lastly, and although not specific to Māori athletes, studies on transformational leadership within sport, such as those by Callow et al. (2009) and Smith et al. (2013), showed how transformational coaching behaviours positively influenced athlete outcomes. Specifically, key indicators such as group cohesion, motivation, and self-regulation were found in this important study. The personalised, motivational, and culturally sensitive nature of coaching approaches means that these findings are transferable to coaching Māori athletes.

The Pulse Netball Team came to understand this very quickly after playing in the inaugural season in 2008 registering no wins all season. They enlisted the support of McCausland-Durie who soon after taking the reins ushered the franchise into their first finals campaign in 2018. They were unsuccessful that year but in the following 2019, 2020 & 2022 campaigns were crowned champions (Pulse, 2023). They are currently the most successful franchise in the ANZ competition making five out of six grand final appearances since its inception. The accolades keep rolling in with the Pulse consistently the most watched team, the highest crowd appearances and the greatest social media following of all five of their ANZ competition rivals. When interrogating this sudden change in fortune further for the franchise,

it was clear to most that the decisive factor was Coach McCausland-Durie and her integration of an athlete-centred coaching style alongside strong tikanga.

Domains of Sport: Culture

The year 1985 was remarkably unremarkable for all things culture in Aotearoa. The public were beginning to come to terms with the anti-nuclear stance of the recently elected Labour Government. A position that would establish an uneasy tension between the United States and New Zealand for years to come. For Māori, amendments to the Treaty of Waitangi Act were largely (though not universally) welcomed. And where previously the Waitangi Tribunal was only able to investigate claims after 1975 – in 1985, its jurisdiction was extended back to 1840. Sir Paul Reeves was also sworn in as New Zealand's first Governor General of Māori descent. An inspired appointment which provided Māori with some optimism that Māori views were at last being expressed at the very highest levels of Government. One single event however was to dominate the attention of all New Zealanders at the time. The tragic bombing of the Rainbow Warrior was our first exposure to international terrorism – a direct response to the ships planned protest against French nuclear testing in Mururoa.

For Hato Pāora College, these events were to have only limited impact on the day-to-day operations of the school. Issues of international terrorism were less relevant as a component of the school's social studies curriculum as they are today. However, there was another event which occurred that year and that had a far more profound and enduring impact on the school. An event which although centred on a single rugby match, has since come to serve as a metaphor for how notions of culture and purpose might inspire effort and endeavour above and beyond what is reasonably expected. And further still, how cultural frames can be used as a powerful motivator or ultimate success. St Stephens School (Bombay) and Hato Pāora College (Fielding) were at the time two of the country's four Māori boys boarding schools (Te Aute College and Hato Pētera being the other two). St Stephens, established in 1844 as an Anglican school, was developing a formidable reputation as one of the New Zealand's premier rugby nurseries. The schools' 1st XV was so strong, they no longer participated in the local secondary school's rugby competition. In 1985, they were looking to repeat the efforts of their 1984 and 1983 predecessors and win entry into the New Zealand Secondary School's top four competition. A task the 1985 team achieve easily winning the national title, whilst also completing an unbeaten world tour, and having four players named in the New Zealand schoolboy's team (Land Rover 1st XV Rugby, 2014).

Hato Pāora College on the other hand was the last of the Māori boarding schools to be established some 100 years or so later and while they had established an admirable rugby profile within the local Manawatū secondary school competition, paled in comparison. Unlike St Stephens, Hato Pāora had never won entry into the top four competition and not yet any players included in any of the New Zealand schoolboy teams. Despite sharing some obvious demographics, the two Māori boarding schools had never previously played each other. Because of this, St Stephens could not call themselves the greatest Māori school in the country

unless they had beaten all of the boarding schools. For St Stephens, the game would serve as a useful trial match, a 'blow-out' or exhibition before engaging with more 'serious' competition. The complacency, however, would eventually prove disastrous. After, starting well Hato Pāora would defend their slim lead for the remainder of the match winning 15-14. St Stephens won 23 out of the 24 games that year, including a demolition of the other top four contenders (Sky Sport, 2014).

Much has been written about the importance of getting the right personnel on board for the job at hand. The same is often said about high-performance teams with such importance being placed on aggressive recruitment strategies. The example above is not uncommon and is an illustration of how sports teams are able to draw upon their collective strengths to overcome what appears to be a far superior opposition. However, the context within which this example is framed is somewhat unique. And especially illustrative of how motivation, inspiration and collective endeavour is both perceived and promoted from behind cultural lines. Anecdotes from players, management and spectators were aplenty. Interviews with the captain and coach highlighted several key elements to their success. Firstly, there was a realisation that size and talent was against them. This required a tactical and technical gameplan centred around speed and pressure. Secondly, there was an acknowledgement that it was highly unlikely that such a game would ever be played again. If not because of the proximity of the two schools, then certainly the difference in the rugby legacies. Indeed, mana was at stake. Lastly, there was a recognition that while there were clear similarities between the two schools (i.e., both teams were Māori and had hostel environments), Hato Pāora was uniquely different from the perspective that its introduction as a boarding school came during a time of cultural revitalization and thus, the role of culture within its sporting background was measured accordingly.

Robson and Reid (2001) locate the understanding of culture to be in a society of behaviours, thoughts and feelings that broadly reflected one's own. Cultures within each iwi were firmly embedded with their own set of protocols, systems for living and historical traditions, which coalesced at a hapū and whānau level to help inform an individuals' worldview (Doherty, 2012). Early encounters between Māori and Pākehā were largely positive with trading, whaling, and sharing of knowledge being mutually beneficial. By the late 1850's however, this changed as settlers began to impose their standards of living, regulations for behaviours and claims to land. Māori saw this as puzzling since many of the settlers left Britain because of growing contempt for the very social rules and norms they wished to introduce in Aotearoa (Tawhai, 2020). The changes would also impact the set of norms, standards, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours already in place. The existing culture of each community, hapū and iwi began to morph into an unfamiliar and unproven set of ideals.

Following the first and second world wars, and the great depression of the 1930s, Māori were forced away from their pā into the larger urban areas. This increasing urbanisation further eroded Māori forms of culture and disconnected many Māori from their cultural underpinnings (Mead, 2016). By the 1970s, the impacts of colonisation on Māori culture were abundantly clear. Policies focused on 'biculturalism' were subsequently introduced with the intentions of equality and partnership between Māori and Pākehā. Among many things, this provided Māori the legal platform to recognise the right of self-determination as a people (Awatere, 1984). The term 'bicultural' would become commonplace for the next two to three decades within the health (Durie, 1994), and social service (Williams, 2000) sectors.

For Māori, the cultural renaissance and revitalisation periods of traditional beliefs during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s has been central to this. There were several significant catalysts to this cultural revitalisation such as the 1975 Dame Whina Cooper-inspired Hikoi, the 1981 Springboks Tour protests, the 1982 Kōhanga Reo movement, the 1985 Waitangi Tribunal amendments, and the 1989 Māori broadcasting initiatives. And while tikanga have evolved over time what remains steadfast and unwaveringly clear throughout this period of change as has been the expectation by Māori that all who call Aotearoa their home will do well to deeply understand Māori ways of thinking, feeling, behaving, and living.

Sport is embedded within a broader social and cultural context. The impact of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and cultural factors on athlete performance, participation rates, and the experiences of athletes from diverse backgrounds is a critical consideration. The experiences of Māori in high-performance sport have therefore been multifaceted, shaped by various factors such as cultural identity, historical context, socio-economic disparities, and systemic challenges. While it is important to note that experiences can vary greatly among individuals, some common themes continue to emerge from the Māori experiences of high-performance sport. Māori athletes continue to have a strong sense of cultural identity and pride, which they bring into their sporting endeavours (Mato, 2011; Erueti, 2015). They often draw upon their Māori heritage, language, and cultural practices as a source of inspiration, strength, and motivation. Māori athletes may view their sporting achievements to honour their whānau (family), iwi (tribe), and wider Māori community.

Overcoming racism and marginalisation continues to be a distinctive experience for Māori athletes in high-performance sport (Erueti, 2015). These challenges can include limited access to resources, underrepresentation in decision-making processes, and historical marginalization. As Shailer (2019) appropriately highlights, overcoming these obstacles requires resilience, determination, and the support of Māori communities and networks. Connected to these distinct challenges is the tendency for Māori athletes to navigate dual identities. That is, where Māori athletes are often required to balance between their sporting aspirations and their cultural responsibilities to their community (Erueti & Palmer, 2017). They

may experience pressure to uphold cultural obligations and participate in community events while pursuing their sporting goals. Te Rito (2006) refers to this as a type of social responsibility and servant leadership that is incumbent upon all Māori in influential roles (i.e., professional sportspeople). Finding ways to integrate their dual identities as Māori and athletes can be a significant aspect of their high-performance sport experience.

Organisational culture is an emerging analysis within the sportscape especially with the ongoing advances into professional sport. Factors such as identity have been shown to have a significant impact on performance right through to the Olympic level (Gould, Greenleaf, Guinan, & Chung, 2002; Greenleaf, Gould, & Dieffenbach, 2001). Predictably, sports team cultures like organisational cultures are also created by the establishment and development of principles, common faith, ethics, spirit, and rites and rituals espoused by the team and its members. The function of which largely revolves around instructing people, construction of team standards, recovery, and meeting psychological and social demands (Lussier & Kimball, 2013). But this is not its only function as there are many examples where national sports organisations in Aotearoa have utilised or included Māori artefacts and rituals in their sport and these have been mentioned in this thesis already.

In what was the greatest medal haul at a Commonwealth Games ever in 2022 for Aotearoa, TVNZ Seven Sharp interviewed renowned performance psychologist, Campbell Thompson to find out what was behind the success of this team. His answer, a deliberate focus on 'fun' and 'simplicity'. The higher you progress in your respective sport, the more difficult this is to achieve. Ironically, this assessment too was rather simplistic as there was no mention of the impact or contribution of Māori cultural values, artefacts, protocols, and rituals during these games. This was either a reflection of the lack of specific questions asked that seek to identify and understand the impact of Māori culture, or a lack of awareness. Footage of Professor Sir Derek Lardelli (Ngāti Pōrou, Rongowhakaata) during these games highlighted a moving if not critical component of the campaigns' success. One that has drawn from the previous team cultural advisor, Amster Reedy (Ngāti Pōrou) and centred upon the highest of cultural protocols – treading carefully on foreign territory and respecting the host nations. Māori cultural principles around respecting the people of the land as well as acknowledging the historical connection as visitors with the hosts is typically pursued as a fundamental anchor to team culture. Cultural artefacts were utilised followed by an affirmation of the Aotearoa Olympic teams' presence. The alignment of the team culture was further reinforced through specific protocols during the official welcoming process (woman at the front, men to the rear) suggesting that everyone involved was 'on the same page'.

With the introduction and utilisation of mātauranga, protocols and rituals come great responsibility especially within sport. Kaitiakitanga (custodianship) is required to ensure that taonga Māori that are introduced to different contexts, are protected and respected. The

reciprocal nature between Māori and taonga operate within a symbiotic and reciprocal way. Arguably the most common example discussed today is whenua, perhaps because of its tangible nature. But other more intangible taonga do exist, such as te reo. Students and staff from Te Wharekura o Mauao (Māori medium school) in Tauranga were horrified to learn that several competing teams at the National Secondary Schools Basketball tournament complained to officials about them speaking te reo Māori during their games. Statements such as “resistance” and “competitive advantage” were found throughout these complaints. An age-old debate in sport often resuscitated every four or so years when the All Blacks are becoming too dominant in rugby (after performing the haka). Fortunately, this would not deter the Wharekura o Mauao who would go on to dominate the tournament and become national champions – the first ever Wharekura to do so.

Not long after this incident, former Black Ferns’ rugby player Te Kura Ngata-Aerengamate’s suffered a mental health breakdown when management told her, among other things, she was “picked only to play the guitar.” These experiences of Māori being ‘othered’, stereotyped and marginalised within mainstream sports such as netball and rugby are not new. Despite this, sport continues to attract Māori in large numbers across all age groups, socio-economic levels and common everyday places and spaces, which leverages positive strengths-focused outcomes across physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. These incidences and many others not only highlight the role of culture within the context of sport, but also the importance of ensuring good kaitiakitanga of the taonga within these environments. To date, the only solution to neutralise such societal attitudes and beliefs is through ‘cultural awareness’ and ‘cultural competency’ training. A concept often referred to within the health and social service sectors, this allows people to understand cultures other than their own (DeSouza, 2008). For Māori however, it falls short of a growing population of athletes who require greater levels of culturally distinctive activities with whakapapa Māori such as waka ama, ki-ō-rahi, kapa haka and mau rākau. These are significant for realising core Māori aspirations; namely, to live as culturally Māori in Te Ao Māori.

The literature exploring cultural competency is expansive across the health and social sectors though limited within sport. In his study of Samoan male rugby players, Schaaf (2006) explained that coaches among other relevant people within sporting organisations must realise that a ‘one shoe does not fit all,’ especially regarding ethnicity. He extended on this further to say that if coaches are to optimise player performance, they will need to modify their teaching behaviours based on understandings of their players’ ethnicities. Similarly, Hippolite and Bruce (2014) made a strong case for more culturally competent approaches to recreational and high-performance sport in Aotearoa, and the need to embrace, rather than resist, Māori values, protocols, and practices into sport. Drawing upon interviews with Māori involved in the organization of sport in Aotearoa, they concluded that sport continued to echo “colonial ways

of thinking that frequently ignore or devalue Māori values” (p. 85). In this ground-breaking study, Hippolite and Bruce (2014) found that the position of Sport NZ along a Cultural Competency continuum (Cross, 1988) was at best, underwhelming:

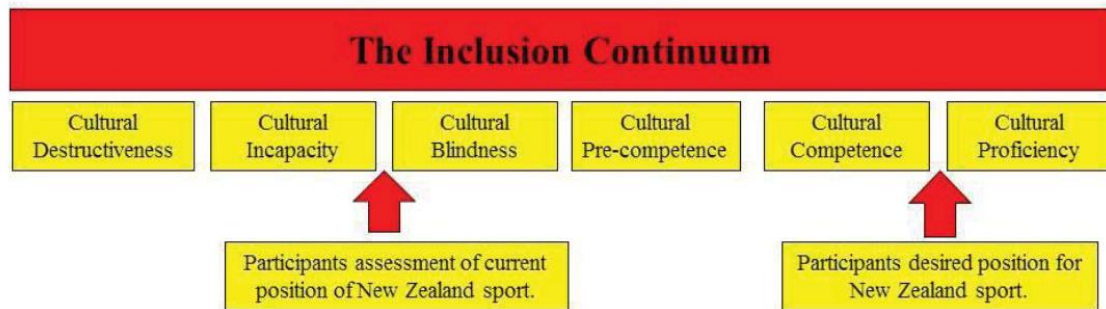


Figure 7. *The Culture Competence Continuum (Hippolite & Bruce, 2013, p. 89)*

The continuum ranges from cultural destructiveness at one extreme, to cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, and advanced cultural competence/proficiency at the other and more constructive end. Hippolite (2010) suggested that Sport NZ was positioned somewhere between cultural incapacity and cultural blindness; however, cultural competency/proficiency was the declared aspiration identified by their research participants. Since then, there are indications that progress is being made towards the right direction of the continuum, but there is still a long way to go for the nation and its various sporting bodies and teams to progress meaningfully towards cultural competency.

Domains of Sport: Winning

Literature to date suggests that there has been no 'proven' correlation between winning and the elements of team culture (McCarthy, 2019). This is because the concept of winning in sport has many faces and is a variable that is dependent upon many other outside factors such as team and player performance, opposition, environment, and match officials. Outcomes research experts such as Professor Scott Miller who specialises in what works in therapy, and the development of expertise, refer to this phenomenon as contribution versus attribution bias (Miller, 2012). To mitigate this, instead of determining the direct correlation between variables, it is likely more plausible to find a relationship between factors. In this context, the characteristics of a positive team culture and effective leadership, can be associated with the outcome of a game (winning), but not necessarily a direct causality. Johnson et al. (2013) claim that there are factors that have become perceived as being essential for winning and for the creation of a successful team and suggest that those factors are preserved by team members. An example of this is the All Blacks, who have maintained and sustained their winning culture using a language and an approach that expressed the values and beliefs of the players, therefore making the objectives of the team clear and the strategies to achieve those objectives obviously understood (Johnson et al, 2013).

For many the above remains mere semantics as Goldsmith (2007) claimed that it is still possible to develop a 'winning team culture'. In this research it was found that the primary goal of the team, the players and the management and coaching staff, was the creation of an environment for all involved that is centred upon a culture of excellence. To achieve this nowadays, the best teams usually focus primarily on producing a good performance, rather than on the goal of winning. Performance psychologists refer to this as process-oriented vs results-based thinking. Winning then becomes a by-product of getting the process correct. This has been a characteristic of many successful teams such as the All Blacks (Johnson, 2012). However, while a winning team culture may produce victory, it may not necessarily be a positive team culture as some elite teams may possess athletic stars in their own individual right and win through pure athletic talent. The most popular example of this was the Chicago Bulls NBA basketball team. In the widely acclaimed documentary *The Last Dance* (2020), Michael Jordan describes the often turbulent and unstable relationship he and fellow teammate, Scotty Pippen had with Dennis Rodman. The feeling appeared mutual as Rodman claimed he never spoke to either Jordan or Pippen in his three-year contract with the Bulls unless it was on the basketball court, and that he was there to do a job and win, not to talk to people.

A relentless pursuit of winning sometimes at all costs is not uncommon. The prevalence of doping in sport gives rise to yet another complex component of sport and indeed winning. The development of anti-doping policies, ethical dilemmas in sport, and the impact of doping

on performance and athlete health has been the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) which was officially established in 1999. In Australia, in 2002, a serious case of mass anxiety erupted when an Australian Football League (AFL) athlete suggested that 80% of elite players had some experience with recreational drugs (Stewart et al., 2011). The only comfort that the organising body and associated media could give the growing concerns among society was that the figure was likely to be closer to 30% (Horvath, 2006). By the early to mid-2000s these trends shifted with just 26 athletes (of a possible 3700 athletes) testing positive to banned substances at Athens Olympics, 2004 (only 0.7%). Torino in 2006, and Beijing in 2008, delivered even lower positive test rates. Athletes were either developing a strong sense of personal ethics or getting smarter at hiding their use. Turned out it was the latter with Pitsch and Enrich (2012) finding that drug use was occurring outside of testing timeframes (pre-season and training), and the utilisation of 'masking agents' (other legal drugs, compounds, and techniques to camouflage the present banned substances). This further complicates both the cultural and wellbeing aspects of sport, especially in Aotearoa.

In the 1990s, sociologists James Baron and Michael Hannan analysed the founding cultures of nearly two hundred technology start-ups in Silicon Valley. They found that most followed one of three basic models: the star model, the professional model, and the commitment model. The star model focused on finding and hiring the brightest people. The professional model focused on building the group around specific skill sets. The commitment model on the other hand, focused on developing a group with shared values and strong emotional bonds. Of these, the commitment model consistently led to the highest rates of success. During the tech-bubble burst of 2000, the start-ups that used the commitment model survived at a vastly higher rate than the other two models. The need to be able to conceptualise this within a broader framework was highlighted well through the High-Performance Environment (HPE) model (Jones et al. 2009). Born out of the organisational performance literature, a core feature of the HPE model is the view that individuals have their own organisational culture. This is best represented by the extent to which organisations balance their focus on achievement (i.e., an emphasis on productivity), well-being (i.e., an emphasis on people and group development), innovation (i.e., an emphasis on creativity), and internal processes (i.e., an emphasis on internal control systems). Schein (1999) believed that organisational culture consisted of three important though distinct components:

1. Cultural artifacts – stories, customs and traditions told in the environment. This could also include physical cultural manifestations such as clothing, buildings, and organization charts. The artifacts are easy to observe but hard to decipher and a deeper familiarity with the culture is needed to determine what they disclose about the culture.
2. Espoused values – the social principles, norms, goals, and standards that the organization shows to the world. They exist in the minds of the members and serve as

visible motivations for actions, although these espoused values (i.e., what the members say they do) do not always correspond to the enacted values (i.e., what they do).

3. Core assumptions – the ultimate and underlying source of truth and action. Assumptions consist of beliefs that are no longer questioned but are taken as gospel.

In returning to the introductory example of Hato Pāora, cultural artefacts were (and still are) peppered throughout the college symbolising among many things, a longstanding culture. As is often the case, such cultural artefacts also reflect the values and principles within. The alter in the school's chapel for instance (carved by Master Carver Moni Taumaunu) is based on three principal concepts: The pare (the door lintel) is associated with the removal of tapu; The paepae (from a pātaka in the Auckland Museum) highlighted the principle of hospitality through feeding of people; and the mere represented a form of strength and perseverance to battle against all evil in life.



Figure 8. Alter at Hato Pāora College (credit: Te Rāwhitiroa Bosch)

The third component of Schein's (1999) work (core assumptions and truths) might best be viewed through the words of Te Aute past pupil and Hato Pāora parent/grandparent, the late Waho Tibble during his address to the then Minister for Māori Affairs, the Honourable D. Macintyre, while visiting the school in 1972:

*"Why do I want my sons to attend Hato Pāora? The education I want for them is here at Hato Pāora. First, they are taught by dedicated men. Men dedicated to reliving the life of Christ, setting the example, not by words and without financial reward, of sacrifice and humility, of faith, hope, and charity. Secondly, they are given the opportunity of learning and acquiring these virtues. Thirdly, they are taught Māori principles in the modern context, that there is a place today for things Māori, that **the Māori way of life has relevance**, that self-respect for others were, and still are... **truths**" (Tibble in Curtain 1972, p.16).*

Literature Summary

In traversing the broad range of interdisciplinary literature (mātauranga, hauora and sports), three primary conclusions can be drawn from this material. The first is that the experiences of tāne in pre-colonial times, in many ways mirrored the experiences and expectations of the atua Tāne – at least in a metaphorical sense. That, despite the initial discomfort, there was a sense of purpose, vision, and mission in achieving te ao mārama. There was also a requirement for being ‘fit for purpose’ (i.e., a certain musculature to successfully undertake specific roles). Often by being physically active and mobile, travelling to hunting and fishing grounds where camps and butchery sites would be built. But they were also dynamic in their roles and responsibilities often shifting between these physically demanding roles and the daily parental and/or intellectual pursuits. These challenges continued well into the 19th and 20th centuries with early colonial representations of tāne being portrayed as lacking the qualities that were in accordance with the civilised Pākehā male. Tāne talked a lot, were more charismatic, and did work which according to Western thinking, was reserved for woman. The irony is that many of these qualities are today desirable and considered to be signs of an evolutionary masculinity often referred to today as the ‘sensitive new age guy’.

Secondly, like the atua Whiro who actively sought to provide barriers and obstacles to potential solutions, there were many socio-political variables also acting similarly towards the endeavours of tāne – whether that was within general society or specifically, sport. The Crown during the 19th and 20th centuries were disinterested in advancing the aspirations of Māori, especially in health – and particularly for tāne. To the extent that multiple processes, at various times (colonisation and assimilation) were introduced to deliberately impede any development. For tāne, these included strategies to direct their employment aspirations towards physically oriented vocations and endeavours. Activities which were typically arduous, repetitive, low-skilled, low paid, and oftentimes highly dangerous. This, combined with a general discourse of tāne being primarily viewed as being suited to labour-intensive tasks led to intergenerational perceptions of tāne (by themselves and society) as being somehow limited in capacity and intellectual capability. Land confiscation would also have a compounding impact on the way in which tāne especially would continue to perform these tasks. So much so that for most of the 20th century, tāne had very few opportunities to showcase their capabilities beyond their physical attributes.

Finally, the only equitable opportunities experienced by tāne over the past two centuries can best be characterised by their participation on three specific ‘battlefields’. The first was war, which has been well covered here. The second was entertainment with the likes of Billy T James, The Hi Marks, and Prince Tui Teka showcasing the performance capabilities of tāne. Linked to this is the emergence of Māori business/enterprise. The fact that it was not

considered one of those spaces is not a coincidence and speaks again to the systematic undermining of Māori progress and advancement. Again, there was certainly evidence of such entrepreneurship and opportunities among Māori communities both pre and post Te Tiriti o Waitangi signing (Petrie, 2006).

But the last battlefield in Aotearoa was and continues to be sport, specifically rugby. Another irony given that rugby like many other sports was introduced initially as a colonial tool to assimilate Indigenous peoples. But unlike most other elite sports, rugby is unique from the position that there would be very few elite sports teams where there is a position for all body types and sizes, perhaps reflecting its inclusivity. Some marvel at the statures of rugby halfback Aaron Smith (Ngāti Kahungunu) whose 1.70m height and 83kg weight pales in comparison to front rower, Tyrell Lomax (Muaūpoko and Tūhoe) at 1.98m and 128kg. Yet they play in the same game, and on the same team. And while I am sure that in another time/place, Smith may have made an excellent soccer player, arguably the same can't be said for Lomax. Conversely, Lomax might make an impressive defensive lineman in the NFL, but Smith might struggle fulfilling the same role. The point being, given the physical diversity, it appears that cultural and ethnic diversity and inclusivity is equally apparent here, and therefore a key rationale for this research focus.

Māori historian, Malcolm Mulholland (Ngāti Kahungunu) in his book *Beneath the Māori Moon* (2009) retraces the origins of rugby in Aotearoa to two predominant stories. The first which is widely accepted by Pākehā historians as the 'birthplace' being Nelson back in May 1870. Though Māori, particularly those from Taranaki challenge this as there are accounts of the Armed Constabulary playing rugby among themselves during the Taranaki invasion of the 1860s. It is said that during this time, local Māori observed the game being played and joined in impromptu matches with the soldiers (Mulholland, 2009). It remains to this very day as one of the few areas in which tāne could gain recognition and societal acceptance. It is upon this socio-cultural foundation of history and knowledge that the focus of this research now shifts towards the role of tāne in rugby and the role rugby has played in tāne ora.

Methodological Framework

Having identified my statement of positionality in accordance with the Takarangi Research Map (WERO, 2023), the next stage to consider is the methodological framework within which key research constructs such as design, methods, engagement, and ethical dilemmas exist. The methodological framework highlighted here, outlines the approach I have taken to this research, reasons why I have chosen this approach, and the necessary mitigations I have considered as part of the potential risks identified. Given that approaches to research are built upon the assumptions held by researchers about the nature of reality (ontologies), value systems (axiologies), and bodies of knowledge (epistemes), careful consideration has been given to the choice of the framework here.

First however, it is important to understand the historical context upon which contests between Indigenous peoples and Western science continues to be fought. Characteristics between Indigenous peoples around the world may differ, but one similarity that continues to emerge consistently is the experience of racism within Western research. The source of this can be traced back centuries. From the Doctrine of Discovery, a philosophy fundamentally founded on ideas of Indigenous inferiority, through to the Western tertiary institutions which by their adversarial nature, perpetuated competition. Students were expected to find faults, weaknesses and/or missing links in written work done by others. These students then became 'academics' who then questioned, argued, challenged, and critiqued others with the underlying assumption that if they could find fault with others, then their own work would triumph. This eventually led to the notion that Western science was stronger than Indigenous knowledge which then permeated Western thinking and is the fundamental premise of the academy today.

Instead, research ought to be a shared space between both the researcher and participants (England, 1994), and if done well can be a process for exploring identities, philosophies, and positions. Identities emerge within research through biases which then shape the research process and outcomes. Positionalities occur when it is acknowledged that people within the research context have multiple overlapping identities and thus, make meaning from various aspects of their identity (Kezar, 2002). Western research paradigms as a result, were harmful towards Indigenous peoples with interpretations of Indigeneity being informed by their own identities (and biases) often leading to misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples and producing at best, negative findings.

For Indigenous scholars, the impact of implied dominance became both alienating and degrading. Rather than their Indigenous knowledge being celebrated as complementary, it was (and continues to be) marginalised to the edges of the academic spaces rendering such scholars to a career path of constant justification and struggle to be accepted. This resulted in a group of Indigenous academics compelled to hold space as an extra responsibility to their job descriptions. A privileged reality that many Western academics do not have to contend

with, nor appreciate. For the Māori academy, several of these ‘space holders’ emerge consistently across the research literature. They are Professors Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Awa) and Graham Hingangaroa Smith (Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Kahungunu); Professor Margaret Mutu (Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Whātua); and Dr Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Porou).

The need for more diverse research positions also emerged within Aotearoa when Māori educationalists began to realise the impact of Western research and questioned the ability of this paradigm. Key to this question was whether the existing research paradigms could provide positive solutions for Māori within a cultural context (Smith, 2003; Smith, 2013; Te Awekōtuku, 1991). The answer was an emphatic *no* and with the growing concern of Māori being the subject of research (and therefore the ensuing biases), Māori responded with a research positionality of their own. One that was kaupapa-Māori centred and where the “life of Māori” was given meaning and purposely constructed within Te Ao Māori (Walker, 1996).

Led by several key Māori academics, a Kaupapa Māori Research methodology underpinned by Māori views that captured the lived experience of Māori, emerged (Smith, 1999). Founded upon tikanga, Kaupapa Māori Research then progressed as a vehicle for Māori researchers to gain tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) while maintaining control and autonomy over knowledge considered relevant and legitimate to Māori (Ratima, 2001; Smith, 2013). A second principle of Kaupapa Māori Research is that it is critical in its research stance (G. Smith et al., 2012). It must speak to the “everyday pressing issues” (G. Smith et al., 2012, p. 14) which Māori face. It must win the hearts and minds of people, and challenge and critique the deficit view which society holds, and research reinforces, regarding Māori. Since then, Kaupapa Māori Research methodologies have extended well beyond education and into other arenas.

The Māori health sector for instance was one to experience a significant shift in Māori research led largely by the work of Durie (2004) and what he termed ‘the science-mātauranga interface’. The challenge in his view was to “afford each belief system its own integrity while developing approaches that can incorporate aspects of both and lead to innovation, greater relevance, and additional opportunities for the creation of new knowledge” (p.1142-1143). An inspired philosophy, and one that was perhaps important for the context of the time. Once a place of conflict, the interface provided existing research paradigms the potential to develop and expand knowledge and understanding (Cheung, 2008; Durie, 2004; Hudson et al., 2012; S. Macfarlane et al., 2015; Mercier & Jackson, 2019; Ratima & Wikaire, 2021). Cheung (2008) and Hikuroa (2017) made significant contributions to highlighting the distinctions between the two. For Cheung (2008), she holds the conversation within the specific discipline of cosmology and the origins of the universe. In here she contrasts Māori cosmology, Te Kore, Te Pō, and Te Ao Mārama, and the origin of species as being different from the ‘big bang theory’ that

created matter into existence, and the origin of species, to evolution. For Hikuroa (2017) he describes both a context-dependant and culturally derived set of distinctions between the two paradigms:

Table 2. *Difference between Mātauranga and Western Science (Hikuroa, D. 2017)*

Mātauranga Māori	Western Science
Participatory ‘experiencers’ of systems	Detached ‘observers’ of systems
Explicit intrinsic values	Implicit instrumental values
Knowledge as belonging	Knowledge for control
Intuition as method	Intuition rarely acknowledged
Inclusion of facts and values	Facts and values separated
Everything is interconnected	Everything physical is interconnected

The tendency to separate out these paradigms was then necessary to better understanding how to apply this in research. Western science and mātauranga each have “distinctive philosophies, methodologies, and criteria” and consequently “Indigenous knowledge cannot be verified by scientific criteria, nor can science be adequately assessed according to the tenets of Indigenous knowledge” (Durie, 2006, p. 1138). As such, the Western science-mātauranga interface can be a space for shared understanding and “learning, not assimilation,” which allows for a dialogue between the two paradigms (A. Macfarlane & S. Macfarlane, 2018, p. 71).

Durie (2006) argued that it was necessary for an “interdependent and innovative theoretical space where the two streams of knowledge can blend and interact, and in doing so, facilitate greater socio-cultural understanding and better outcomes for Indigenous individuals or groups” (p. 52). Since then, several further approaches have achieved this, such as the Negotiated Spaces model proposed by Hudson et al (2012) and Te Hiringa Hauora Research Framework (Ratima & Wikaire, 2021). These approaches among many things, bring together multiple knowledge systems, to be more effective as a collective knowledge stream than what either one could be independently.

One specific approach exploring the Western science-mātauranga interface has been He Awa Whiria – Braided Rivers approach originally proposed by Angus Macfarlane and colleagues (S. Macfarlane et al., 2015). He Awa Whiria provides a useful metaphor of a converging of a ‘knowledge waka’ being propelled by the braided rivers. Like two paradigms meeting at the interface. By applying this approach in research, He Awa Whiria creates potential for new knowledge to be used to progress understandings in both worlds. The approach has since been applied across many contexts (Dawson, 2022; Arahanga-Doyle,

2021, Martel et al., 2022; O'Toole & Martin, 2019), and used in several New Zealand government departments and research projects, such as evaluating the efficacy of Family Start, a government-run home-visiting programme for Māori whānau (Cram et al., 2018).

The diversification of research paradigms by and with Māori continues to be explored. The appropriate exploration of a Mana Wāhine Research methodology has been one of these frontiers (Mikaere-Hall, 2017). At its core is the need to capture the spatial and relational complexities that wāhine Māori encounter as part of their lived realities (Pihama, 1991; Te Awekōtuku, 1991). In thinking about Kaupapa Māori Research, Mana Wāhine Research methodologies, and He Awa Whiria, what then might this mean for the potential of a mana tāne research methodology? L. T. Smith (2013) has outlined seven cultural values which are key to research with Māori regardless of personal orientation and/or circumstances. As a means for conceptualising a Mana Tāne Research methodology, this framework is further explored and adapted here:

VALUES (L.T. SMITH, 2013).	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL MANA TĀNE RESEARCH ADAPTATION
AROHA KI TE TANGATA	Enable respect and empowerment for people within the research.	Aroha: Empathy for the journeys of tāne
HE KANOHI KITEA	Illustrate your commitment by showing up and being a face that is seen and known to those who are participating in research.	Integrity: Meaningful engagement processes
TITIRO, WHAKARONGO, KŌRERO	Look, listen and then, later, speak. Researchers need to take time to understand people's day to day realities, priorities, and aspirations.	Āta: Intentional and purposeful when undertaking research with tāne.
MANAAKI KI TE TANGATA	Being open to sharing, hosting and being generous with time, expertise, and relationships.	Mai and atu: Shared tāne experiences
KIA TŪPATO	Being cautious through ensuring culturally safe practices.	Tapu: Maintaining the brotherhood.
KAUA E TAKAHI TE MANA O TE TANGATA	Do not trample on the mana (dignity) of people.	Mana: Acknowledging tāne identities, roles, and responsibilities.
KIA MĀHAKI	Researchers should find ways of sharing their knowledge while remaining humble.	Pūrākau: the role of personal narratives

Aroha: Empathy in research

According to Barlow (1991), aroha is defined as a person who expresses genuine concern towards another and acts with their welfare in mind, no matter what their state of health or wealth. In the context of research with tāne then, the application of aroha works to protect against exploitation of researchers, participants, and communities. This is also about the demonstration and expression of vulnerability which in a socially constructed world of hypermasculinity, could be crucial to deriving greater knowledge from research with tāne.

He Kanohi I kitea: Meaningful engagement process

He kanohi i kitea literally translates to 'a face seen' (Mead 2003), and in the context of research with tāne, speaks to the role of trust and integrity in relationships. This might simply mean the researcher being of the same identifiers as the participants themselves or could also mean being prepared to show one's face when there is mahi to be done. Often Māori will more likely trust someone who is seen at various Māori kaupapa, or at activities/initiatives of value to Māori. In some cases, coming from the same places and spaces as the tāne themselves serves to facilitate greater engagement processes. Likewise, it is also about accountability and being able to 'front up' to tāne within their communities where the research is being conducted, to be challenged and interrogated where necessary.

Āta: Intentional and purposeful research

Being intentional and purposeful about research with tāne recognises that sometimes this requires researchers in the first instance, to simply observe and listen. And that, when trying to manage, organise, analyse, and interpret the data pertaining to tāne, not to lose sight of the fact that the multiple sources of data received, come from tāne. This speaks to the Māori concept of Āta which is about cautious considerations. Being able to observe, listen and 'be present' to the seen and unseen elements of knowledge that often unfold/reveal themselves in multi-layered and subtle ways. As such, each korero is imbued with the tapu (sacredness) of that tāne within their environment and must be respected when deriving meaning.

Mai and atu: Shared tāne experiences

Shared tāne experiences in research with tāne speaks to the important concepts of mai (take) and atu (give). Like the paepae kawa of tauutuutu (a process which allows for the reciprocity of relationships through shared dialogue) on the marae, it is the ability of the researcher to be able to firstly, understand, then respond with empathy and respect. This can often only be achieved through the sharing of common tāne experiences. Being open to sharing therefore is critical to research with tāne.

Tapu: Maintaining the tuakana/teina brotherhood

Tapu is central to the belief system of Māori, with interactions between people, communities and the environment to a large extent being governed by the laws of tapu (Walker 1990). Interactions between tāne are therefore an important consideration and speaks to the notion of the 'tuakana/teina brotherhood' as a culturally relevant space, and not to be confused with the Western concept of brotherhood which often promotes individualism. In many cases, this may on the surface appear as a rather uncomplicated space, but one that is crucial for tāne participation. This is not to promote a notion of exclusivity, as tāne operate best within the context of whānau, hapū and iwi but to recognise that creating specific spaces purely for tāne might yield a different language and therefore, different responses and research outcomes.

Mana: Identities, roles and responsibilities

Mana is defined as power, authority, or prestige (Barlow 1991), and has several dimensions, including that which descends from the gods, ancestors, and the land. Research with tāne also means firstly recognising the roles and responsibilities that tāne have within society. For some, this might simply be their roles as providers and/or protectors. For others, an acknowledgement of the unique knowledge they possess as tāne, and the courage shown to share this knowledge within the context of research. Research with tāne is also about the importance of identities. How they identify themselves generally and in the context of the research, their whānau, hapū and iwi will have bearing on the research outcomes and findings.

Pūrākau: Role of personal narratives

Lee (2009) explored the versatility of pūrākau and its construction and application within the context of the research environment. The ability of pūrākau to provide a platform for Māori to convey their personal experiences lends itself well to the endeavours of research with tāne. Like the notion of mai and atu when working with tāne, pūrākau creates a space not otherwise common for tāne to participate in research. Challenging pre-existing narratives around tāne is also relevant. Such narratives as the 'warrior gene' and 'Māori masculinity' (Hokowhitu, 2004) which significantly narrowed tāne roles and responsibilities through colonisation, is an important consideration here.

Methods

While beyond the scope of this research, the beginnings of a Mana Tāne Research methodology allow us now to consider how this might be applied here. One that recognises the alignments with Kaupapa Māori Research and He Awa Whiria framework, and that also acknowledges that for tāne especially, there are hidden discourses that require a carefully constructed research approach. It is not intended to be binary (i.e., one that is contradicting

from other methods), but one that is parallel or complementary. Much like He Awa Whiria (Macfarlane, 2015) and other research methodologies of the same ilk (Durie, 2005; Hudson et al., 2012; Ratima & Wikaire, 2021), the need to ensure an interface when working with tāne is crucial.

Undertaking a Mana Tāne Research methodology in this thesis, allows for the acknowledgement of the *space between* two phenomena. In this case, I am referring to sports performance and tāne ora. A Mana Tāne research methodology acts as an interpretive interface between the two phenomena of sports performance and tāne ora. Earlier I referred to a carving metaphor as a way of understanding the approach to this research. My positionality as a tāne means that while I might be the carver, and the pūrākau is the chisel, and the tāne are the wood, the relationship between tāne ora and sport performance is really the phenomena that is being revealed. This is critical as in doing so, will reveal the desired final carving/product or research outcome. Failure to do so may render a completely different result. The Mana Tāne Research methodology then, is just as important as the product itself and therefore will be one of the major contributions within this thesis.

Guided by a Mana Tāne Research methodology then, this thesis explores some observable phenomena among tāne within Māori sports performance settings. In this context, I refer to a phenomenon as “a thing which appears, or which is perceived or observed” (Phenomenon, 2023). This could include an object, process, behaviour, factor, idea, concept, theory, or a framework that I am interested in learning more about. Phenomenology serves as a useful approach that primarily employs unstructured methods for data collection. It proves valuable in interpreting personal knowledge and viewpoints, facilitating the exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, actions, and cognitive processes (Creswell, 1994). While it's acknowledged that complete objectivity and bias are unattainable for any researcher, this research centres on the endeavour to comprehend the significance of athletes' encounters throughout life, and within a specific sporting context.

To better understand a phenomenon, a Narrative Inquiry approach was adopted. The term narrative is defined by Andrews et al. (2013) as “all meaningful stories of personal experience that people produce” (p. 48). Narrative inquiry, therefore, is an approach that focuses on the power of storytelling as an approach to generating data for the purposes of research (Mueller, 2019). Central to Narrative Inquiry is the primary means by which human experiences are made meaningful; narratives are imbued throughout social and cultural processes that inform behaviour and experience (Polkinghorne, 1988).

There are three considerations to Narrative Inquiry – theoretical, practical, and interpretive (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). The theoretical consideration acknowledges that narratives are not only representations of experiences, but also the epistemology that attends to creating a new relational aspect between an individual, their life, communities, and the

broader environment (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The practical component is understanding that the telling and representation of stories is associated with the relational – a process of inquiry involving a transaction between people. But Narrative Inquiry emphasises the centrality of relationships to the study and understandings of experiences (Caine et al., 2013). Lastly, the interpretive aspect is about how we make sense of the stories. When creating intended impressions in narrative, some positions may appear habitual or fixed, but most are likely to be in constant flux (Bamburg, 2011).

Although located alongside social constructionist approaches, which privilege macrosocial conditions as primary in influencing life and knowledge, Narrative Inquiry holds as primary the individual lived experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, as cited in Clandinin, 2022). To study meaning and the activity of meaning then naturally necessitates a focus on language (Polkinghorne, 1988). In other words, this research focuses on listening to the stories of these tāne to better understand how their upbringings may have facilitated sports performance and in turn, tāne ora. For Māori research, engaging in the retelling of pūrākau serves to both reclaim knowledge systems and to underscore Indigenous research practice. Lee-Morgan (2019) extends that pūrākau are Indigenous stories that explore 'from the inside-out'. This aligns well with the carving metaphor which would suggest that the carving already exists within the wood (inside) and our job is to reveal this (out). In the same way that narrative is viewed as both the phenomena under study and the methodology for its study (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007), pūrākau refer both to the narratives and the research methodology.

Given the natural synergies between pūrākau and Narrative Inquiry, the earlier mentioned ethical principles for Kaupapa Māori Research (Smith, 1999) were also applied, and the outcomes for Māori were at the forefront of what drives this thesis. This included narratives and other various forms of storytelling (in its many forms include karanga, waiata, haka, whakataukī, kōrero, art and design, documentaries, social media, media releases, silence, gaps, body language, physical movements, etc). For Bishop (1995) Narrative Inquiry is favourable for Māori because it promotes connectedness and aptly aligns with established Māori traditions of narrative to protect and impart knowledge. Māori knowledges and epistemology in narrative form connects people to locations, the environment, and space in both temporal and metaphysical terms (T. Smith, 2008).

This combined approach therefore provided an inside perspective and holistic understanding to the experiences of these tāne. This methodology provided a description and measurement of observable phenomena which in turn helped to inform key themes and findings. This thesis focused on periods of time (episodes) ranging from childhood through to playing elite level rugby. By taking this narrative approach, it allowed the stories to remain intact while identifying emerging themes and factors from which to develop socially constructed phenomena grounded in data. Fortunately, the merging of these approaches is not new and

there are several other research approaches that have successfully integrated across disciplines – especially health (e.g., Bishop, 1996; Lee, 2009; Ruwhiu, 2008; Ware et al., 2018; Wirihana, 2012; & Brittain, 2022). However, few have managed to merge these two paradigms within the sports research context outside of Palmer (2000), Erueti (2015), Hapeta (2019), and Borrell (2022).

Tāne were identified from one high-performance setting. I attended specific events and activities (e.g., training sessions) related to this setting. This research was then promoted to potential participants through face-to-face discussion. I then identified and established relationships with relevant stakeholders in this site. Lastly, snowballing or promoting the research through already recruited participants was utilised. Tāne then indicated their interest in participating directly with me either face-to-face, via phone, text, or email. I responded using the same form of communication, explaining the rangahau and requirements for participants, seeking contact details, and providing the information sheet. I then organised and held interviews at a venue and time chosen by the participant. Interviews followed the Hui Process (Pitama et al, 2018), which are both a set of practices grounded in tikanga, as well as formal guidelines for engagement that include mihimihi, karakia, kōrero, kai, and koha. See below for the final list of Kaipara and their details:

Kaipara (participants)

	Tau	Whakapapa	Kāinga	Taumata	Tauhou/ Tautōhito
Kaipara 1: ‘Puihi’	July 1997	Ngā Puihi	Āhuriri,	Magpies Hurricanes Māori All Blacks All Blacks XV	Tautōhito
Kaipara 2: ‘Porourangi’	Dec 1986	Ngāti Porou	Kāpiti	Lions Hurricanes Māori All Blacks All Blacks	Tautōhito
Kaipara 3: ‘Tū’	Mar 1996	Muaūpoko Tūhoe	Wainuiōmata Canberra Townsville Melbourne	Mako Rebels Highlanders Hurricanes Māori All Blacks All Blacks	Tautōhito
Kaipara 4: ‘Tāpuika’	Dec 1990	Ngāti Porou Tāpuika	Papaioea	Turbos Lions Hurricanes Māori All Blacks All Blacks	Tautōhito
Kaipara 5: ‘Te Rangi’	May 1999	Ngāi te Rangi Ngā Puihi	Whātaimai	Lions Hurricanes Māori All Blacks All Blacks XV	Tautōhito
Kaipara 6: ‘Rā’	Feb 1993	Te Rārawa	Ōtautahi	Canterbury Hurricanes Māori All Blacks	Tautōhito
Kaipara 7: ‘Āti’	Apr 2001	Te Ātiawa	Papaioea	Lions Hurricanes Māori All Blacks All Blacks XV	Tauhou
Kaipara 8: ‘Piki’	Sept 1996	Ngāti Pikiāo	Petone	Turbos Hurricanes	Tauhou

In total, eight tāne were selected to participate. All of them had played (or are still playing) Super Rugby, and National Provincial Championship (NPC). Seven had represented the Māori All Blacks, three were current All Blacks and one was a former All Black. Interviews with tāne comprised of 1.5 hour long individual interviews. Their iwi and hapū affiliations included Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Porou, Te Ātiawa, Tāpuika, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Pīkiao, Kūki Airani, and Tonga. All identified as tāne with a mean age of 27 years and 7 months. Ages ranged from 21 years to 36 years which is considered a broad a range of ages within the high-performance rugby environment.

Given the commercially sensitive nature of this sports performance site and tāne, there was potential for conflicts of interest to arise. I played a facilitative role at times to ensure that the conflict of interest between my professional role and a researcher was minimised. I also sought clinical and other relevant supervision for advice and knowledge so that the stakeholders and entities involved could feel assured. The relevant management and governance were kept informed along the way and were invited to attend hui and be a part of the research. This is where integrity in relationships, trust and respect are important to foster. More on this is shared under the section on ethical considerations below.

A crucial concept worth also mentioning here is tino rangatiratanga which is the principle of self-determination (Smith, G.H., 2017). Unlike standard research methods where anonymity is offered to all participants, and pseudonyms provided (often manu, rākau and/or atua names), these athletes were given the option of identifying them as participants in this research. In doing so, they would be able to exercise their own autonomy over the research. All of the tāne agreed to do this upon two conditions: firstly, they were happy to make their personal details known in this research provided their iwi were also recognised as this would elevate the mana of their iwi; and secondly, that their primary employer (namely Hurricanes Super Rugby franchise) was comfortable with this, and that no information would compromise these relationships.

But in the end, I decided to anonymise the players, offering instead pseudonyms that subtly aligned with their iwi in an attempt to ensure their iwi were still appropriately recognised throughout. Their participation was reasonably well known by many and the possibility of identification by a reader remains. As part of this initial engagement, an information sheet was provided to forewarn the athletes of the nature of the interviews and allow them to prepare any necessary thinking, content and/or material required. All agreed to participate unreservedly though interestingly, several of the tāne asked for more specific clarity around the focus and objective of the research. Their rationale was that they wanted to ensure that they put their 'best foot forward' and perform diligently throughout the interviews.

Care was taken in the preparation of the interview questions to ensure a naturalistic storytelling approach to interviews starting with a chronology of life events for athletes. These

events ranged from early childhood memories through to significant and enduring personal relationships. During this process, all of the tāne noted a positive and somewhat cathartic experience in (re)telling their personal stories. This surprised many of them as it allowed a space for reflecting on significant events and the interconnectedness of these with their high-performance.

The genuine humility, empathy and inquiry underpinning the interview allowed for a richer source of information gathering and sharing between the athlete and me. The experience for both was therefore deeply powerful and intimate. As kai was also not provided, a karakia was invoked to help lift the tapu and whakawātea both the athlete and I from such a narrative encounter. Despite this, all athletes left the interviews feeling a sense of mai and atu (give and take) in the relationship again as evidenced by the revelations and learnings throughout the interviews. This prompted significant thought about the domain of 'koha' which is cultural practice of offering gifts or contributions often observed on the marae, but also applied in research contexts (Bishop, 1998). An easy reconciliation for this practice in most research contexts is to provide a monetary-based gift. However, it was important in this instance to be more considered with this domain as these athletes have little interest in '\$50 petrol vouchers' and instead, tend to value relationships more. As such, specific and considered artworks related to Tāwhirimātea, were commissioned to express the links between the tāne and I, as well as the tāne and their place of performance.

Analysis

Data was generated through a story-telling interview style where participants were asked to tell their story. Questions such as 'if you had a chance to talk to your younger self, what would you say?' were asked. Once the phenomena were adequately discussed, stories about several episodes of particular interest were explored. Such episodes included 'managing stress' and 'recovery from injury'. In doing so, I was able to highlight points of divergence, and perhaps more importantly, points at which data converged. This knowledge was then analysed thematically, based on frameworks and models that reflected a Māori worldview, and some knowledge lent itself to being presented holistically, as a rich and informative narrative. It is important to note that sharing raw data as in the case with narrative analyses is often utilised as a way of ensuring transparency and fidelity. This was negotiated at the time of conducting the rangahau.

Ethical considerations: The Psychologist vs The Researcher

It is important to acknowledge the potential tensions surrounding my role as both a registered clinical psychologist and researcher, particularly within these specific case studies. The most relevant concern here is one of dual roles and the potential for conflict of interest. The simplest answer would be to say that there is no conflict, rather, there is only an interest.

However, to satisfy the academic requirements of this research, a more comprehensive response is necessary. Fortunately, there exists several platforms that act as a roadmap to assist in navigating such circumstances carefully and safely. This is especially necessary in small countries like Aotearoa where the process of whanaungatanga is so deep and thorough that these circumstances are oftentimes unavoidable.

The Code of Ethics for Psychologists working in Aotearoa (2002):

In Aotearoa the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003) provides a legislative framework that every registered health professional body is bound by. Among many things, this framework requires all professional bodies to have established a Code of Ethics. A Code of Ethics defines the standards, values, and principles that each professional body believes is important in shaping their work. A Code of Ethics describes what decision, and actions are 'right and wrong' and provides an approach to their work that focuses on honesty, integrity and the upholding of key rights and responsibilities.

Common values sit across all health professional bodies. These include concern for consumer wellbeing, maximising benefits and minimising harm, the importance of privacy, confidentiality, and consent, and of course avoiding conflicts of interest. Equally, psychologists internationally have also recognised a common set of principles, values, and interests. These were highlighted in the development of the 2008 Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists (Sinclair, 2012).

The present Code of Ethics for psychologists is undergoing a review by key stakeholders – the New Zealand Psychology Board, New Zealand Psychological Society, New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists, He Paiaka Tōtara Māori Psychology and Pasifikology. The present Code adopted the 1991 Canadian Code framework representing a significant and distinctive departure away from the codes of other countries and was seen at the time as aspirational. A preliminary draft was released for comment in 1998, and after thorough examination, was officially released in 2002. Recognising the status of Māori as tangata whenua and te reo Māori as an official language of Aotearoa / NZ, the Code of Ethics was eventually translated into te reo Māori in 2012 (Te Tikanga Matatika).

With specific reference to dual roles and conflict of interests, Principle 2.2.5. of the Code of Ethics for psychologists highlights that psychologists ought to “maintain an awareness of how their own experiences, attitudes, culture, beliefs, values, social context, individual differences and stresses, influence their interactions with others, and integrate this awareness into all aspects of their work.” Principle 3.4.1 of the Aotearoa Psychologists Code of Ethics also points out the importance of understanding dual roles and relationships. In essence, the principle asserts that where dual roles are unavoidable, psychologists identify any real or

potential conflicts of interest and take all reasonable steps to address the issue in the best interests of the parties.

The value of the reo Māori version shows its true worth here as principles such as *Integrity in Relationships* are further described in te reo Māori as being about being unbiased, kind and sharing chiefly knowledge. This highlights a significant enrichment in our understandings of concepts and perhaps most importantly, holds psychologists (and researchers), especially those of whakapapa to a higher degree of accountability than the English version.

Two other relevant bodies exist to ensure safe navigation through research and evaluation. The first existing body is Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants. It was endorsed by the Massey University Council in 2017 and is currently managed by the Massey University Human Ethics Committees at Albany, Palmerston North, and Wellington campuses. Like the Code of Ethics for Psychologists, the intention of the Code is to provide protection for all participants in research pertaining to Massey University and shares some similar universal principles such as respect for persons, privacy and justice. It too distinguishes itself from other codes internationally with the incorporation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Te Ara Tika Māori ethical framework. The latter is an ethical framework that specifically addresses research involving Māori communities and knowledge. It emphasises respectful engagement, reciprocity, and the safeguarding of Māori rights and interests in research contexts.

With specific reference to dual roles and conflict of interest, the ethical principle of Autonomy in this Code includes the avoidance of conflict of interest. It also extrapolates the power relationships involved in teaching and research. Again, the beauty of te reo Māori in the context of Codes, and in this specific case Te Tiriti o Waitangi, means that concepts such as mana extend well beyond the idea of power and in fact recognises that mana is something that cannot be ceded, thus holding the participants' position in research as paramount. This meant that all potential for conflicts of interest was carefully acknowledged throughout this thesis. Because this rangahau was funded by Health Research Council (HRC), the other relevant resource to consider is the Health and Disability Ethics Committee (HDEC) National Ethical Standards for Health and Disability Research and Quality Improvement. Like the Massey Code of Ethics, it too is premised on the Te Ara Tika principles and is equally intentioned. With specific reference to dual roles and conflicts of interest, the principles and mitigation strategies were therefore the same.

Mitigation Plan

Unlike the legislative framework for the mental health and addiction sector which is still largely based on a 'substituted decision-making' model – one that fundamentally fails to fully

recognise the rights of people – the two Codes above are premised on a ‘supported decision-making’ framework. This means that provided that all necessary steps have been taken to maintain the mana and dignity of participants, then participants have the right to provide informed consent to undertake this rangahau. In the case of the necessary steps in this thesis, the first was acquiring ethical approval by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) in 2020. Other mitigation steps included ensuring critical self-awareness (self-reflective practices as per the expectation for psychologists in Aotearoa); clarity on research methods as per the methodology section; acknowledgement of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi; and the importance of seeking clinical supervision where appropriate.

With specific reference to research methods, the narrative analysis method prioritises an episodic narrative interview which provides a targeted window into the aspects of the phenomenon being measured (Mueller, 2019). This helps to uncover the layered reality of ‘difficult to see’ phenomena by way of pūrākau. How this assists with potential conflicts of interests here is that the pūrākau helps to remove personal/professional bias I may have towards the end product. Mention of the relevant ethical standards and codes above (e.g., Aotearoa Code of Ethics, and Te Ara Tika) provides a useful roadmap from which to navigate carefully through this research. An although it is generally accepted that even then, it is almost impossible to remove all bias, a mitigation plan that integrates key steps and particular concepts to navigating such research tensions is critical. Such concepts may include collaboration, partnership, reflexivity and peer review processes. These all scaffold into ensuring an even higher degree of research practice and accountability, which in turn mitigates any professional and/or personal ‘baggage’ I carried into this thesis.

WĀHANGA TUARUA: Their Stories

Introduction

Wāhanga Tuarua (Part II) of this thesis explores the narratives of eight tāne in professional rugby. Their stories are significant journeys and provide invaluable insight into key factors underpinning tāne ora and high-performance. This is in keeping with the chosen research methodology, as well as good tikanga which suggests that proper introductions begin with 'ko wai koe?' Such stories include the first time touching a rugby ball via informal gametime, through to first games as professional sports athletes in NPC, Super Rugby, and international representative honours. Guided by the Narrative Inquiry approach, their stories resulted in coherent and cohesive accounts of cultural development and skill acquisition, which allowed for greater understanding of the nature of their journeys. These stories and the data generated from these, were used to inform insights into life experiences and the meaning of hauora and sports performance for these tāne. Likewise, the stories told allowed for the identification of pedagogical factors contributing to their success as a process of learning and a way of sharing knowledge.

Also in Wāhanga Tuarua, there is an intention to avoid interfering with each of the tāne interviews and allow the richness of their stories to unfold organically. This part of the thesis then makes sense of the eight stories on both an individual and collective level. There is mention of key demographic information to help give context and perspective to the reader about the socio-cultural backgrounds of each tāne. Depending on your perspective, these either facilitated or hindered their developments. Accordingly, each tāne is introduced in this research according to Kaupapa Māori research methodologies with a general overview of their whakapapa and life story. This reflects careful consideration of tikanga and the importance of listening. At times, there is additional content introduced to each section in the form of storytelling. The intention here is to amplify key points/messages of the tāne. Following this, the research will consider key themes and sub-themes that will allow bridging into Part III (Discussion) of this research.

Kaipara 1

Puhi is from the Tai Tokerau region of Aotearoa. As of the 2018 Census, the population of his iwi, Ngāpuhi was 165,201 people affiliated to the iwi, making it the largest iwi population group in Aotearoa. Other important information to know about Ngāpuhi is that culturally they are also one of the strongest iwi with 72.8% of people within the iwi feeling connected to their tūrangawaewae; 54.2% of people attending their marae (ancestral meeting house) in the past 12 months; and 19.2% of people report being able to read te reo Māori very well. Puhi was born in Henderson, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), which he described as being a “congested place”. Subsequently, he was 2 years old when his immediate whānau consisting of mum, dad, and his sister, moved to Taupō. The whānau were in Taupō for only two years before relocating again to what would be their final destination of Ahuriri (Napier), in the Hawkes Bay region. In what was an ecologically strong environment surrounded largely by fruit trees and vineyards, Puhi described his childhood as positive having access to a few natural resources utilised for both self-sustainability as well as leisurely activities:

I grew up in Meeanee to start with. Went to a little school there... Meeanee Primary School of like 100 kids. Grew up riding bikes down the road. We had these big gutters in the road, so we used to use those as like dirt ramps and stuff. Yeah, grew up playing on the road and had big apricot trees out back climbing trees all sorts. My parents used to do wood chopping, so we had like a lot of axes and wood and stuff like that lying around so I used to get like the tomahawk and just smack a bit of wood for ages and just all sorts of stuff like that. It was fun!

Both whānau and rugby were dominant cultural pieces in both Puhi’s household, as well as the community that Puhi grew up in. His maternal nan (grandmother) also relocated from Tāmaki to Ahuriri following the death of her husband (Puhi’s grandfather). Puhi described his nan as the matriarch of the whānau with all activities centring around her whare. And his father, who grew up in Kaikohe amongst his Ngāpuhi people, was heavily involved in Puhi’s rugby life.

At 10 years old, Puhi’s whānau relocated to nearby Pirimai, a predominantly urban area in Ahuriri made up largely of Māori and tangata moana demographic. He fondly recalls his primary school experience, describing loving and caring relationships with all his teachers. He felt that the teachers all liked him, and the feeling was mutual. Again, critical to this schooling experience was the heavy involvement of his whānau during his time there. This ensured his behaviours at school were well regulated. In particular, he spoke about his parents coordinating many of the school camps he attended – largely due to their vocational roles within the Department of Conservation. From early childhood Puhi was constantly active and playing

some kind of sport. He recalls being typically put into rugby grades higher than his own age. His parents were becoming increasingly aware of his physically maturing body that for the safety of kids his own age, and for the benefit of his own development they decided to register him in higher grades.

I actually played Napier Boys High School eighth grade when I was Year 7 because I was quite a big kid. I was too big to play club rugby, so I played at E grade. Guys like Morgan Poi and that were in my team. I was 11 years old (in a 16-year-old grade).

Playing rugby was not a conscious decision made by Puhi as he recalls starting rugby at the early age of four years old. Like most other kids in Hawkes Bay, this was just something that you did. But he does recall several 'critical moments' throughout his life that he attributes to shifting his rugby awareness from the subconscious to the consciousness. The first occurred when he was still at Intermediate School and realised that a key pathway to higher rugby honours in Hawkes Bay was the Ross Shield tournament. A nationally renowned 11–12-year-old rugby tournament credited with producing some of the game's greatest ever players such as Israel Dagg and Hika Elliot. Unfortunately, the challenge was the weight restriction required to play in the tournament:

My dad got me running around the blocks and stuff. Got down to 60kgs which was the weight you had to be and then that yeah, I got asked to play Ross Shield. I was about 56 [kilograms] and then I was like "Nah... I'm not losing anymore" [weight].

While Puhi denies having any personal issues with his weight and/or body image even to this day, the institutes around him did. Whether it was Ross Shield, local community club regulations or current high-performance authorities, there was ongoing concern about his size. Puhi describes having "always been a big kid" as he recounts being approximately 100kgs by year 9. In year 10, he then became gluten-free to try settle some digestive issues at the time. He quickly and drastically lost 20kgs before being supported by his father to regain this weight all in muscle via powerlifting. He attributes this time to the next critical moment of his career – the significant involvement of whānau throughout:

I guess the thing in my life is my whānau were pretty huge in it. Like my old man coached me in every team I made until I made NPC. He was my junior coach. He was my first XV coach, my under 15s coach, my Prems [Napier Pirates Premier Rugby] coach. And then when I made NPC, obviously he stopped coaching because I wasn't playing in his teams. But yeah, that's when I started taking rugby seriously because I

made the Hurricanes Under 17s tournament team. And that's when my old man was like... "Do you really want to do this?"

After making the relevant age grade teams at both a regional and national level, Puhi was eventually selected for the Hawkes Bay Magpies National Provincial Championship (NPC) Team. A consistent top four team in the country's elite rugby competition, the Magpies as they are affectionately known as, were a rugby powerhouse strong with Māori and tangata moana players, culture, and rugby flair. Puhi recalls this moment of his career as being another significant learning curve for him not only was he a part of one of the most physically dominant and intimidating teams in the competition, but he was only 19 years old playing in a position that most elite rugby players don't mature in until well into their late 20s.

'BAM' [Ben May, Hawkes Bay Magpie, Hurricane centurion and Māori All Black] got injured and I ended up starting all 10 of our games that year. I was getting demolished every scrum. I was playing 'tight head' at the time. And no one took it easy on me like all these dudes just smashing me. And yeah, I took a good learning out of that. I was 19 years old.

Puhi led a typical rugby pathway of regional and national age grade and academy representation. Not long after his first NPC season, Puhi was offered a long-term contract with the Hurricanes Super Rugby franchise. They saw in him what many others, including his whānau have known since he was a child. That not only was he big and strong, that he was humble, grounded, and clear about his identity as a person. After his first two seasons with the Hurricanes, he was selected for the Māori All Blacks a team he regards as his greatest honour and achievement.

For all tāne involved in this research, they were involved in developing a personal mantra. This is a personal statement, kaupapa, motivation to keep them focused in times of distress or disillusionment. These are extraordinarily personal revelations of their psychology. For Puhi, his personal mantra at the time of this research was "Do Your Doings," which he explained was connected to the importance of process over results/outcomes. By keeping focus on what was within his control, there was a sense faith and expectation that the rest would take care of itself.

Kaipara 2

'Porourangi' is a revered figure in rugby, known for his dynamic playing style and relentless work ethic. Hailing from te Tairāwhiti / East Coast, Porourangi made a significant impact as a hooker, showcasing his exceptional skills and versatility on the field. Renowned for his agility, speed, and athleticism, Porourangi brings a unique dimension to his position. Whether it's his lightning-fast support play, explosive runs, or accurate throwing in the lineout, Porourangi consistently demonstrates his exceptional abilities. His ability to cover ground quickly and his keen eye for gaps in the defence make him a constant threat to opposition teams, and one of the highest try-scoring forwards in All Blacks history. His impact is not limited to his individual contributions, as he also exhibits exceptional leadership qualities, captaining his team and inspiring those around him.

At the tender age of 36 years old, Porourangi is the eldest statesman of all his contemporaries within every team he currently occupies – the Lions, Hurricanes and All Blacks. Renowned for their strong cultural and political influences, Te Tairāwhiti is also home to several great Māori leaders and rugby players such as, Sir Apirana Ngata, George Nepia and the Rt Hon Parekura Horomia – the latter whom played over 100 games for Ngāti Porou / East Coast. So, to some, it was going to be no surprise that Porourangi would later be known for his unwavering commitment and leadership. Despite facing various injuries throughout his career, Porourangi has shown incredible determination to bounce back stronger each time. His dedication to physical conditioning and his drive to continually improve have allowed him to maintain a high level of performance. Furthermore, his tenacious defensive skills and fearless tackling make him a vital asset in disrupting the opposition's attacks. With his impressive skill set, leadership abilities, and unwavering passion for the game, Porourangi has firmly established himself as one of the most respected and influential rugby players of his time, leaving an enduring legacy in the sport.

Porourangi was born and raised on the Kāpiti Coast township of Paraparaumu in the North Island of Aotearoa. A coastal town largely characterised by two population groups – Pākehā middle aged and/or young nucleus families. His whānau consisting of mum, dad and younger sister have resided in the Kāpiti region ever since. Porourangi describes his childhood as "awesome" with his first memories of rugby occurring from an early age playing for the 'Beach Veges' rugby team. The team's name aptly coming from the local vegetable shop that one of the coaches owned. He described his parents as both supportive, without putting any pressure on him to play any specific sports. He was encouraged as a child to play all sports. And they would follow him wherever he went with it:

I tried everything... and there was never any pressure from my parents you know, just like I wanna play cricket, I think I even went to softball training once. It [upbringing] was nothing but love aye. They'd followed you wherever. That was cool.

Whānau engagement was also crucial to Porourangi during his upbringing. He describes “nothing but positive memories” from these experiences. These ranged from being “picked on” by family through to being supported in his early adult life when he made the decision to move for greater career aspirations. And while some might see these types of interactions as traumatic, Porourangi instead viewed all of these at worst as, great lessons and at best as, awesome:

My uncle [mum's brother] used to pick on me a bit growing up. I think I got a lot out of him growing up because he was quite skilful. Dad coached a lot of my age group stuff. He kind of stayed involved and like we'd have run ins all the time. That's why he became the backs coach. Yeah, the boys loved him. Just good support.

At 17 years old Porourangi encountered a critical moment in his life. After a serious discussion with his father, he moved to Wellington for his final year of college at renowned rugby production school, Wellington College. This was a deliberate and conscious move to gain greater exposure to the regional and national rugby selectors. While he has no regrets about the decision to move, in hindsight, Porourangi believed that his rugby trajectory might have remained the same had he stayed at Paraparaumu College. He feels that there might have been more credibility of having ‘cracked it’ from a relative ‘no name’ rugby school like Paraparaumu College than Wellington College.

I remember when my Paraparaumu College 1st XV coach goes to me "I reckon you could be an All Black". And my dad was the backs coach, and I was like "Really?" [laugh]. And yeah, he was one that said, "You should go to town" [referring to a Wellington-based college]. My dad was there, and he was like "What do you reckon? We'll support you whatever you want to do".

The change in environments and circumstances was not without its stressors. Going from the settled seaside village on the Kapiti Coast to the hustle and bustle of the country's capital city would have been a struggle for anyone to navigate. Transportation to the necessary locations and training facilities suddenly became that much tougher. The sacrifices made by Porourangi, and his parents were not forgotten during this time. Lastly, the mindset shifts from playing “Division Five” 1st XV rugby and party-going, to playing “Div One” and being solely

focused on a career in rugby was becoming a quick and challenging reality for Porourangi. But a challenge that he embraced with open arms:

It was a big thing moving from a place or college you know. All my mates were there. I knew no one in town... like no one. And there was no scholarship back then. I remember mum was working at the Warehouse and dad was at the cement place and they had to pay for the odd training fees and uniform. So, like they had to sacrifice a lot.

While Porourangi was mindful of the challenges and sacrifices, he was equally clear that he had no regrets about these decisions. It appeared he had developed a philosophical view of his situation and that the experiences he had (good or bad) were necessary for his high-performance development. Even the significant setbacks in his career were regarded as being 'path for the course' – like:

I wouldn't have it any other way. I got to experience life. I used to catch the train every day from the Coast and go to school and come back. It was tough. Then once school finished i just... coz I didn't make NZ Schools, so I was pretty gutted, but I wasn't like you know hung up about it... I just was like "That's it" then went and worked for Dad.

This sense of disappointment and rejection instead fuelled a newfound motivation and was quickly reframed psychologically as an appreciation and opportunity to explore alternative pathways to professional rugby. The motivational factors included 'proving' that it (an alternative pathway to professional rugby) could be done and that 'a kid from Kapiti' could achieve this. This was especially relevant today more than ever before as the realities of professional rugby steer further away from the community level of the game. Equally values such as respect and results started to have resonance with Porourangi:

A lot of kids go straight from college [into professional rugby] because there's so much emphasis on first XV rugby. So, they miss that club experience. Whereas I loved it aye. It was hard at the time, but you just get on with it. Trainings Tues/Thurs and then you're doing Academy trainings on top of that.

I think I had something to prove because I was from Horowhenua / Kapiti. So, there was always a chip on my shoulder to prove people wrong... "Oh this guy's from Kapiti... he's from the Nua... he's no good". So, I always wanted people's respect and if that was at work or playing club or at training... that was my mindset at the time.

Porourangi carried on forging an alternative path into the national rugby system. After playing for the NZ Under 19s in 2005, and NZ Under 21s the following year, Porourangi made his provincial debut for the Wellington Lions NPC side in 2007 and the Hurricanes Super Rugby team in 2009. Many had credited him with revolutionising the role of his position. One that was not only strong and powerful at the breakdown, but extremely mobile and intellectual about the game. Unsurprisingly, Porourangi was selected for the Māori All Blacks in their 2010 Rau Tau (centenary year) in which he played all three tests that year.

In 2012 Porourangi debuted for the All Blacks where he continues to evolve the role of a hooker. In 2016 he was awarded the captaincy role for the Hurricanes and saw them to their maiden Super Rugby Championship. That same year, he was awarded the Tom French Cup Māori rugby player of the year and nominated for NZ and World Rugby player of the year. In his 75th test in 2021, Porourangi was given the honour of leading the All Blacks haka for his first time ever. He scored three tries that day. When asked about that moment he said:

When I started, they [Tonga] walked forward and because I'm quite an emotional fulla, I was like... "Lessgo then." It kind of geed me up even more and was like alright we on. So, it [wairua] kind of took over and I just let it and yeah, I just did it how I felt, and it was awesome. I'm very proud that I got the chance to do it. It [leading haka] definitely gave me a lift aye.

For all tāne involved in this research, they have been involved in developing a personal mantra. This is a personal statement, kaupapa, motivation to keep them focused in times of distress or disillusionment. These are extraordinarily personal revelations of their psychology. For Porourangi, it is likely that the personal mantra he developed at the time of this research was reflective of the stage he was at in his playing career, which was "Work Hard and Enjoy It." Unlike many of the other player mantras, which were largely focused on outcomes, Porourangi was clear that his was more of a reflection of his outlook on life now that he has achieved what many players will only dream to achieve.

Kaipara 3

'Tū' is a prominent figure in the world of rugby, known for his imposing size and exceptional skills on the field, as well as his humble and modest demeanour off the field. Of Tūhoe and Muaūpoko whakapapa, he was born in Canberra, Australia he lived there for the first three years of his life while his father played for the renowned Canberra Raiders, National Rugby League (NRL) team. His father, an imposing figure himself on the field, made his first-grade debut for the Raiders in 1993 before going on to win the Premiership with them the following season where he was also crowned, player of the year. He later captained the New Zealand Kiwi's international rugby league team. In 1998 the whānau relocated to Townsville where Tu's father played for the North Queensland Cowboys for the next two seasons. During this time, Tū described his early start to life as being transient, yet positive:

We moved around quite a bit with Dad [being a professional rugby league player]. In 1998 we moved to Townsville where he played for the Cowboys for two or three years. Or something like that. And then to Melbourne for a year or so with the Storm. And then back home to Wainui.

Tū continued with fondness, his early childhood memories noting the reputable North Queensland climate, as well as some lifelong connections he had established with the children of other Cowboys players. He spoke specifically about the access to specific resources both natural and humanmade. Some of these included building a new house, laying turf and a new pool. He also mentioned the natural resources like hanging out down at the local park across the road, as well as the Cowboys clubrooms with his older brother. It was here that several of his informal interactions took place. One specific teammate of his father had a son who would also go on to follow in the footsteps of his father and play in the NRL, describing him as an uncompromising and aggressive player himself:

I remember Townsville... so hot! I remember one of the old man's close friends. He played for the Raiders and ended up playing at Cowboys together as well. He had a son the same age as me and we would hang out. Bit of a hothead. He plays NRL now too. He got into a scuffle with Jared Waerea-Hargreaves [current Sydney City Roosters and Kiwi's international enforcer] one game.

Additionally, Tū recalled his father's injuries and undergoing a recovery protocol that required him to enter a hyperbaric chamber. This was the first time he had ever seen such technology and as a four or five-year-old, was unsure how to feel about it. It was a disconcerting experience, but on reflection was perhaps critical moment of informal exposure to high-

performance level through access to a new type of technology. Upon completing his return to play protocols, the whānau then relocated to Melbourne where Tū's father took up a contract with the Storm. The Storm were at the time, a new club to the NRL but quickly establishing themselves as a 'hard-to-beat' team with fellow Māori players, Tawera Nikau and Stephen Kearney also there alongside his father. At the end of the 2000 season, the whānau returned to Wainuiōmata where the wider whānau continues to reside until this very day.

Despite living in several cities early on in life, Tū was quick and clear to recognise Wainuiōmata and Levin as towns close to his heart with the latter being linked more to his Muaūpoko whakapapa. He lived in Wainui from 2000 to 2011 attending Our Lady of Rosary School in Waiwhetu and St Patrick's College in Silverstream for Years 9 and 10. During this time, he recalls again being exposed to several informal high-performance moments as he explained that his older brother was drafted into the Raiders Junior Rugby League system and being sent training programmes to complete. Tū recalls waking up early some mornings and undertaking some of these training activities alongside his older brother and others. Though perhaps not appreciative at that very moment, he described being hugely fortunate to have an older brother to help 'pave the way'. Tū's relationship with his older brother was described as "standard" and not unlike any other sibling connection:

He was a good league player. He played second row. And then prop. Just seeing my older brother 'take off'. Seeing him succeed. It was inspiring. And then we had another cousin that played. He was good. He played for Wainui team when he was like 16 or 17. I thought that was mean.

The opportunities for Tū's older brother resulted in the whānau being lured back across the ditch to where it all began for Tū, Canberra. He completed his Year 11 to Year 13 schooling at St Edmond's College in Canberra where other notable rugby and league players also attended. These included George Gregan (former Wallabies captain), Matt Giteau (former Wallabies great), and Ricky Stuart (former Raiders and Kangaroos great, and current NRL coach). It was not long then before Tū's pedigree and early exposure to high-performance were noticed as he would be later selected to represent Australia at the under 20 Rugby World Cup in Manchester, UK. It was at this tournament that another critical moment took place whereby after a deliberate encounter with the then NZ under 20's head coach, Scott Roberston (now current All Blacks coach) and forwards coach, Jason Ryan (now current All Blacks forwards coach), Tū was lured back to Aotearoa. By this time and now in his early 20's Tū committed to pursuing a lifelong dream of playing for the All Blacks and Māori All Blacks:

They [Scott and Jason] approached me about moving back to New Zealand. They were interested in me. And then I got a call from 'Shag' [Sir Steve Hansen, the then All Blacks head coach]. But yeah, they were the ones who were first interested in me. And then there were a couple of times where I was meant to go the Crusaders because you know... they were coaching there.

As a tighthead prop, Tū brought with him a power and stability to the scrum, with an already established solid foundation from a young age, made him an asset in both set-piece plays and open-field encounters. But as with all the other tāne in this research, this hasn't come overnight and/or without pain, trial, and error. These will be mentioned further in the next section around the types of pressure that players generally, and indeed these tāne are exposed to as part of their 'job'. Some of the lessons learnt by Tū related to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Factors like routine and structure around preparation and performance have been critical. But unlike the other tāne in this research, Tū also mentioned that he has not experienced any significant injuries in his life. Perhaps some 'niggles' after games but nothing serious or significant enough to sideline him from games.

At an elite level and given his positional role, not having experienced any significant injuries was an astounding feat. When exploring this further, Tū attributed a lot of this to the ongoing support from his partner (soon to be wife), being whānau oriented and having grown up in and around sports. The passion for sport was fuelled early in his life and is palpable in his current performances. He combines his physical attributes with an astute understanding of the game, making him an effective player in both attack and defence. Tu's ball-carrying ability and tackling prowess are complemented by his ability to read the game and make intelligent decisions in high-pressure situations. As he continues to develop and refine his skills, Tu believes that "having a voice", "work ethic" and "confidence" were three key characteristics to leaving an indelible mark on sport for young tāne to consider.

Kaipara 4

Born in Taihape and raised in Palmerston North, this uri of Ngāti Porou and Tongan descent has a whakapapa that is becoming more increasingly common among tāne in the 21st century, one in which cultural diversity is seen as the ‘new norm’ and not a rarity. As such, his ability to recite his whakapapa in several languages is comprehensive in both depth and breadth. His whakapapa within sports performance is equally comprehensive and impressive. His mother is a cousin to a former All Blacks centre who played in the late 1960s. And his father is the younger brother to a former All Blacks representative during the same time. Likewise, Tāpuika is first cousin to another former All Blacks and Māori All Blacks captain.

Tāpuika spent his early childhood as an “army baby” moving from Waiouru to Linton, Palmerston North. He explains that his mother went into labour on the way to hospital from Waiouru and only made it as far as Taihape before he came into the world. Tāpuika is the youngest of three children and credits a lot of his skill development from watching and interacting with both his older brother and sister. Unlike the other tāne within this research, Tāpuika attended a kōhanga reo (Māori medium early childcare centre) in Palmerston North. Here, he was exposed to a worldview centred on te ao Māori with a focus on tikanga and te reo. Conveniently, this was just across the road from the local primary school that his older brother and sister also attended. Tāpuika recalls getting special dispensation to attend various sports activities whilst still at kōhanga reo. He credits this in hindsight as being the breeding ground for his skill development:

I always remember wanting to go across to the [other] school so I could play at lunch times with a lot of the older kids, and I think I must have got some sort of special exemption or something because I was the only one that was allowed out of the Kohanga gates.

The benefits of being able to operate ‘in two worlds’ was not lost on Tāpuika who saw this as a significant contributor to his development as a person and player. It meant that not only could he navigate the traditional customs of te ao Māori confidently, but he could also interact within a non-Māori world just as safely. Despite some of the early childhood setbacks (i.e., parental separation and the changes in households and schools), he described his childhood as being ideal. Tāpuika spoke candidly about the impact of these setbacks but importantly, that his childhood was a settled and positive one:

From primary we sort of moved around a couple of different households. A monumental time that played a big part was mum and dad separating early on. Yeah, was probably

at an age where I couldn't really quite make sense of it. But yeah, I had a meke childhood.

When explored further, he believed that the crucial ingredient in his upbringing was the connection he had with key people in his life. These included his mother, siblings (and their friends), and specific influential figures such as teachers and coaches. While this may seem ordinary for many, in the case of Tāpuika, these engagements were treated with high value. When asked about why this was, he spoke of the importance of Māori concepts such as mana and rangatiratanga. That is, knowing who the rangatira were in their respective professions helped him to draw skills from them and navigate life carefully. Specifically, he believed that everyone possessed their own mana and that this was important to acknowledge:

It's important, the Māori side of me, in my upbringing and getting me to where I am. The first black jersey I ever put on was the Māori All Black jersey and I grew up watching them as well as the All Blacks.

What is less known about Tāpuika, is his adolescence, and particularly his secondary schooling at Queen Elizabeth College (QEC) which would be considered a less conventional pathway to high-performance. With neighbours Palmerston North Boys High School and Feilding High School boasting players like Aaron Cruden, Aaron Smith and the Whitelock brothers around the same time as him, QEC was not highly regarded as a rugby school in the local Manawātū competition. In fact, they were not even in the first XV rugby competition. At the time, their sporting focus was instead on touch rugby and basketball. This makes the rise of Tāpuika through 'the ranks' even more remarkable. He was Head Prefect in his final year which was perhaps again a reflection of not only his academic abilities or his leadership qualities but also the value that he placed on relationships.

A critical moment in the career pathway of Tāpuika came in his final year at QEC where he was invited to a rugby league trial in Wellington. He impressed the selectors which led to another invitation to Sydney based National Rugby League (NRL) club, Canterbury Bulldogs U20 Holden Cup team not long after. The transition (to Sydney and sports performance) was quick and steep with various struggles along the way.

I loved watching it and loved playing it. But being involved in it. Going from home to Sydney, big city, you know, just a whole lot of unknowns. Yeah, it was quite freaky. And I feel like I definitely struggled over there. Just trying to find my place and you know, figure things out.

After two seasons being exposed to the NRL system, Tāpuika was unable to gain a contract with the Premiership side and returned home to Palmerston North which presented another set of challenges. Not only did he have his own expectations, but also those of his peers, whānau and the wider Palmerston North community. The various conversations and questions from different people resulted in him adopting a 'self-preservation' technique of enrolling at university:

I definitely feel like I failed within myself and that was just magnified, amplified by everyone else as well. And so that was a struggle for me at the time coming back home from not cracking it in Ozzy. Yeah, that's why I enrolled at Massey. I wanted to do a business degree to almost you know have that sort of validation like, "Far you're studying... you must be pretty onto it". But it was just a cop out! Just a way to have a coping mechanism with being back home.

Tāpuika debuted for the Manawātū Turbos in 2011 and after an impressive NPC Campaign in 2014 (during which the Turbos won the Championship Division) earned selection into the Hurricanes Super Rugby and Māori All Blacks squads. His form continued, helping the Hurricanes into their maiden Super Rugby final. Tāpuika would eventually continue his illustrious All Blacks whakapapa by being selected for the All Blacks World Cup squad in 2015 where he was named by The Guardian as one of the players of the tournament. Perhaps Tāpuika's greatest achievements were still yet to come. During the 2021/22 seasons, Tāpuika with a new-found perspective on the game won the NPC Premiership title with Wellington Lions ending their title drought of over 20 years. Tāpuika was selected for arguably the greatest provincial rugby team in the history of New Zealand Rugby, Ngāti Porou East Coast provincial union.

For all tāne involved in this research, they have been involved in developing a personal mantra. This is a personal statement, kaupapa, motivation to keep them focused in times of distress or disillusionment. These are extraordinarily personal revelations of their psychology. For Tāpuika, his personal mantra at the time of this research was "Show Up and be Impactful," which he explained was connected to his rugby world cup experience where he did exactly the opposite and learnt a valuable lesson thereafter. This is further explained in the next section of this thesis.

Kaipara 5

Born and raised in Hataitai, Wellington, Te Rangi is from Tauranga Moana and Ngā Puhi descent. With a prominent population base of 165,201, Te Rangi's Grandfather's iwi of Ngā Puhi is regarded as the largest iwi population group in Aotearoa. For his Nan's iwi of Ngāi Te Rangi, the population of 17,205 people however, pales in comparison. Outside of its spiritual home base of the Bay of Plenty region, Wellington is the second largest home to the people of Ngāi te Rangi whakapapa. This is true for Te Rangi who along with his mother, father and two older brothers were born and raised in Te Whanganui-ā-Tara, Wellington.

Te Rangi a formidable force in the game, is renowned for his exceptional skills and unwavering dedication to the sport. As a player, he possesses a unique combination of strength, agility, and tactical prowess that sets him apart on the field. Te Rangi's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in his relentless work ethic and rigorous training regimen and is likely to see him reach higher honours within the next two to three years. Whether he's breaking through defensive lines or executing precise passes to his teammates, Te Rangi's proficiency in defence makes him a formidable opponent. Beyond his technical abilities, Te Rangi's leadership qualities and sportsmanship are equally admirable, inspiring his teammates to give their all and fostering a sense of confidence on and off the field. With his unwavering determination, Te Rangi is undoubtedly a rising star in the world of rugby, leaving an indelible mark on the sport's history.

Te Rangi's brother is also a professional athlete having reached the highest level of rugby in Aotearoa debuting for the All Blacks in 2018. Their eldest brother was also a useful rugby player but decided on a different career pathway instead becoming a qualified builder. Te Rangi described his relationships with his older brothers as being "really close" which might not be the standard for typical sibling relationships. Especially since the age difference with the both was some seven and nine years, respectively. Despite this, Te Rangi reported that they (older siblings) were always inclusive and allowing him to attend various sports activities with them (e.g., local Evans Bay Park and school grounds) as a kid. He described being friends with their friends which he believed allowed for rapid social maturity and increased skill development. Specifically, he believed that being around older people made it easy for him to relate to. Te Rangi also noted that when mentioning his age to others, they would often be surprised by his age (young) as he was typically viewed as 'beyond his years':

Because of the big age difference between us, I think I could have potentially matured a bit quicker by just hanging around with them. I guess being around older people I just found it easy to relate to them.

External to his whānau and social connections, Te Rangi described several other significant influences on his career trajectory. These were 'CJ' (Cory Jane) and 'Tams' (Tamati Ellison) both of whom were well established Māori professional rugby players (former All Blacks and Māori All Blacks) and now mentors of Te Rangi's (current assistant coaches of the Hurricanes and Crusaders, respectively). When unpacked further, he explained that this was largely because they were of similar characteristics to himself – Māori, men, relatively young, knowledgeable of their craft (rugby), and playing a similar style and position on the rugby field as Te Rangi.

In essence, those who were fastest to mature and develop were likely to be most successful within sports performance arenas. When unpacking this further, Te Rangi noted that he first started playing sports when he was 4 years old. He explained the influence that his father had on his childhood. As someone who played for the Junior All Blacks himself, Te Rangi's father was clear about the positive role of sport in childhood and social development. This was further reinforced by his brothers having already 'paved the way' for sport within their whānau. Te Rangi started his junior rugby at the Wellington rugby football club where during this time was coached by his father. This relationship progressed until Te Rangi's college years. He initially started off at Scots College before moving to St Patricks City College. Te Rangi reported that he enjoyed his time at both schools but was especially fond of his time at St Pat's describing it as a place where he felt he 'belonged':

It [St Pat's College] was quite a communal school. There were quite a few brown boys there and quite a good mix. Coming from Scots you could kind of tell the difference in the brotherhood.

Te Rangi described his college years positively as he felt like he fitted in. The ongoing theme of interacting with older peers re-emerged as he reported that several other students, he was close with, were typically older than him. These included Xavier (Sefo) Numia, Grayson Whitman, and Isaia Paese who were also accomplished rugby players (Sefo also a New Zealand Schools, Hurricane and All Blacks XV representative alongside Te Rangi). He played for three years in the St Pat's 1st XV during which he made the Wellington age grade teams, and eventually the NZ Schools team in his last year. This led to being invited into the illustrious Wellington Rugby Union Academy pathway where other notable players such as the late Jerry Collins (also a past St Patrick's pupil), Shannon Paku and Rikki Flutey plied their trade. His rather conventional pathway of rugby accolades and achievements would continue until an equally unconventional reality occurred and he became the first player in Aotearoa to be offered a long term (5 year) contract deal with the Hurricanes. A recognition of his maturity, performances and potential for greater opportunities.

While opportunities come with consistency of performances – noting several standout events (versus Waratahs in Sydney, 2022) – Te Rangi was also quick to mention that sometimes, regardless of how well you prepare, things just don't go your way. Specifically, while playing for the Hurricanes against the Crusaders in 2022, he recalled making a few mistakes and upon reviewing his game, there was nothing significantly different about the gameday preparation. Instead for Te Rangi, it was:

“Just one of those days.”

For some this is considered a philosophical outlook on the world, and for others perhaps a detachment from emotions and reality. When unpacking this with Te Rangi however, it was clear that his early emotional and social maturity led to his ability to ‘make peace’ with the result and/or individual performance on any given day and prepare again for the following week. It is an incredible insight into the mindset of an athlete. To be both philosophical about this experience and also task-oriented is a unique skill:

“I guess that's what happens in professional sporting environments... the next person is right behind you ready to go. There are only small margins for error and it is cutthroat. It is what it is you know.”

The ruthlessness of the sporting industry was not lost on Te Rangi either as selections are often performance-based in professional sports and certainly one that Te Rangi was mindful of throughout his career. Additionally, the higher the honors (e.g. from Super Rugby to international), the greater the stakes. When exploring the sporting philosophies of athletes, Te Rangi's mindset continued to enlighten as he mentioned the reality of training day to day with some of his closest friends knowing also that someone might miss out. Because of this, and the concession from Te Rangi that “nothing is guaranteed”, his work ethic was second to none. Additionally, the injury setbacks experienced by professional athletes was also something that Te Rangi resonated with having had two significant injuries (shoulder and knee) so far in his career. More recent hamstring setbacks were described as being a “handbrake” on his quest for higher honours:

Yeah, I was playing well getting picked for the Canes and kind of cemented a spot a little bit through that back end of that season. Played most of those games. Then in the preseason for Lions I pulled my hammy [hamstring] in that preseason game. And it took me a while to get back. It was a bit of a roadblock in the path but again, injuries come with the job.

Interestingly, the recovery process for Te Rangi was one of intrigue. When discussing with his rehabilitation team (made up of a physiotherapist, nutritionist, strength and conditioning trainer, and psychologist), they were astounded at his mindset and attitude towards his programme. Specifically, his physiotherapist mentioned that Te Rangi's level of acceptance about the injury, personal interest in his rehab programme fast-tracked his recovery process leading to an unprecedented timeline being set for the type of injury sustained. When explored further, he explained:

Yeah, I guess you've gotta ask for specifics with reasoning behind the recovery [programme] which makes it a little bit easier. And again, you got to realise that you're injured and there is a process behind it in terms of getting back . You'll get a message [from the rehab team] but for you, it's important that you get the 'why' behind the message. Then you go away and think on it and come back [with questions].

For all tāne involved in this research, they have been involved in developing a personal mantra. This is a personal statement, kaupapa, motivation to keep them focused in times of distress, uncertainty, or disillusionment. These are extraordinarily personal revelations of their psychology. For Te Rangi, his personal mantra at the time of this research was "You get what you give," which was a recognition for him of the value he places on personal control and mastery in achieving your aspirations.

Kaipara 6

Rā is another prominent tāne within the professional rugby space. His tribe of Te Rārawa in Te Taitokerau region of Aotearoa makes up 23,280 (2018 Census) affiliates, with notable mentions of their use of te reo Māori being approximately 23.2% (all Māori 14.6%). Likewise, the participation in tertiary education for those of Te Rarawa descent was impressive at 25.2%. This compares to 19.3% of all Māori. Despite his 'far north' whakapapa, Rā was born and raised in Ōtautahi (Christchurch). A sociocultural setting characterised largely by a predominantly Pākehā backdrop, his whānau consisted of mum, dad, and one younger brother. Rā has two maternal uncles and a paternal aunt and uncle, all of whom did not have any children of their own. He does acknowledge his paternal aunt adopting a baby boy so had one cousin who was a lot younger than him and his brother.

Aside from his maternal grandfather who passed away the year Rā was born, the rest of his grandparents were actively involved in his early life. His maternal grandmother would also pass away some nine or eight years later, leaving just his paternal grandparents. Rā recalls spending a lot of time with these grandparents as a kid as they lived just down the road. In some cases, they would "babysit" Rā and his brother to help with the parental workload. They too suddenly passed away during Rā's teens, which was described as a crucial time in his life. Despite these significant setbacks in his early life, Rā describes having "an awesome upbringing". His parents worked hard to ensure that he and his brother had access to all the necessary resources. Rā also described his relationship with his brother as being typical of many siblings characterising their interactions as both fun as well as tense at times. The relatively small nature of their whānau meant that Rā and his spent much of their childhoods together. This resulted in them supporting and challenging each other in various contexts:

My brother and I got along well. But as all brothers do, I suppose we argued and bloody wrestled and fought. But we had fun together as well. He was always a guy that picked up things really quick like driving a car, playing rugby, diving. Whatever it was... he had it. And for me I always took a bit longer. And I suppose just that competitive nature in me came out.

While his first chosen sport was soccer, rugby did not feature in life until Rā was 9 years old. During this time, he and his brother were also seen playing tennis, cricket and even water polo. His sporting diversity allowed him not just to develop physically, but he believes socially as well. Rā felt that a lot of the skill and understanding of rugby came from his wide experience of different sports, and exposure to the social connections created during sports. Before school, after school and on the weekends, he was playing some kind of sport:

I played soccer first... when I started primary school. Think it was tail end of primary school when I got into rugby. Yeah, I was 9 years old. Me and my brother also played tennis across the street. Yeah, we played cricket. Water polo.

The exposure to the breadth of sports doesn't just develop you physically but probably socially. It keeps you fit as well like after school or before schools or in the weekends you've got something to look forward to and participate in.

Humility and work ethic emerge strongly when Rā talks about his sporting attributes and achievements. He recounts from approximately the age of 13 years old, a critical moment of realisation when describing himself as “never being anything really special” as a rugby player and needing to find other ways of realising his potential.

Growing up Dad said to me “You will enjoy it more if you’re fitter” and pretty much since that age that was a point of difference for me to be fit and work hard. And I suppose it's what's sort of held me in good stead through high school and where I am today.

When unpacking this critical shift and the motivations therein, several factors were explored by Rā. These ranged from wanting “to give rugby a good crack” through to the disappointment of missing out on selection. He also described being inspired by the ongoing competitiveness between he and Blair:

So, I was 13 years old. I missed out on rep teams that year. My brother was a couple of years younger than me and always made rep teams. He was New Zealand Schools. So, he got looked after really well... awesome kit. I was like “Wow bloody Christmas”. And so, he makes this team which I was stoked for him. I've never really told him, but I suppose it [the inspiration] just stuck with me it was always in the back of my mind like... “I wanna be there”.

This inspiration and work ethic became the catalyst for what would eventually be a lifelong relationship with sports performance. He went into all spheres of life with this inspiration and desire for sports performance. His learning journey within the various educational environments would also later reflect his sporting achievements. Characterised by positive relationship with all his teachers and coaches during these formative years, Rā appeared to progress further during this time.

Did all my schooling down in Christchurch. Christchurch Boys High for my five years. Loved it there. Last year of high school was probably the highlight. I was in the 1st XV Rugby team, and I was Deputy Head boy. Just felt like relationships with teachers became more of like a friendship rather than teacher-student. Really enjoyed it all and then after school I went straight to UC [University of Canterbury] enrolled in a Bachelor of Commerce and Law. Yeah, it was awesome time there too.

Rā also credits his high-performance characteristics with the social connections and networks he developed during adolescence. Though in his predictable style, he also describes himself as having a sense of luck or fortuitousness that these all occurred. While this may be true and, on some level, not deliberate or by design, on another level it could be argued that these moments in life were indeed deliberate and consciously played out for high-performance:

The Head Boy the year I was Deputy - we started together in Year Six so that's 13 years of schooling together from day one. So, to be Head Boy and Deputy was pretty cool. Yeah, all of us enjoy sport. We all, work hard at school, we're not just in for the sport we had that balance right. Enjoyed each other's company. I suppose just fortunate. Made lifelong friendships on day one. Still best mates today and it's pretty cool.

Despite making a relatively late start to rugby and coming through a rather non-conventional pathway to rugby (non-rugby academy), Rā's appetite for sports performance was certainly just as entrenched through the exposure to the diverse sporting and social backgrounds. He eventually debuted for Canterbury National Provincial Championship (NPC) side in 2014. A team brimming with a culture of success, he was certainly not out of place there. Rā then earned a contract with the then 7-time championship winning Crusaders in 2016 before being given a longer-term opportunity with the Hurricanes. He credits this as another critical moment in his career as the decisions that occurred at this point, shaped him up comfortably for an enduring career in the game:

I had no guarantees of being with the Crusaders going forward and then part way through that year [2016] the Hurricanes offered me the opportunity to come up. So, I grabbed the opportunity and ran with it. I made my Māori All Blacks debut not long after which was pretty special.

For all tāne involved in this research, they have been involved in developing a personal mantra. This is a personal statement, kaupapa, motivation to keep them focused in times of distress or disillusionment. These are extraordinarily personal revelations of their psychology. For Rā, his personal mantra at the time of this research was “Chasing Moments,” which characterised his professional rugby career to date. One that included a combination of working hard, and taking your chances when they arrive.

Kaipara 7

Ati is a rising star in the world of rugby, capturing attention with his exceptional talent and blistering pace. Of Te Āti Awa descent, he was raised initially in Waikanae before moving to Palmerston North with his two parents and brother. Ati is a gifted player who possesses a wide range of skills that make him a formidable force on the field. As a versatile back, he displays a remarkable blend of speed, agility, and vision, allowing him to excel in various positions. Whether he's orchestrating plays as a fly-half, making incisive runs as a fullback, or distributing precise passes to his teammates, Ati's rugby intelligence and technical proficiency are truly remarkable. At a young age, Ati has already shown great composure and maturity in his decision-making, earning the respect of his teammates and opponents alike. This he attributes to his upbringing and understanding people and their personalities:

Yeah, I had a great upbringing. Went to Kapanui School, Waikanae. I had a large group of friends. Most of my time was spent down at the rugby club or at the skate park and when I was probably 10 or 11 years old, I got caught up in the wrong crowd and went to boarding school. But yeah, my childhood was great. Great environment. It was heavily family orientated. So always with friends. Always with other people. I think that's what I guess kind of shaped me into being a people person that I am.

The rugby and broader sports journey for Ati began in the grassroots town of Waikanae where his exceptional abilities quickly caught the attention of his parents, coach, and wider community. This led to the whānau relocating early to Palmerston North where regional and national schoolboy interests would soon follow. Representing his region and country at schoolboy level, Ati's performances stood out, leading to his selection for representative sides and ultimately earning him opportunities in professional rugby. His dedication to the sport and commitment to constant improvement are evident in his relentless work ethic and rigorous training routines. With his natural talent, passion for the game, and the guidance of experienced coaches, Ati believed he developed all the makings of a future rugby superstar from an early age. Renowned for its high proportion of tertiary students and boasting one of the country's premier indoor sporting facilities for regional and national sports tournaments, Ati has fond memories of his Palmerston North upbringing also attributing this period of his life to the development of skills he currently possesses:

Yeah, I was probably three or four years old? Had my first season of rippa [an age-restricted format of rugby] when I was four. Wasn't allowed to sign up because obviously you'd have to be five to go back then so was put up a grade. Rugby has been a huge part of my life. And ever since I was a kid, I've always had a ball in my hand.

Yeah, for four years, I was my first season of rugby. And basically, I've been playing sports ever since.

Ati extended on his early exposure to sports with his equally impressive resume in cricket which he started playing at 12 years old. He explained that while at boarding school there were many sporting options to choose from all with the same enviable opportunity of getting out of the school gates for the day. These sports included tennis, softball and of course cricket where he would later establish himself as a schoolboy dual international representing Aotearoa in this code also. Interestingly, this is also where Ati arrived at one of his first critical decisions in life as he was forced to choose between the two codes:

Cricket was great. Totally different to rugby. As you see on TV its predominantly white and a completely different environment. There's no sort of cohesion in the group as much as there is in rugby. I was pretty lucky to play for New Zealand when I was 18yo. And that was the last kind of stint that I had as I had to choose between going into the NZ team or come in for a week with the Hurricanes. And basically, I had to choose. So, I sat down with my parents and made a choice to have a week with the Hurricanes instead of going to the Cricket World Cup. And that was my last stint of cricket. Oh except for the Black Clash [fundraising enterprise between cricket and rugby superstars] gig earlier this year.

With an already well established legacy of Māori leadership and sports performance within his whakapapa, Ati relocated to Wellington to undertake his professional rugby career among his local iwi where this collective totals 29,433 descendants and several impressive economic resources and assets largely attributed to the work of several of his whānau members. Ati mentions an incident in Hawkes Bay where he was approached by an opposition coach. This interaction left Ati feeling confused and upset as he felt like this was an attack on his mana and a rather unsavoury act given that his rugby team had just played (and beaten) this coach's team. This interaction became the genesis for the motivation and drive he now has today:

Yeah, I was Year 11 and my Koro had just gone to prison. And I was up at Napier Boys, and we just played the game and were at the 'after match' and one of the Napier coaches came up to me and pulled me aside and asked me about my koro and I can't remember everything I said afterwards... I was completely buggered. I just remembered his tone. You know. His facial expression. And it was like he was bagging me for it. And then he pulled out his phone and went on to Stuff and you know he's

pointing at his phone and he's pointing at me and yeah, I don't know how that correlated into a rugby sense, but I remember leaving that trip thinking "I'm doing nothing with my life I want to do something. Bring positivity back to my family because it wasn't a very positive time for us".

Another critical moment for Ati occurred during his adolescence. He believes this shaped him alongside the 'Napier incident' and the 'cricket v rugby' dilemma, and this was the eventual opportunity to play 1st XV rugby for Palmerston North Boys High School (PNBHS). He explained that the then 1st XV coach, approached him at the end of the Year 11 with a proposition. The coach explained that there would be an opening for Ati the following year if he was willing to take it (i.e., train). He further explained that this was significant as the first three years of his time at PNBHS was anything but successful. He was not only doubting himself mentally, but he never made an A's team during this time. This then led to a fortuitous (or destined) moment that would see his focus for rugby be elevated to 'another level':

I guess I was a pretty decent rugby player in Year 7 and 8 and then came to Boys High and remember the first trials and I was coming up against these dudes and was like "oh I'm not good enough". "There's no way I could make it." For three years at Boys High, I never made an A team. So, I wasn't motivated from Year nine to Year 12. I was just cruising really and hung out with my mates and rugby was just something we did on Saturdays to muck around. But yeah, going into the end of Year 11 and I think there were sadly three boys that dropped out of school going into their final year. And they were probably the best players in the team. Basically, I got told there was an opening and if I came back a better player, I'd get a look in. So, I trained the house down and came back in Year 12. Rode the bench for a little bit and then got a couple games. I was pretty lucky really.

Key to the sustained commitment and dedication of his craft has been the ongoing support of his whānau, in particular his father who was recognised throughout this interview largely for two reasons. Firstly, he himself represented his country in rugby so had a deep understanding of the game and the necessary psychological characteristics required to succeed. And secondly, his support for Ati was unwavering and on occasion described as bordering "extremist" but always with the best intentions:

Yeah, he played for Manawatū. I don't actually know how many games but yeah, he also played for the Junior All Blacks, the Māori All Blacks and he had a trial for the All Blacks but sat behind Grant Fox and some other dudes so couldn't quite crack it. But

rugby has been a huge part of his life. He coached Palmy Boys post his playing days. He coached me at under five and under six. He made me realise how grateful I am to have two parents. My dad he's at times not an extremist but he pushed me to where I didn't want to go and times where I wanted to quit. Actually, I was adamant that I wasn't coming back [to the game]. But he was like nah you're not going anywhere. You've got no choice!

Today Ati utilises many of his internal and external resources to further enhance his skill development in rugby. From reading books to connecting with whānau regularly. Connected to both of these has been his ongoing philosophical development. That is, Ati has quickly and effectively developed mechanisms for staying both grounded as well as upbeat regardless of his performances on the field. Three significant characteristics were identified while discussing his craft/skill and performance. These were: “maintaining gratitude and perspective” and “understanding your duty/obligation to whānau”. While these can often provide sources of pressure and stress, for Ati they allow him to remain driven and motivated to perform:

It's just a game. Obviously, I want to do well. More than anything. But I know that the sun will still come up the next day if I don't. Having gratitude for my job as well. A lot of my mates have some pretty sad situations. Having kids prematurely. A couple in jail. A lot of them whenever I come home still treat me the same. So, I'm not doing it for myself anymore. I got a good reason to go for. Provide for my family, you know, my nephews or my cousin's. I got people to look out for. I got people counting on me. In a way there's a little bit of pressure but it's not really.

For all tāne involved in this research, they have been involved in developing a personal mantra. This is a personal statement, kaupapa, motivation to keep them focused in times of distress or disillusionment. These are extraordinarily personal revelations of their psychology. For Ati, his personal mantra at the time of this research was “Courage Over Comfort.” His explanation of how he arrived at this mantra involved going to the dark places where the potential for new knowledge and opportunities exists but could also be where pain and fear reside.

Kaipara 8

Piki was born in Hutt Hospital, Wellington to a Māori father and English mother. A registered population of 9.264 in 2018, his iwi of Ngāti Pikiao is based predominantly around the Rotorua area of Te Arawa and is typically known for its commitment to culture and in particular te reo. In 2013 almost 225 of Ngāti Pikiao descendants under the age of 15 can speak te reo Māori (as opposed to 14.16% of all Māori). Although his father was from Rotorua and mother from England, he grew up and spent most of his childhood and adolescence in Waiwhetu. The whānau later moved to Avalon where he attended Hutt International Boys School (HIBS). Piki was quick to recite the school's motto - "Men of Integrity" – suggesting a close and loyal connection to the school. He played for the school's 1st XV rugby team for four years. Piki was invited to go to St Pats Silverstream to enhance his rugby but opted instead to stay at HIBS where he was mentored and coached by former All Blacks great, Graham Mourie. He described Mourie as being permissive and encouraging of leadership often encouraging Piki from an early age to lead and speak on behalf of the teams.

Academically, Piki achieved NCEA Level 3 after some perseverance and convincing from those around him. He explained that he was 10 credits away by the end of his Year 13 and upon discussion with the principal, was encouraged to return and complete this which he did. Piki discussed that this led to a scholarship opportunity to WELTEC where he completed a landscaping qualification that included operating different heavy machinery (forklifts, 30 tonne diggers, and tractors etc). This he explained, was his back-up plan if rugby did not eventuate. This allowed Piki to focus on rugby as a passion and not necessarily something that presented pressure for him:

"It was plan B... drainlayer... which I have completed now so I can just focus on Plan A... rugby. When I am ready then I can slot straight into that work. Plenty of work in Wairarapa on new house builds.

Piki recalled fondly his childhood with close friendships largely to several people he remains good friends with to this day. A key theme emerging from these relationships was the relatively successful careers that all these friends have established. One who is a sales manager for Lion Brewery, and the other a Designer for McGuinness. In another case, Piki explained that the coincidental nature of this friendship meant that bonding and socialising occurred rather naturally and seamlessly from a young age. That is, the pre-existing whānau connection between their fathers between them allowed for their connections to flourish well into adulthood:

My best mate [also shares the same surname but no relation] went to college together. He lives in Waipukurau. His father and mine played rugby against each other. First met him in Under 13s playing against each other in Hutt Valley final. Ended up staying that night at his house. Carried on as good friends from there. He's 'onto it'. Went to Lincoln University. Got a degree in Agriculture. Brought a house in Waipukurau with his partner. Doing well now.

Rugby wise, Piki recalls being “as young as you could remember” when he first picked up a rugby ball. In other words, he was exposed to sport, and in particular rugby, from an infant. He explained that he played everything from soccer to basketball, touch, and league. He played for the famous Upper Hutt Tigers rugby league club as a Junior simply because this is where his father played. Piki even participated in athletics. But when he had some medical problems (appendicitis) he switched to soccer as it was a non-contact and still allowed him to be physically active. During this time, Piki recalled having a catheter strapped to his side as he was still receiving medical treatment while still playing. This was to highlight that Piki has always been physically active even when medically challenged, which he believes instilled a sense of determination and focus that led to him making several age-grade representative teams:

I made the Hurricanes U18s squad. Realised then that I had some talent for footy. Then first year out of school went to Rotorua to pursue rugby more. Made Development Bay of Plenty team. The following year, I returned to Wellington playing in the Development team for the next three years. Was called in as injury cover for Wellington Lions in 2021. And then engaged an agent and after that a number of options opened up Taranaki, Northland, Otago and Manawatū. Chose the closest and debuted for Turbos not long after that.

Piki further explained that he took his opportunities there. These included the extra drills and training tuition from the likes of Peter Russell (the then head coach of Manawatū Turbos). This led to some consistent appearances in the NPC competition which then resulted in a training contract with the Hurricanes. Piki explained that the Hurricanes were sending him training programmes to complete during the summer with the possibility of ongoing training with full squad in 2022. Indeed, this was the case and later that year, Piki played for the Hurricanes scoring a try on debut.

While there was mention of health challenges earlier in life, Piki didn't believe he had experienced any other major setbacks. However, as is often the case within sports performance settings, the potential for disappointment is greater as your career progresses.

Non-selection for instance was of note for Piki as he described a specific coaching conflict he experienced. This appeared to be within the context of a self-described poor performance where “nothing was working” for him and eventually he was substituted before half time. When asked how this made him feel, he said:

I ‘spat my beans’ at the coach. He put someone else on. I thought “stuff ya then”. Went and had a shower and sat in the grandstand. It was a terrible feeling. Being subbed before halftime. Created a scene aye. Why couldn’t you do the change at half time. Its demeaning. Still hadn’t received an explanation for being subbed so I didn’t attend training the following week. Coach apologised eventually the following Thurs training.

When exploring whether it was being replaced by someone else specifically or that he was replaced before halftime, he was clear that it was the latter. Strategies that possibly assisted Piki with the above situation included a reflective period as he initially wondered if he did the right thing by not attending training the following week, thereby potentially compromising his position within the team further. On reflection, ‘stepping away’ (from the scrum, the situation, the issue, the team, the coach) allowed him the opportunity to take stock and regroup his thoughts and feelings. Debriefing the situation also allows one to approach it adequately and accurately with the right mindset. Lastly, and of rare note for Piki was his recovery capacity which was described to him as ‘unique biomechanics’. When asked to unpack further, he explained:

I can be blowing [short of air] one second and then the next second, I’m good to go. My recovery is quick. From 145 [bpm] down to 80 [bpm] in seconds. My younger brother is even better. He eats rubbish and doesn’t train – but still ends up winning the fitness tests.

For all tāne involved in this research, they have been involved in developing a personal mantra. This is a personal statement, kaupapa, motivation to keep them focused in times of distress or disillusionment. These are extraordinarily personal revelations of their psychology. For Piki, his mantra was “Strive, humble, limitless,” which he explained was connected to the idea of working towards the limitless possibilities that exist, and doing so with humility.

Their Stories

“You do the haka to show your mana”.

(Sir Wayne ‘Buck’ Shelford)

The word mana is now used frequently enough to be familiar to most in Aotearoa. Oftentimes used to illustrate standing or status - or the type of authority reserved for a select few. For Māori, and indeed most Polynesians – mana is a term which cannot be so easily defined or translated. A concept which has no English language equivalent, and which transcends both linguistic and cultural domains. Something that the late Dr Moana Jackson considered when he identified the fact that there was no te reo equivalency for ‘cede’ and that this was not a coincidence but an indication that to even consider ‘giving away’ mana would have been pragmatically impossible, politically untenable, and culturally inconceivable (Jackson, 2015). Professor Kamana’opono Crabbe noted that in ancient Hawaiian society, there were two sources of mana in kānaka: mana that was inherited genealogically (through the gods) and mana that was acquired through one’s belief and/or expertise (Crabbe et al., 2017). He added that the gods were both their ancestors and the primary sources of mana because they were in the land, in objects, forces and in kānaka (people/Native Hawaiian’s).

Dr Moana Jackson extended on this by claiming that mana was bound by tikanga and was a totalising authority that could not be tampered with. In essence, it was a taonga, a sacred treasure, handed down from our ancestors to be exercised by the living for the benefit of the future (Jackson, 2015). Jackson believed that mana was inalienable and untransferable - acquired not by right, but through one’s actions and intent. True mana, therefore, could not be secured by force or maintained through fear. A concept which further illustrates the futility of attempting a definition – at least through Western eyes – where authority is often demanded and where a leader’s genealogy is more valued than their capability.

Given the reverence and regard attached to the concept of mana, it is of little surprise that the sporting world has been quick to embrace this concept as part of the established lexicon of sporting language and metaphor. Ironically, and far from appropriating this word with nefarious intent - mana has been used in ways which further highlight why this style and mode of leadership is so valued – but remains so ill-defined. As such it could be argued that mana has been mainstreamed in Aotearoa. That its deeper meanings are not known by the majority of people who use or hear/see it. Indeed, there are many examples of the term 'mana' being used in commercial aspects of NZ Rugby. The All Blacks also provide numerous examples of this and have on many occasions rationalised the selection of a team captain based on their mana. And not simply derived from their athletic ability, performance, or sporting prowess.

Sam Cane for example, was considered a controversial selection as the All Blacks captain at the last rugby world cup. Many were of the view that he wasn't the best player in his position. Nor could he offer anything that couldn't be found (at higher levels) within other members of the squad. However, what set him apart were the types of qualities that, like mana, were difficult to describe, but essential to the type of leadership the coaches and management staff were looking to cultivate. Someone who secured respect through their actions (both on and off the field) who was fearless and determined, who engendered (rather than demanded) respect, and who led by example as opposed to any pre-ordained right, status, or connection. Even though neither Cane nor the coaches were Māori, the word mana was deliberately used to rationalise an otherwise polarising selection. Likewise, to highlight the idea that conventional leadership selection parameters were ill-suited to an All Blacks environment. An environment where large numbers of the playing squad were either of Māori or Pacific descent and where a more culturally nuanced selection and decision-making process was required.

Notwithstanding the utility of this example, it is unlikely that the All Blacks coaches and management reflected too deeply on why mana was important to their leadership selection process. Other than to rationalise a decision which didn't sit well with the established conventions. Nor was it entirely clear as to whether mana contributed to their selection decision matrix, or simply used to again explain the key characteristics required to lead the All Blacks. Regardless, it was clear that both mana and leadership were used in concert with each other. And that mana within a sporting or high-performance setting, is frequently mentioned with little understanding of its breadth and depth. And if not careful, the word mana will become mainstreamed in Aotearoa and that its deeper meanings, which are not known by the majority of people who use or hear/see it, could be sanitised or worse, exploited.

In his book *The Captain Class* (2016) Sam Walker provides a compelling and comprehensive account of the differences between the good and great sporting teams of the last century. He identified that above all else, there was one variable that correlated with a 'sustained period of excellence' by these great teams – the arrival and departure of one player in particular, the captain (Walker, 2016). The research needed to first answer several foundational questions before unlocking this new theory on leadership: What constituted a team? How do you separate the good teams from the great? And what qualified a team as 'freakish'? The dictionary definition of a 'team' underwhelmingly described it as any group working together on a shared task. For the purposes of his research, Walker made the unpopular call of defining a team as having at least five members who interact with opponents to achieve a desired destination (winning). Additionally, 'a great team' involved a sustained period of time by which such a team dominated their respective opposition/competition. The period of dominance was rounded off at four seasons – to account for variables such as 'good

luck' and the principle of regression which assumes that teams can win competitions and even tournaments (e.g., the Hand of God moment in the 1986 Soccer World Cup) at any given time.

After applying such measures to the above questions, there were several significant 'causalities' to note. None more so than the Chicago Bulls who won six NBA titles between 1991 and 1998 but finished second and third in its division in 1994 and 1995. Walker's reasons for such omissions are clear and can be found in his book. What can also be found is that from across the 25,000 different athletes and teams spanning 40 sporting codes, there were less than 20 great teams that shared seven common leadership behaviours such as possessing an extreme doggedness and focus in competition, along with a willingness to do thankless jobs in the shadows and motivate others with an unheralded passion.

Of the teams that made the final list of the greatest in Walker's book, there were two All Blacks teams. Specifically, the teams of 1986-1990 and 2011-2015. The captains for these teams were Sir Wayne (Buck) Shelford and Richie McCaw. For Buck who appeared in 32 matches for the All Blacks, captaining them from 1987 to 1990 with an unprecedented success rate of 100%, his feat would be matched by no other captain of the modern era. Many will attest to the fact that Buck possessed mana. It was therefore surprising to almost everyone in Aotearoa at the time, except the then All Blacks coach, Alex 'Grizz' Wylie when Buck was unceremoniously dropped from the role and team sparking national rally cries of 'Bring Back Buck'. In an interview decades later, Grizz admitted that this decision was wrong and has regretted this ever since. While the official reason was not explicitly stated, some speculate that it was due to a combination of factors, including performance concerns and team dynamics.

To understand the next section of this thesis, it was important to first understand the concept of mana and locate this within the context of sport. It highlights both the importance of this concept to the tāne and their stories, as well as the role that this concept has had on factors like identity, knowledge transfer, performance, leadership and captaincy. Without explicitly mentioned the word mana, it was clear that this was central to their development. Accordingly, it is both relevant and crucial to the final concluding statements about tāne ora and high-performance.

Theme 1: Wānanga – Knowledge Transmission

Collective leadership is considered a 'relational approach' wherein a set of leaders apply their skills and knowledge within an environment, successfully sharing elements of the leadership role as the situation requires (Yammarino et al., 2014). In a sporting context, collective leadership is present when two or more individuals share responsibility for directing the team toward its goals. Responsibilities are distributed and people within the team lead each other. For sport in the Aotearoa context however, the literature is still building. The All Blacks

offers a potential insight into a collective leadership approach. Johnson et al.'s (2012) study of the All Blacks leadership structures found a misalignment between the informal and formal leaders after the All Blacks disappointing 2003 Rugby World Cup campaign. The new All Blacks coaching staff and captain acknowledged the informal leaders and worked directly with them to develop a collective leadership approach that influenced cultural changes for the benefit of the team and eventually led to one of their most successful winning periods. Since 2004, this has been formalised by the coaching team and has been an effective means of upholding a winning team culture. The collective leadership model that is present within the All Blacks encourages a commitment to being totally honest with oneself and others, the evaluation of the team and in personal reflection (Johnson et al., 2012).

For one tāne in this research, who was also a part of the abovementioned All Blacks collective leadership group for much of his time, he credited his leadership experiences and opportunities to several key people in his career. Alongside his already strong Ngāti Porourangi pedigree for leadership, it was also the then head coach of the Hurricanes whom he says, encouraged him to see the importance of the tasks and destination ahead. This experience helped craft his leadership style into one of the most formidable leaders in the game:

I think 2016 was probably the best year I had in my career. Boydy [Chris Boyd, Hurricanes Head Coach, 2014-2018] came up to me before 2015 and said, "I want you to be captain for the Canes." And at this stage I was pretty reserved. My thinking was built around emotion, so I was pretty hesitant - getting up and speaking in front of people. But I was also at that stage of my career, and I needed something different. As hard as it was, I look back now and that changed me as a person. The responsibility and the maturity. And I didn't know myself but leading up to being the captain of the team for the first time... it just set me up. (Kaipara 2).

For many of the tāne involved in this research, leadership appeared to be something that occurred naturally for them from a young age, while for others it was something that they developed later in their professional careers. For one tāne he spoke about the joy he gained from the extra responsibilities of being a leader. He honed this from a young age and, from his time as Deputy Head Prefect at Christchurch Boys High School – a rare achievement as a tāne:

I guess that's something not many people knew of me [being Deputy Head Boy at CBHS]. I remember being shortlisted for Head Prefect in our second to last year. The other was my best mate who was also my best man at my wedding. So, it was Cool. (Kaipara 6).

Yes, leadership is something that I suppose I just naturally gravitated towards and suppose for me I feel like I really thrive in those positions and enjoy extra responsibility and people rely on you to get things done. (Kaipara 6).

When exploring the sources of this 'leadership comfort zone' this tāne explained that his father was a natural leader, so it was easy to watch him both at home and in his professional setting. He further described some of the traits and characteristics of his father and how this perhaps led to the leadership qualities that he also possesses. It should be noted that this tāne is one of the longest serving Hurricanes and Māori All Blacks players, as it might also add to the description below:

Dad is a guy who's been in the same company for now 43 years. So started there as a 16-year-old sweeping the floors and sort of worked his way up into middle management. And now is one of the directors there. And that's come through with a lot of hard work and loyalty. I suppose he's one of those guys too who is just naturally a leader amongst his mates. (Kaipara 6).

Equally, not all good captains make great leaders. Sam Walkers' *The Captain Class* (2016) characteristics of a great captain are well documented earlier in this thesis. This was further exemplified through Netflix sensation *The Last Dance* (2020) which gives a detailed account of Michael Jordan's very dogmatic and relentless approach to captaincy. A popular quote taken from this documentary to highlight that "he (Jordan) wasn't really a nice guy; he was really a tyrant." Naturally, Jordan's response was to reinforce this perception with "well that's you [your opinion], because you've never won anything" (Jordan, 2020).

Dupuis et al (2006) stated that team captains have three main responsibilities. One is to act as a liaison between the coaching staff and the players, the second to act as a leader during all team activities and then, to represent the team at referee/umpire interfaces, meetings, and press conferences. Dupuis et al. (2006) addressed this by identifying and examining the leadership behaviours of university male ice hockey team captains. Whilst each team captain displayed his own personality, some common personal qualities were evident such as remaining positive, controlling emotions and demonstrating respect to teammates and coaches. There is, however, a way to navigate the middle ground between captaincy and leadership. Captaincy focuses on the practical aspects of leadership describing what people *do* to add the specific value required of them in their respective team context, for the benefit of those they are leading and for those they serve. The critical point is in the ability to 'serve' (your team/unit). All great captains have a strong sense of 'server-ship.' This then elevates their

purpose from winning to something much greater than themselves or the result. A task much harder to achieve.

That [being named captain] definitely flowed into my All Blacks season. I think I got Māori Player of the Year, and I was nominated for International Player of the Year. Not that awards are everything but yeah. I just wanted to lead. I wanted to play well and even in the All Blacks we had a massive exodus of leaders, so I remember Steve [Steve Hansen, All Blacks Head Coach, 2012-2019] was like “We want you to...” I think his phrase was like... “We’ve cut down all these trees and it’s your time to blossom and grow.” (Kaipara 2).

Theme 2: Tuakiri – Identity

Durie (1998) defines identity as “an amalgam of attitudes, cultural knowledge and participation in society” (p.58). For Māori, particular attention is given to self-identification, knowledge of genealogy, participation in cultural activities, involvement with whānau, access to whenua tipu, and use of reo Māori. It is a source of belonging and connectedness which is generally applicable across all demographics. The Social Report (2006) published by the Ministry of Social Development deemed knowledge of te reo Māori an important indicator of Māori cultural identity and “a necessary skill for full participation in Māori society” (p. 81). Developing a secure identity then, is in large part dependent upon several foundational personal (e.g., early childhood attachment; Bowlby, 1979), sociocultural and natural environmental concepts. Te Hoe Nuku Roa (THNR) (Durie, 1995), the only longitudinal study in Aotearoa focused specifically on Māori identity, was tasked with gaining critical information from 700 Māori households across a number of key cultural, health, education and employment indicators. From these indicators, four identity profiles were constructed – secure, positive, notional, and compromised identities.

Advances in cultural identity have progressed since the THNR study. Spearheading these in recent times has been the Multidimensional Model of Māori Identity and Cultural Engagement (MMM-ICE3) (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010). The most recent version of the MMM-ICE3, assesses concepts and characteristics commonly associated with Māori identity from nine domains. Other more recent research includes Fox (2022) and Stevenson (2023) who extend on this seminal work with concepts of cultural embeddedness, defined as the foundation of Māori cultural identity, achieved through engagement with the core features mentioned above. For the tāne involved in this research, they all undertook a survey as part of this study which was adapted from the above two cultural identity surveys used in various contexts to determine what constitutes Māori identity. These questions are also helpful for assessing the extent to which players have access to te ao Māori. Together, these cultural indicators totalled eight questions all exploring some important role that cultural identity had on their wellbeing and/or performance. These indicators included self-identification, whakapapa, marae participation, whānau associations, whenua tipu, contact with Māori people, and use/knowledge of Māori language. The player results to the following indicators of cultural identity are as follows:

Table 3. Self-identification – Do you identify as Māori, Māori/Pākehā, Kiwi or don't identify as Māori?



Table 4. Knowledge of culture – How many generations of your Māori ancestry can you name?



Table 5. Strength of cultural identity – Do you know the name of your iwi, hapū and waka?



Table 6. Involvement in culture – How often did you go to your marae in the last 12 months?

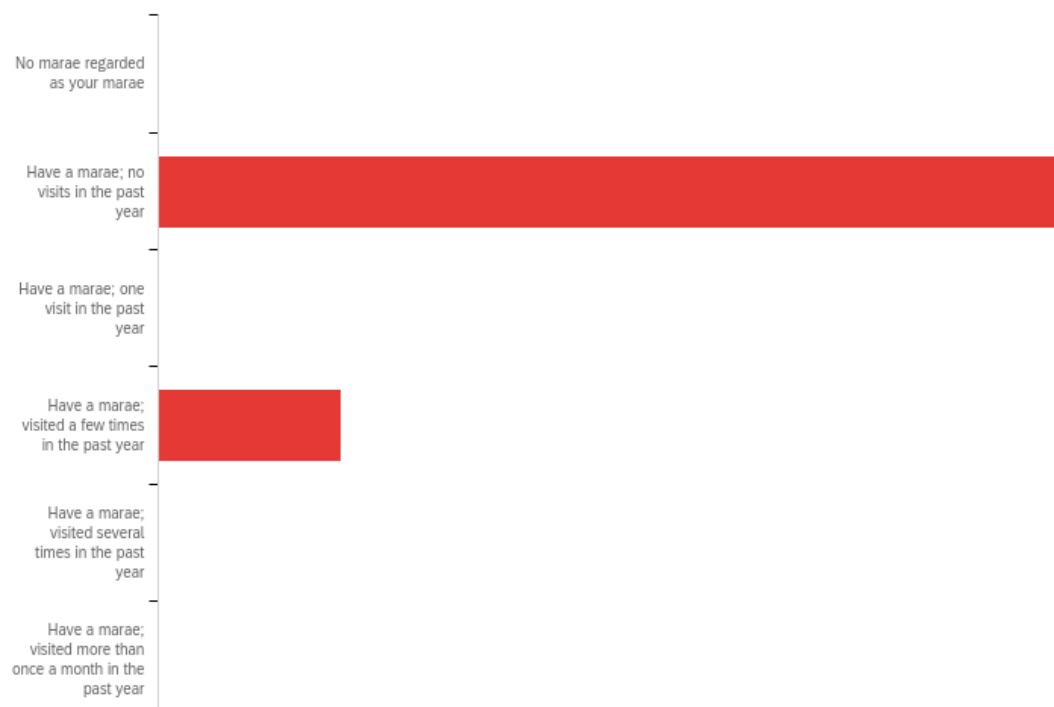


Table 7. Association with others – How often do you associate with other Māori?



Table 8. Importance of maintaining cultural identity – Is being able to speak or understand te reo Māori important to you?



Table 9. *In terms of your relationship with your whānau, what would you say your whānau plays?*



Table 10. *What is your ability at speaking Māori?*



All tāne in this research self-described as being Māori by whakapapa. Their experiences and realities, however, were very diverse, and the data above confirmed this. All the tāne experienced what could only be described as having either 'a secure or positive cultural identity' where accounts of whānau-centred activities led to the development of their knowledge and skillset. That is, there was a heavy involvement of whānau during their upbringings. This ranged from parents having coaching roles through to whānau being involved in broader administrative functions. This allowed the athletes to generate a sense of value, belonging and connection with their own whānau as well as the peers they were playing with.

Dad coached a lot of my age-grade stuff. He kind of stayed involved and like we'd have 'run ins' all the time, but that's why he was our backs coach. Didn't have to worry about me and the other forwards. Yeah, the boys loved him. Just good support. (Kaipara 2).

Another tāne extended on the role of his father as someone who was also heavily involved in his rugby development. He was his coach right through until he reached National Provincial Championship (NPC) level for Hawkes Bay Magpies. Of most significance here however, was his earlier years and the role that his father played in a more subliminal and subconscious way:

My dad was powerlifting and was one of the best in New Zealand. And he was really good at 'Strong Man' too. So, there's always been like photos on the wall of him... you know... pulling trucks and all that sort of stuff. And when you're a seven or eight-year-old kid seeing your dad pulling a truck you think he is the best thing in the world. (Kaipara 1).

Several others also mentioned the role of their fathers in their development. Beyond the usual roles and responsibilities undertaken by their fathers (i.e., providing emotional and physical security), these tāne explained that their fathers also played a specific role in the development of their skillsets, having themselves been involved in rugby at a high level:

I guess it was an easy decision for me [to choose rugby as a sport and career] with the old man being a rugby player himself. He was in the Wellington team. He played for the Junior All Blacks. So, it was a kind of 'do what your old man does' kind of thing. (Kaipara 5).

Yeah, he [dad] played for Manawatū for a long time. He played for the Junior All Blacks and then the Māori All Blacks. Had a trial for the All Blacks but was stuck behind Grant Fox and some other dudes so couldn't quite crack it. But rugby has been a huge part of his whole life. He coached me and my under 5 and 6 rugby teams (Kaipara 7).

Opportunities to hone one's craft also extended to interactions beyond parents and in many cases, included older siblings as a source of development for specific skills. These tāne described a traditional whānau and hapū system of learning for Māori as a likely facilitator of skill and performance development. The testing and challenging of skillsets occurred when these tāne were exposed to both their siblings as well as their siblings' friends who were physically and cognitively stronger. This allowed them to draw comparisons with a higher level of abilities thus creating a gap between their abilities and those of their siblings (and their peers):

There's nine years between me and my oldest brother, and then seven years between me and my next oldest brother. So yeah, I'm quite a bit younger than them. But they were good to me. Pretty inclusive. I was like friends with their friends. I think I matured faster because of them. (Kaipara 5).

I think a big part was because I had an older brother who was a few years older than me. He was sort of at that age where he was just starting, you know, he was just starting to get into the groove of things. And then, I would be there being a hōhā little brother. But from my perspective I was like oh far this is going to be choice. It will help me. (Kaipara 4).

I always remember wanting to get out of kōhanga and go across to the school so I could play at lunch times with a lot of the older kids. I think I must have got some sort of I don't know special exemption or something because I was the only one that was allowed to go out of the kohanga gates and go. You get toughened up pretty quickly. (Kaipara 4).

I would have been about 11 or 12 maybe. He [older brother] was about 16 or 17. He was a good league player. He played second row. And then prop. He was always sent training programmes. So yeah, I remember having to get up in the mornings and do those trainings. Conditioning sessions and things. (Kaipara 3).

Many of the tāne in this research highlighted particularly warm and caring relationships with a primary caregiver. In some cases, it was their fathers who were central to their success in rugby. With many children in society nowadays being reared in solo parent situations, these tāne described a sense of gratitude and appreciation to their parents for setting up the foundations for their success. Some spoke of the experience of not being pressured into playing a particular sport and just being encouraged to be active. A turning point for many of the tāne appeared to occur at a crucial age of development – between 17 years old and 19 years old.

There was nothing but love aye. There was never no pressure from my parents to do anything or you need to make this or make that... they'd followed me wherever. And do whatever it takes. That was cool. (Kaipara 2).

In other cases, tāne mentioned a close bond with their mothers. In one instance, this was set against a common social backdrop of parental separation. This tāne was able to articulate the value of this significant event as being critical to establishing the necessary skills required. Specifically, he mentions the role that the parent-child bond had in his development as a person as well as his skillset:

I think that [parental separation] sort of yeah had a big part to play in, I guess understanding that sort of dynamic or relationship between like a father and a son. So instead, I was always a mommy's boy. Was always a piri pāua clinging to mum from day one so I think through that separation happening that sort of strengthened our bond. (Kaipara 4).

Another tāne mentioned the dual role of both his parents in the development of his skillsets. He witnessed the achievement and success as a child while following his parents around the world in their chosen sports, which led to a mindset of this being the standard expectation within the household. Not that there was any pressure or expectation by the parents, but he articulates this idea of being constantly exposed to this success at a subliminal level (e.g., seeing their medals on the walls) as being important:

My parents were national wood chopping champs, so we used to travel around heaps watching them. We used to go to Aussie every year and they would compete in the World Championships for wood chopping. So just seeing like the success of them... they didn't have to tell me to do the work and get the benefits out of it. Because they

sort of just showed us growing up. Seeing that as a kid was just a given [expectation] that's what [high-performance] life is like. (Kaipara 1).

Several tāne also mentioned an intergenerational experience to their skill development and perhaps their performance on a particular occasion. For one tāne, he recalls the presence of his nan during a test match. While immediate whānau were described as important, for him the presence of his nan gave him a closer relationship to his identity as a Ngāti Porou tāne which he believed enhanced his performance on the field:

For me, I feel like it [haka and whakapapa] ties me back to my mum's side. So, I always think of my Nanna. She passed when I was still at school. But even when I do the anthem, like she's always the lady I think of. It's weird. She's like the one who always comes to mind. I always think of my mum, my kids but she's always the one maybe because she never got to see me play for the All Blacks. And she was very supportive, and she was the lady that always popped up. (Kaipara 2).

The development of identity in and through sport continues to grow. Though commonly understood as silencing Indigenous theories and practices, the 'conventional' field of Sport for Social Change (a sub-field of Sport for Development), allows for sport to be a catalyst to build and develop socially and physically healthy hāpori. For one of the tāne in this research he speaks about his experiences of identity formation during a time of great change, confusion, and uncertainty. In a context where there's a different way of being to the one in which you are accustomed to, this can cause one to question their own way of being/living, and oneself. Is this experience then saying something about the tāne themselves, or the new environment? As some tāne in this research found, they were led to feel like it was more the former:

Yeah, I always remember... not that it's an Ozzie mentality... but some of the old school Ozzie trainers and coaches used to just hate Kiwi's and especially Māori boys. I don't know if it was like a racial tension, but that added to like a whole lot of unease as well. Trying to figure out hey, "Who Am I?" in this whole new world. So that was probably like, yeah, something I definitely battled with while i was over there. (Kaipara 4).

And still, sport continues to attract Māori in large numbers across all age groups, socio-economic levels and common everyday places and spaces, which leverages positive strengths-focused outcomes across physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. It has not quelled Māori participation in the slightest with its roots genealogically linked to Hine Rēhia (the goddess of sport and recreation). Informal gametime appeared to play a significant role in

the development of skills for all the tāne interviewed in this research. For most of them, this began from the age that they could walk and quickly progressed into more formal sport and recreation:

The benefit of going to a small school like QEC meant you didn't have to worry about not making teams because pretty much if you wanted to play a sport you just had to rustle up a few of the bros. Whereas yeah like I remember at [Palmerston North] Boys High... yeah, there was all sorts of other you know politics or different perspectives about things and I just got hōhā. (Kaipara 4).

Pretty much from the get-go you were playing... yeah under 4s right up to 1st XV at Paraparaumu and Wellington Colleges. (Kaipara 2).

All the tāne involved in this research also referred to the importance of playing a variety of sports. Particular mention was given to the benefits other sports had in the development of their broader set of social skills such as communication and leadership. The overlap between their chosen career (rugby) and other sports was specifically notable. Soccer and rugby league were two codes noted for high transferability of skill and development:

I remember I would have been like maybe even eight years old, where I was playing heaps of stuff. I remember playing like twilight hockey, playing cricket. I was even taking tennis lessons. Yeah, played basketball throughout primary... was mini ball back then and then basketball in intermediate. (Kaipara 4).

The old man was like a 'league' for the local league club, so I was drawn to rugby league early on! It was good. I tried everything. And there was never any pressure from my parents you know, just like i wanna play cricket, so I did! (Kaipara 2).

I think I even went to softball training once but yeah, I was just trying to give everything a go and then I think as you get older you kind of find out you know if you're not that great or something or something's more of a passion and then rugby kind of took over but even at college I was like into touch, heaps of rugby, and then we end up playing league Sunday for something to do.

There was always a ball in my upbringing." (Kaipara 2).

Think I would have been about four or five-years-old. I actually picked up soccer first. And then tennis. My mum was the one who put me into soccer. (Kaipara 3).

The potential for sport to contribute to Māori as transformative is reflected in the high numbers for whom sport plays a significant role in their everyday lives. Considering these high levels of Māori engagement, mainstream sporting spaces can be sites of Indigenous resistance and transformation – a platform to challenge and disrupt dominant discourse, cultivate a sense of belonging. For several tāne, the transformation extended further into an elite level in more than one code. For one it was rugby league. For another it was cricket. Many comparisons and discrepancies were recounted between these codes and rugby. Of note here was the mention of having to choose between cricket and rugby once he got to the age of 19 years old. The trajectory of which, would inform the rest of his career pathway:

Cricket was great. A totally different environment to rugby. As you see on TV, the top end of cricket is predominantly white. There's no sort of cohesion as much as there is in rugby. And yeah, I was pretty lucky to play for New Zealand in cricket. Then I had to choose between the Under 19 World Cup or come in for a week with the Hurricanes. (Kaipara 7).

Sport can also fuel notions of 'cruel optimism' or 'unbridled aspirations' where dreams of representing Aotearoa in, for example, rugby (All Blacks/Black Ferns) or netball (Silver Ferns) are unlikely to be realised, thus turning to frustration, disillusionment, or whakamā (shame). One of the single most significant factors reported by tāne in this research and more broadly in the rugby environments, that contributed to moments of internal distress was the fear of failure. In most contexts, this was in relation to not letting down their teammates/peers. But there were also events throughout life (e.g., not securing another contract) where thoughts of failure and rejection were also experienced:

So, I didn't get offered a contract after my 2010 season with the Bulldogs. My plan was to try and kick on into first grade. When I got no offers, it was either go up to Brizzy [Brisbane], try and play league up there. Or just do the mahi in the mines buzz. Or go home. (Kaipara 4).

When explored further, this tāne recounted the impact that the following decisions had on him personally. While not referencing these words specifically, it appeared as though he experienced a significant sense of whakamā (shame and embarrassment). He extended on

this further by unpacking the various whānau and other social interactions that occurred at this time and the activation of 'self-preservation' that occurred during this time:

I ended up moving back to Palmy. That was hard because obviously Palmy is a small place, everyone knows who you are. So, as well as your own expectations of wanting to crack NRL, there was everyone else's expectations and perceptions. You know "oh far you didn't crack. back home now." Yeah, I definitely felt like I failed within myself and that was just magnified or amplified by everyone else as well. (Kaipara 4).

Theme 3: Ngā tapuwae – transitions

Posting up against Lisa and Gabby when I was younger was way rougher than any player in the NBA. The only comeback I had against them was that if they ever got so pissed off that they wanted to smash me, I could usually run to Dad and then they couldn't do anything. (Steven Adams)⁹

Any immediate whānau that boasts two Olympians (one of whom is a Dame), an NBA player, two Tall Blacks (national men's basketball team), and more recently, a Tall Ferns (national woman's basketball team) representative, deserves some academic attention. Especially when you explore further into their childhood upbringing and realise the journey of adversity that this whānau underwent. This was indeed the case for the Adams whānau featuring Dame Valerie, Lisa, Gabriella, and Steven. The next generation of Adams are just as impressive with nieces, Vitolia Tuilavi (Junior Tall Fern) and Sharne Pupuke-Robati (3x3 Tall Fern) both representing their country at various levels. In his inspiring and candid autobiography, *My Life, My Fight* (2018), Steven Adams shares several stories about his childhood and while it is difficult to directly attribute any of these experiences to his on-court performance, there is clearly a contribution. You would be forgiven for thinking that this story centres around Steven, but in fact it begins in Bristol, England, where his father Sid Adams was born, raised and spent his working life in the Merchant Navy. He made landfall for New Zealand as a young man around 1960. Powerfully built, he was your typical able seaman but for the fact he was so tall, somewhere close to 7 feet.

Sid married a local from Rotorua where he settled along Te Ngae Road for the rest of his adult years. Between her and several other relationships he sired 18 children. Steven's mother returned permanently to Tonga while he was still a child leaving Sid as the sole custodian of him and his many offspring. Sid took a job in forestry, Rotorua's other big industry,

⁹ Extracted from his Biography *Steven Adams: My Life, My Fight* (2018)

driving logging trucks. Finding work boots big enough was a constant problem. In 2007, at 76 years of age, Sid passed away in his small Rotorua home. At Sid's funeral, some of the children were discovering each other for the first time. Of note was that most of Sid's relationships had one thing in common (besides their connection to him) – their Polynesian ancestry. This was an incredibly distressing time for many of the children on top of what was already an increasingly disrupted childhood.

A growing body of evidence suggests that adversity or stress-related experiences hold value for athletic development and performance. For example, a recent study examining the developmental history of superelite Olympic champions (i.e., multiple medallists) found that these champions all reported experiencing early-life adversity that, coupled with a positive sport-related experience, was instrumental for their eventual athletic success (Hardy et al., 2017). Is it that the high-performance pathways appear to characterise athletes with little consideration for this phenomenon (childhood adversity)? It would certainly appear as though such pathways tend to resemble the societal gaps of inequity and privilege. In drawing from the opening statement, Steven's story of adversity and resilience are important considerations and one's that have assisted with his introduction to sports performance and more importantly, his ability to perform under pressure at the highest level despite the multiple 'transitions' in life he experienced. Something that he credits to his upbringing and in particular, his sibling (albeit rough) interactions.

Transitions

Transitions are reported constantly as a cause of pressure in sports performance though not well understood. Transition - by definition, is typically characterised by the movement from one state to another. A process driven by multiple factors – internal motivators or catalysts or through external influences or moderators. They may emerge through choice or planning, but just as likely be brought about by uninvited circumstances, leading to outcomes which are both unforeseen and unexpected. For many athletes, these principles of transition will be no less relevant, but will be framed in ways which reflect their current athletic environment or circumstance. Oftentimes centring on a transition into a new environment (e.g., change of clubs), or equally transitioning out of a system altogether (e.g., retirement). Schlossberg's (1981) work offers a useful framework for understanding and conceptualising these transitional milestones and by highlighting four key factors: The Situation, Self, Social Support and Strategies for Coping. As with the opening story, transitions, and transformations for Māori in sports performance athletes might be better understood through models such as Te Kore-Te Pō-Te Ao Mārama; or Tū and Rongo; or Tapu and Noa; or Te Pae Tata and Te Pae Tawhiti. The translations for each concept are not necessary as the focus should instead

be on the intent of each concept which is to recognise a shift from one domain (Te Pō or Tū) to another (Te Ao Mārama or Rongo).

The Situation: Adapting to a new environment

The challenges within rugby and more broadly, high sport performance was discussed at length by the tāne in this research. Many situations were mentioned such as injury, non-selection, high stakes games, personal identity, relationship issues, and contractual discussions. For all but one of the tāne, the realities of relocating to the city was inevitable. For some they were relocating from another island but for others it was literally down the road (from Kāpiti to Wellington). In all their respective situations however, there was a significant challenge to overcome. Some of this revolved around familiarity and also proximity to whānau support. In the cases below these were rare experiences of having to do this multiple times for different sporting codes across two different countries:

So, I went over [to Australia] at the end of 2008 for a preseason and managed to stay for the 2009 and 2010 seasons. Yeah, that was hard. Feeling disconnected from others and with yourself... in a whole new world. Made it really hard to navigate. That whole two years being in a new city, being around new people. Trying to figure out hey, “who am I” in this whole new world. So yeah, something I definitely battled with while I was over there. (Kaipara 4).

We actually moved around quite a bit with Dad [being a professional rugby league player]. In 1998 We moved from Canberra to Townsville when he played for the Cowboys for two or three years. And then to Melbourne for a year or two. And then back home to Wainui. (Kaipara 3).

Structural

Structural challenges were also mentioned throughout this research. In some cases, these stretched back into childhood and later adolescence with one tāne citing a “pinnacle event” during his secondary schooling, that consisted of a disagreement between his mother and Palmerston North High School principal:

So, my brother and I wanted to watch a touch tournament. Mum rang up the school and said we were going to be away for the first few periods. We had a few cousins playing. Then we’d head back from school afterwards that we were going to get suspended because the principal at that time didn’t think it was a good enough reason

for us to take those two periods off. Mum disagreed so there was like an argument happening. And yeah, i always remember her just saying, "oh well look, I don't think this is the right school for my boys if you're going to suspend them for something like that." (Kaipara 4).

What might have appeared as a rather trivial event in the principal's eyes was perhaps otherwise evidence of structural barriers to progress. Where there was an opportunity for rich and deep mauri-enhancing whānau interactions was instead viewed as 'a waste of time' and/or unimportant within the traditional education lens. The principal's rather narrow and fixed view of adolescent development was confusing and frustrating for this tāne and his mother. Weighing up the costs/benefits of missing two periods of class in the name of positive whānau and adolescent development seemed a 'no-brainer'. The internal conviction, strength and belief shown by his mother to maintain her philosophical position (and later, teaching pedagogy) would pay dividends:

I could easily say that that [event] kick started all of the amazing things that happened for me. I feel like I definitely thrived during my time at QEC [Queen Elizabeth College]. Mainly around the big whānau feel. You know, teachers, mentors, coaches, students, the whole field they definitely shaped me to become you know, a pretty well rounded and grounded person. (Kaipara 4).

Relationships

The tāne in this research discussed the matter of personal relationships in many ways. Some described their own intimate relationships and the challenges therein. This was noteworthy though goes without saying in most instances of life stressors and indeed, sports performance environments. Others however, preferred to talk about the nature of their relationships with other players in their team which was of particular interest to this research as further advances can be drawn from these experiences. The development of these relationships it seemed was connected to a shared life experience:

Yeah, some of us I guess were sort of cut from the same cloth. A lot of boys from separated parents... not too well off. Yeah. The same sort of group we grew up with from like primary right the way through so yeah, we seemed to click pretty well we were always yeah, we're just similarly wired. (Kaipara 4).

When explored further, the nature of these relationships was further unpacked as a possible determinant of being a good teammate and player. What was also expressed during this interview was a sense of vulnerability in sharing a self-reflection moment of his development as a person/friend:

That's one sort of memory that sticks out in terms of helping me. Because I'd been playing with kids that were older than me, I felt like I was always ahead of my own age. So, when I'd play with players my age, and they weren't sort of up to the level yeah I was pretty much a dick. An asshole teammate to everyone. Because yeah, I just wanted to be as good as I could. They couldn't make mistakes, and if they did, I'd just rip into them. And so, I always remember, my mum pulling me up actually saying "it's not the way to treat other people". And I think yeah, I learnt a good lesson that day (Kaipara 4).

Again, this was unpacked even further to better gauge the depth and magnitude of this moment. It was clear that this was a defining moment in the development of not just his performance abilities, but his maturity as a good human being.

Yeah, I was just an 'egg' to my teammates, and I probably carried that right through until my first couple years of high school. And so just understanding that you're working with teammates and trying to be a mean touch player or be the man, there's ways about your role as a leader. Can't just be the best player, you have to be the best teammate. (Kaipara 4).

Relocation

The pressure of relocating from one home to another is daunting enough without the added challenge of moving cities or even countries. This on top of learning essentially a new game (pointing to the significant difference between the amateur and professional game of the same code). Many sports clubs nowadays have finally come to understand these experiences and navigate this well. But as some of the tāne in this research found, there is still much work to do:

Yeah, I moved out of home, but at the same time, I was sort of going home you know, most weekends or like on a Saturday night spend Sunday at home. So that transition wasn't yeah too difficult I felt like I was only just down the road from Palmy from Mum, the bro, and the sis.

But then yeah, I was off to Sydney [to take up a Rugby League opportunity]. That was pretty daunting. Pretty freaky. Like it was my first sort of few months understanding the game the league obviously enjoyed it, loved watching it and loved playing, being involved in it, but to go to Sydney, away from home, big city, you know, just a whole lot of unknowns. Yeah, it was quite freaky. And I feel like I definitely struggled over there. Just trying to find my place and you know. (Kaipara 4).

Selection

Though not mentioned as greatly as some of the other challenges experienced, selection was still mentioned, nonetheless. Much of what was described however was more in relation to coaching perspectives and preconceived notions rather than selection based on ability. The following was from a tāne and while this was from a secondary school recollection, he believed that the same issues existed at the highest level of sport too (aka unconscious bias):

There were all sorts of politics or different perspectives about things, and I got hōhā that I wasn't allowed to play for the senior touch team. I was only year nine and they said, "oh look nah its only seniors allowed to play" and I'm like "aye bro I just been dusting up your senior team at intermediate normal last year." (Kaipara 4).

I remember back in 2019 just before the Rugby Championship and I got a call from Shag to say that I was unfit and wasn't selected. Didn't make the World Cup squad either. I didn't take it as well then as I would now. Just didn't 'stay ready'. Whereas now, I just get excited for the next challenge, like playing for the Māori team. (Kaipara 3).

Injuries and Mental Health

The economic, social, and political value of sport and high-performance has continued to grow with greater participation in events such as Olympics and Paralympics than ever before (Westerbeck & Hahn, 2013). With the increasing professionalisation and globalisation of this industry has come the double-edged sword of commodification which has led to shifts in both the philosophy and structures of high-performance environments to include greater awareness around mental health. The WHO defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community. Mental health disorders are common in Aotearoa with two typical measures of prevalence – life-time

occurrence (the condition has been experienced during one's life), and the 12-month prevalence (indicative of recent morbidity). Other measures of risk for specific populations include hazard ratios, relative risks, and odds-ratios. The most common mental health conditions are depression and anxiety.

Several recent media articles within sports performance have raised public awareness of mental health challenges. Evidence to date varies widely in the reported prevalence of mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety, and a systematic review conducted in 2016 found that around one in three elite athletes reported symptoms consistent with a depressive episode (Golding et al. 2019). The stress and pressure to perform, demands of training, traveling, injuries, social standing, and forced retirement from a professional sporting career are among some of the common significant contributors toward the development of mental health challenges in athletes. Mental health challenges can have detrimental effects on sporting performance and can severely affect player welfare.

Injuries and de-selection are an accepted part of the high-performance industry. Tāne in this research were oftentimes philosophical about these setbacks stating that it was 'part of the game'. Difficulties arose however, when there was some uncertainty – especially in the context injuries or the 'return to play' programme/protocol. In one case, a tāne talks about sustaining two completely different injuries at approximately the same time of his career. One that was clear and measurable and the other, seemingly vague, and difficult to evaluate for prognostics:

In 2017 I was six or so games off my 100 for the Canes which was a big motivation and milestone for me and then ended up being out for about three months with concussion. That was pretty tough... I remember having a conversation with my wife and was like "this might be it... I might have to retire." Because at least when you break your hand or something, you know you're out for six to nine [weeks] and you can come back. It was just the uncertainty of it all. But I stuck at it and got back [into the All Blacks]. I still wasn't myself. There was a lot of fear in the way I played because of the head injury, and I think a lot of it was anxiety. And then we played France I kicked the ball. Probably shouldn't have kicked it [laughs]. Chased it. Their fullback grabbed it. Stepped. I stepped. Bang ACL [anterior cruciate ligament]. And then yeah, I was out for 11 months.

When I did it [ACL], it was almost like a relief. A really weird feeling like I was gutted but it was like this massive weight off my shoulders because I was dealing with all the anxiety and fear of the concussion. Yeah, I actually remember being my true self again after that. (Kaipara 2).

Injuries were also described articulately by the tāne in this research as a 'build up' of events over the course of many years. From the social acceptance and validation as adolescents through to the various messages received from coaches, peers, and the public. This then contributed to the development of their identities as individuals as well as athletes.

I remember trying to go back [after shoulder surgery] and doing some healing, from childhood around all that high achiever validation from, you know, family and friends. And then that getting taken to a whole new level when you're, you know, on the world stage. Sort of being put on a pedestal. And the pedestal just getting, you know, completely wiped out. And suddenly, I feel like I'm sinking. (Kaipara 4).

Culture shock

Some tāne spoke of the transition into high-performance settings as being like a 'culture shock' in that it was a significantly different world to the one that they were accustomed to. While all the tāne described being comfortable with high workloads, the expectations in some cases seemed overwhelming and/or unnecessary:

I feel like the biggest challenge was just the daily grind. So having to get up you know at 5.30am catch a bus, take a 15-minute walk to the bus stop, catch a bus, go to the train station, catch two trains to go and do the teacher's aide work. Or work at a retail store or labouring, all these different jobs throughout the day and then go train in the afternoon. The trainings were absolute killers. (Kaipara 4).

When you have gone from one cultural background into another this can be a significantly confusing time. In a context where there's a different way of being to the one in which you are accustomed to, can cause you to question your own way of being/living, and yourself as a person. Is this experience then saying something about the tāne themselves, or the new environment? As some tāne in this research found, they were led to feel like it was more the former:

Yeah, I always remember... not that it's an Ozzie mentality... but some of the old school Ozzie trainers and coaches used to just hate Kiwi's. I don't know if it was like a racial tension, but that added to like a whole lot of unease as well. Trying to figure out hey, "Who Am I?" in this whole new world. So, that's probably like, something I've definitely battled with while I was over there. (Kaipara 4).

The self

Injuries can also be viewed as a form of transition and therefore pressure. One tāne sustained a horrific leg injury in 2012 for the Hurricanes, which he described as having just as much of an impact on him as a person as it did as a player. He articulated the transition he went through at an identity level which led to a forming of 'the self' albeit under trying circumstances:

The hit [broken ankle] that I took as a rugby player had a direct impact on me as a human as well. Because I didn't have anything to fall back on. I went to some dark places. Places I hadn't been before. I cared about social media. I cared about what reporters were saying. What the public were saying. (Kaipara 9).

This early career transition would later be transformational for this tāne as this would not be the only serious injury he would sustain. Having found form and a return to the All Blacks side in the 2022 season, he would tear his achilles tendon in the final act of the final game of the All Blacks season. While most would be distraught and upset, this tāne was instead, philosophical, upbeat, and optimistic about his 2023 prospects.

Prompted by the question of "if you could speak to your younger self, what would you say?", some insightful reflections from some of the greatest ever Māori male high performers were shared. These were shared either as a means of facilitating a smoother transition into high-performance for future Māori tāne, or simply as a reflexive exercise for them personally:

Looking back there was no way I was ready [to be picked for the All Blacks] before 25 years old. I reckon I would've fucked it up or done something real stupid and never got back in. But I think once I figured it all out, I just wanted to stay in there and I reckon if you are a good bugger then you'll stay and if you're not, you'll get found out real quick. (Kaipara 2).

The realisation in this case was one of 'self-awareness' and the importance of maturity in high-performance settings regardless of sport. The foundation for developing sound self-awareness is the ability to have positive social interactions (i.e., "be a good bugger"). He extended on this concept further when discussing a significant 'alcohol-fuelled' event that occurred earlier during his rugby career. It was a moment that he described as both 'enlightening' and 'regretful' for it was after this that his level self-awareness grew:

I don't know how to tell myself that but just be more conscious of myself. More aware of what I was doing. Awareness. I still think about it [a life changing incident] now and I'm 36 so it was like 10 years ago. And everyone thinks it's funny but you're the one that has to live with it. It was bad. Yeah, lots of regret and I just wished I had that awareness. (Kaipara 2).

Similarly for Kaipara 4, the development of his sense of self also occurred after experiencing several setbacks. One was through injury and the other through poor performance. These instances made him realise that identifying oneself by 'what' you do (e.g., rugby player) is only a small part of your identity. That actually, you are born with various characteristics (e.g., whakapapa, mana etc) that form a more significant part of your identity:

It was probably a catalyst for wanting to get through being injured. That experience made me completely identify myself as a rugby player. And so, through wanting to explore these other parts of me and get in touch with my Māoritanga, my culture that has actually strengthened me. I dunno if I wanna say that it's rebuilt me, because I was always this person anyway. But it kind of has. (Kaipara 4).

Pressure

Baumeister's (1984) description of pressure as being "any factor or combination of factors that increase the importance of performing well on a particular occasion" is straightforward (p.610). However, others have argued that it is not the pressure (i.e., importance to perform one's best) in and of itself, but rather the subsequent stress response (e.g., fear), resulting from a subjective evaluation of the situation, which will negatively affect an athlete's functioning (Oudejans & Pijpers, 2009; Vine et al., 2016). Simply put, pressure is fear, anxiety, stress, injuries, non-selection, transition, self-doubt, frustration, threat, and all other related emotional and cognitive phenomena.

Performing under pressure is both a biological and social phenomenon. All high-performance athletes experience pressure. This is well understood through the literature and can be best explained by the structure of the brain in three sections. Firstly, the brainstem which is responsible for our major physiological and survival responses. The same system can be found in reptiles and mammals and is widely regarded as the 'old brain', the first part of the brain to be fully developed (at birth). Secondly, the limbic system which is responsible for the processing of information about the emotions and body, similar to a computer's anti-virus programme. This system is typically fully developed within the first year of life and has a critical connection to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979). Sitting alongside this second section is the

basal ganglia which is a set of nerve centres most closely associated with our automatic physical responses. Lastly, the cerebral cortex, which is the last system of the brain to develop (sometimes into our mid 20s) and is associated with left and right hemispheres of the brain. In short, the right hemisphere and limbic system deal primarily with feelings. And our left hemisphere deals with thinking.

Neuropsychological theories on pressure assert that it is a manifestation of a task-specific focal dystonia (Adler et al, 2005; Altenmüller & Jabusch, 2009) which is a hyperkinetic movement disorder characterised by involuntary muscle contractions, which include jerking, freezing, cramping, tremors, and/or spasms. The dystonia is considered task-specific when it occurs during highly trained movements. For example, muscle contractions in a golfer's arms or hands interrupt his or her putting stroke (i.e., the yips), or when a musician's hands tighten involuntarily while playing his or her instrument (i.e., musician's cramp). A definitive aetiology remains unknown. Possible causal contributions include stroke, head trauma, metabolic diseases, dopamine blocking drugs, subcortical biochemical changes due to aging, deterioration in the basal ganglia, and/or abnormalities in the dopaminergic system in the basal ganglia (Hallett, 2011).

Another neurological factor that may contribute to pressure is impairment of the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex influences our ability to assess situations, as well as modulate emotions and impulses; it also plays a role in selective attention and working memory. Stress and anxiety can overwhelm the prefrontal cortex, increasing the likelihood of poor decision making, dysregulated affect, and socially inappropriate behaviours (Hiser & Koenigs, 2018; Lee & Grafton, 2015). Additionally, distracting, intrusive, and/or ruminative thoughts can emerge when selective attention and working memory are compromised by stress/anxiety, making it difficult to focus on the task at hand (Balderston et al., 2017). Sociological theories suggest that pressure derives from our feeling system (our right hemisphere and limbic system) which is primed for survival and is the genesis to the 'fight-flight-freeze' response system. This is evolutionary and links to standard predator and prey scenarios. In more contemporary times, this might be more a threat to ego, than perhaps to one's life. If we can't overcome or free ourselves from a perceived threat, our primitive reactions start to kick in.

The strategies

Stress management and coping interventions have long formed a central feature of sport psychology (Kent et al., 2018; Murdoch et al., 2021). One intervention that has gained increasing attention over the past decade is the use of pressure training (PT) (Fletcher & Arnold, 2021; Low et al., 2021). According to Kegelaers (2022), the literature appears to fall into two broad categories of PT. A first approach has considered PT specifically as a means

to reduce choking on a well-defined sport-specific task (Gröpel & Mesagno, 2019). The second considers PT as a broader stress management intervention, aimed at helping athletes cope with a wider range of different and sometimes unexpected stressors (Henriksen, 2018; Kegelaers et al, 2020). The inclusion of PT activities such as planned disruptions in the development of talented and elite athletes is worth exploring as planned disruptions through stress exposure can play a role in the development of athletes' resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016; Galli & Gonzalez, 2015; Kegelaers & Wylleman, 2018). This idea derives from Fergus and Zimmerman's (2005) challenge model of resilience, which is premised on the idea that the stress associated with adversity will, over time, lead individuals to develop both personal (e.g., coping strategies) and environmental (e.g., use of social support) protective resources. This is a process also referred to as steeling (Rutter, 2006).

The theory of deliberate practice originates from research into the development of expertise by Ericsson et al. (1993) and has been used to varying degrees as a practice design. However, misrepresentations of Ericsson's original research has resulted in an overemphasis of practice volume over quality or type, resulting in athlete expertise being quantified or predicted according to practice volume. Specifically, and most notably, Malcolm Gladwell, author of internationally acclaimed *Outliers* (2008) book calculated that based on the theory of deliberate practice, in order to be the best in your sport/position, you must practice for 10,000 hours. It was not long before kids the world over were spending any and every waking moment practicing kicks, shots and passes in the pursuit of skill development.

Notwithstanding this confusion, the deliberate practice approach continues to be widely utilised to specific aspects of sport and athlete skill development such as its use with PT. More recently the deliberate practice theory has also reached into the health workforce development industry (Miller, 2014). Through his research on the evolution of therapy, Miller identified several significant gaps and risks for the therapeutic profession. Firstly, he found that in the last 75 years, the number of treatment approaches have grown from 60 to well over 1000; there were over 55,000 'how to' books on therapy; and most alarmingly, there were little or no known differences in outcomes between professionals and their student equivalents (Miller et al., 2011). If anything, this all but confirmed that therapists were becoming increasingly out of touch with the needs of the client.

Secondly, Miller's research team identified that after following 170 therapists over a period of 17 years, on average their outcomes declined over time (Goldberg et al., 2016). In other words, one's therapeutic potency gets worse not better. It was the largest study to date on the effect of experience on outcome. This then sent the profession into its own 'pressure-filled' frenzy sparking defences such as lack of funding; societal problems being more complex than ever before; and that the research was wrong. The findings, however, did identify certain therapists who demonstrated better outcomes than the rest. The one common practice they

had in common was the tendency to ask for feedback, which is otherwise known as, deliberate practice (Miller et al., 2015).

Mātauranga

The interface between haka and sports performance is an emerging one though unsurprising to many who have recognised the synergies between the two for decades. Concepts such as ihi, wehi, wana and tapu are often recited. The idea of someone being uplifted by their ancestors during an important performance (i.e., kapa haka or rugby) might otherwise be considered as mere nonsense to non-Māori. Despite this, and for well over a century now, sport performance has continued to draw performance enhancements from such mātauranga as the haka.

For Māori, how to transfer that which we know to be effective, to other fields of Māori endeavour, performance, and participation (including education, health, business, media, the environment, the arts, and social change) is crucial and remains an ongoing challenge. The laying down of a Māori All Blacks jersey in recognition of Anthony 'Axel' Foley's death has since been viewed by over 10 million people on YouTube. Cynics might believe this to be nothing more than marketing theatrics, but for those closer to the environment, this was an expression of tikanga. It was a form of poroporoaki (a ceremonial farewell) except the contemporary 'marae' in this case was Munster's hallowed stadium. It was an acknowledgement and elevation of Foley's mana. It was an exemplar to how one might go about transferring mātauranga through other fields of Māori endeavour and performance. This was best exemplified by one of the tāne who stated that:

That just opened my eyes up to like a whole other perspective of looking at high-performance. I guess, having a bit more understanding of who I am and that taha Māori was critical. (Kaipara 4).

There were extensions to the Munster story further reinforcing other Māori concepts (e.g., mana) within sports performance. As the Māori All Blacks boarded the airplane to return home when they were greeted with an impromptu and rapturous applause from Irish travellers on the flight. A strange feeling since the Māori All Blacks were humbled 27-14 that day. It appears the 'Foley gesture' reached much deeper into the memories of Irish fans. Success therefore needs to be defined more broadly than by ensuring you are on the right side of the scoreboard. In some cases – especially for Māori athletes – success is just as much about mana and representing your ancestry and whakapapa well.

Sport too reflects culture and has never been isolated from the societies within which they occur. How people respond to a haka for instance, is reflective of their culture (turn backs, do warm up drills, stand and face, advance, laugh). The South African supporters make noise during the All Blacks haka. That is how they express their culture (with whistling, lots of chants, cheering and shouting, and vuvuzelas!). It is likely that the haka provides an emotional response for Māori athletes too because their identity as Māori is at their core. Such was the case for one tāne in this research who shared his experience of leading the haka for the first time ever in his life. This just happened to also be for the All Blacks. Among many things, this tāne talked about the energy he generated not only from the haka, but also from the reaction of his opponents on the day. Likewise, the performance benefits he believed were generated from him leading the haka were equally clear:

It was something I kind of always wanted to do to represent my Māori side like it was something really meant a lot to me. I knew if I didn't do it, I'd regret it so yeah when the boys asked me, I think I texted you just like to get the 'sign off' from the brothers that been in that department. And got the thumbs up. I was nervous as. I just didn't want to forget the words. But it was good because when I started Tonga walked forward and because I'm quite an emotional fulla, i was like... lessgo, it kind of geed me up even more and was like alright we on. So, it [wairua] kind of took over and I just let it and yeah, I just did it how I felt, and it was awesome. I'm very proud that i got the chance to do it. (Kaipara 2).

The direct impact of that opportunity was evident on the night too as this tāne explained that the honour of leading the haka was not taken lightly and that he had a duty to his whānau, hapū and iwi to not only do the haka justice but also perform. It was a matter of mana as far as he was concerned:

I got a couple [3] tries too. I never told my parents I was doing it. It's cool. You don't know how much it means to people aye that. Like, I've had so many people come up to me and you know, say congratulations. That was awesome. Yeah, even Derek [Lardelli] came up and he was like "you were alright. You weren't great. But you weren't bad." You know, the man himself. I was like "Thanks bro I'll take that". So stoked that I got the chance. Very proud moment in my All Blacks career.

It [leading haka] definitely gives me like, a lift aye like. Yeah, it's weird. It's like a spiritual kind of feeling. Like mana. It's hard to explain. I think every time i have done it i have played well. They gave me a bit of an edge. (Kaipara 2).

Rituals and habits

The science behind rituals is clear. The more an athlete can lock their day-to-day activities into habits (system one thinking), the more cognitive capacity they have for retaining new knowledge (system two thinking) leading to greater rangatiratanga. Key to ensuring sound rituals and habits is the importance of preparation planning. Many of the tāne downplayed the nature of their rituals and habits thinking that the source of their success was likely to be elsewhere. For one tāne, the thought that there was a connection between him making his lunch, and his longevity and consistency in the game seemed too simplistic:

Yeah. I've always done it [prepared meals] throughout the day. Regardless of what's there [catering at the club]. I've always just made my own lunch. It's all part of my preparation. But it's nothing too scientific. (Kaipara 6).

Preventative rehabilitation sessions, otherwise known as prehab after gym and/or training days throughout the week was reported by several tāne as being critical to their performance consistency and injury prevention. Specifically, one tāne reflected on his long and enduring career pointing directly to one activity – stretching. Interestingly however, there were several other (more unconscious) activities identified that were also occurring at the same time:

I've been pretty fortunate throughout my career. Like I've had quite a lot of niggles but never anything long term. Well, nothing that's required surgery so far. I reckon it has to do with my stretching. 20 minutes every night. Only day I don't do it is after game night. I go straight to sleep. I will try and read something on my phone at this time. Learn something new. It might have been 2018 when I started doing it. I just got sick of the soft tissue injuries, and I was like I'll just try this [stretching] and see if I get something out of it. I've stuck with it ever since. (Kaipara 6).

Natural strategies

Opportunities to engage in the taiao (natural environments) occur in different ways for tāne high performers. The connection to the natural environments doubles as both a recovery process (from the game) as well as pursuing ongoing physical strength and conditioning. This is a reframe from traditional thinking which might suggest that we should go for runs outside to achieve health and fitness. For this athlete, these aspects would instead be incidental and/or secondary to the primary aim of engaging with the taiao (and gathering kai):

When I think about it now, it [lung capacity] could have been due to my deer hunting and diving. You know that breathing. Because I'll be out hunting or diving. You're walking up a steep hill, but you still have to be quiet otherwise you will scare off the deer. So, you have to get up there fast, but still control your breathing to be quiet. So that ability to slow your heart rate down and hold the gun still at the same time. I think that kind of plays into my fitness. (Kaipara 8).

There were also opportunities for engaging with the environment much closer to home for another athlete. Though his reasons varied in terms of a direct link to his high-performance development as he described in detail being surrounded by multiple hua rākau (fruit trees) growing up. Interestingly however, he later realised the connection this had to the wairua of his nan and perhaps how this might have been actual source of his enhancement him as a person and athlete (as opposed to the multiple fruit trees):

So, we had heaps of fruit trees. We had nectarine trees out front, apricot trees out back, feijoa trees. We had strawberry beds like full on strawberry beds. So, I grew up like just being able to grab fruit off the trees. When I was about 10 or 11 years old, we moved to Pirimai. The first thing that we did was grow feijoa trees and Mandarin trees. We just did not like not having fruit trees. So again, yeah, we had like fruit trees everywhere. (Kaipara 1).

My nan [dad's mum] used to have a peach tree in her backyard. She used to like jar them all and make fruit and preservatives and stuff that was like sort of her thing. And when she passed away my old man dug out the little shoots on the side of the tree and passed them around the family so they could have that connection. (Kaipara 1).

Extending on from the above connection to the taiao was the very practical implication and benefits of being exposed to greater qualities of air and water. As another athlete suggested, the healing properties in fresh air and water are becoming underestimated as we become increasingly acclimatised to the urban way of living:

Yeah, you can definitely smell the difference between being in a big urban city and then going into nature, into the rural space. You can smell that fresh clean air. Taste that fresh clean water which is quite different I reckon. (Kaipara 8).

Practical strategies

Many practical strategies were discussed by tāne within this study. Some were described as deep and meaningful strategies. Others were initially viewed as trivial and somewhat accidental in nature though would later become crucial to their development and success. As one athlete for instance found out, the value he placed on something as simple as a 'wall planner' would become a revelation for him:

Ever since I made a planner like a weekly monthly planner, I ended up going to Manawatū [Turbos]. From there I decided to sit down and have a moment to myself. Started to set goals. Plan out my weeks. What I wanted to get better at and how that could kind of worked out the best for me. I got a whiteboard I brought from K-Mart and put it straight on the wall. So, every time I went into my room, I could see it. (Kaipara 8).

Another practical strategy discussed was the importance of public speaking skills for tāne. It remains a crucial though elusive concept within the high-performance setting and often speaks to the nature of leadership. The transferability of public speaking for Māori however is not so elusive with the oratory nature of te ao Māori. As one athlete found out, his natural ability to communicate within the team despite only being in his first year of the high-performance scene:

I always used to be really shy and scared of coaches. If I had something in my head, I wouldn't say it to the group. And then someone would say it and then I'd be like "Far I had that in my head". Ever since then I said to myself "I need to talk more to get better." (Kaipara 8)].

The supports

Pressure training appears to fall into two broad categories – performance enhancement and stress management. This subsection is concerned with the latter. This is because, although insightful and important consolidations of the existing literature, by focussing on performance as the primary outcome of pressure training these reviews did not directly address the mechanisms and the broader links to wellbeing nor the supports that might be required (Alder et al., 2016; Kegelaers, Wylleman, & Oudejans, 2020; Low, Freeman, et al., 2022). Pressure training activities can be traced back to traditional clinical techniques such as systematic desensitisation (Wolpe, 1958), stress inoculation training (Meichenbaum, 1985), and related nonclinical approaches such as stress exposure training (Driskell, Sclafani, & Driskell, 2014). Analogous to medical inoculation, these approaches have a long history of being used to treat phobias and other anxiety-related disorders via gradual exposure to the anxiety-inducing stimuli, often progressing from imagery or role playing to in vivo exposure (Fletcher & Arnold, 2021).

The notion that athletes may find some benefit through the exposure to (managed) stressors is not necessarily new for Māori either and can be more broadly traced back to traditional exercise practices such as mau rākau, waka ama, and ki o rahi. More contemporary forms such as kapa haka in preparation for Te Matatini Māori undertakes a form of pressure training. The ‘dress rehearsals’ for instance is often an opportunity to simulate potential stressors that could occur on the day of performance. This might be considered an equivalent of systematic desensitisation. The mental resilience literature has also shown some promise with coaches creating a challenging yet supportive practice environment for their athletes (Kegelaers & Wylleman, 2019; Sarkar & Hilton, 2020). Beaumont et al. (2015) argued that creating pressure situations within practice was an important approach to develop robust sport confidence. Both Van Rens et al. (2021) and Kent et al. (2022) confirmed this assertion when they found that athletes reported increased confidence in their ability to perform under pressure following a PT intervention – specifically mastery within the practice environment.

It would appear therefore that PT can not only improve performance under pressure but also play a vital role in health and wellbeing through the development of resilience and mental aptitude. However, scholars have warned that ill-considered or ineffective implementation of PT activities could lead to unhealthy and even abusive practice environments. Advancing our understanding of the process of PT is thus not only important to understand how it can be effectively implemented, but crucial to ensuring a safe environment and culture. As alluded to in the introduction section to this thesis, tāne are often expected to be many things to many different groups of people. In terms of peer supports, this was viewed as those peers within the game (e.g., teammates) and those outside of the game. This was a revelation – that tāne would deliberately separate out peers into their own respective ‘boxes’.

Regardless, when exploring the 'within group', athletes in particular spoke about drawing various lessons from those of the same position as him who had been in 'the system' for a long time and held good mana across the game. Specifically, there were some traits and characteristics that were described as especially helpful such as having an 'growth mindset':

I have a lot that I can improve on especially like scrummaging. You're always learning. Ben May is 40 years old and he's coming in and he's still trying to work on stuff that he's not getting right. That's inspiring to me. I know I have a strong base so I back myself generally. But also know that there are gains to be made elsewhere. (Kaipara 1).

For those peers outside of the game, another athlete also described the nature of these and the roles they played in his development. He reported a sense of social diversity among the peers he connected with. These appeared to enhance the development of his skills for communication, listening and learning:

I'm part of a large group of friends. Most of my time was spent down at the local rugby club or at the skate park. Yeah, my childhood was great. Was really family orientated. Always with friends. Always a lot of people. I think that's why I guess now it's kind of shaped me into being a 'people person'. I kind of just like being around it. But yeah, obviously the more people you're around, the more you're exposed to different types of people. (Kaipara 7).

A common default for support in situations faced with challenges such as transitions, injuries, and poor performance, is whānau. How these are described and indeed utilised however, is based on each individual athlete. For instance, one athlete spoke of the nature of his upbringing and the heavy intergenerational involvement of whānau throughout. In many instances this can be a source of distress (cramped surroundings etc), but for this athlete he describes this as both a natural and also cornerstone of who and what he is now:

Nan's whare was like the hub so everyone would always be coming and going there was always a cousin or an aunty, or like a family living there. We used to go there [to Auckland from Napier] quite a lot to see them. (Kaipara 1).

Hobbies, interests, and friendships

One of the hallmark symptoms of depression and anxiety is anhedonia or the lack of previously pleasurable activities. Critical to sustaining good levels of mood, therefore, is the need for hobbies, interests, and friendships. The variety and diversity of these activities reported by the tāne in this research would be too many to mention. Though one tāne managed to summarise these adequately as a general indication of all the tāne:

Because I had so many different interests like video games, cars, and obviously rugby, I could connect with quite a lot of different people. So, I hung out with like real nerdy kids. Then there was also, because I'm brown, so the hood boys I could sort of bounce off as well. And then obviously I was playing first XV, so I was friends with all the rugby boys. Yeah, I could sort of like float in between because I had that connection with them all. (Kaipara 1).

But I also had my two close mates, that I would say has been really important for me. One of them I grew up with. Both met in primary. We used to game a lot. He was real smart real intelligent so I would hang out with him. He was my best mate. Yeah, my friends I think, shaped me to be like the guy I am now. (Kaipara 1).

Professional supports

All the tāne in this research acknowledged the importance of formal and professional supports like seeing a counsellor or a psychologist when experiencing any of the situational stressors outlined earlier. For one athlete, he recounted his experience freely as he mentioned both the insights, he gained about himself and in particular the sense of validation that he could manage most of these setbacks himself (akin to the role of a carver):

I saw this psychologist at the concussion clinic. He was good. I remember like... because what you don't know you don't know, and he just gave me some systems and structures to manage my emotions... because the concussion was consuming me. What I learnt then was that I can do this by myself. So yeah, the chat to people in those departments kind of helped me get back in 2018 to a better space. And back in the 2019 World Cup squad. (Kaipara 2).

After chatting with our mindset crew, I just learnt to develop a 'carry on' and 'look forward' mindset; focus on body language and those things. I remember our league

coach encouraged us to keep our hands down by the side for faster recovery. (Kaipara 8).

Theme 4: Whakaatu – Practice & Motivation

Today's society is obsessed with the idea of being 'first' (especially in media), even at the risk of misinformation and/or misunderstanding. Some see this as being driven by ego and others, an extension on the explorer/pioneer mindset of 'breaking new ground'. Either way, it is an energy source that facilitates motivation for change and/or achievement. The story of Sir Roger Bannister for instance is a special one. Up until 1954, it was thought to be impossible that anyone could run a mile quicker than 4 minutes. This was known as the 4-minute mile. Doctors, psychologists, and even other expert runners assumed that the human body could not perform at that level – it was physically impossible. And these same naysayers believed it was crazy to even try. Roger Bannister did though, becoming the first person to break the 4-minute mile. His time was 3:59.4 to be exact. He wasn't born of privilege and instead grew up in a working-class family who struggled to make ends meet. All he had was a passion for running, and a work ethic that ensure he trained intensely. And there were times when he wanted to quit. But he refused to settle. He focused on his passion and envisioned the reality of living his dream. His running time kept getting better and better too. The more he trained, the quicker he became. Almost 20 years later in 1975, Aotearoa would have its own running royalty with John Walker later eclipsing Bannister's feat creating a sub-3:50 miler record clocking in at 3:49 at Gothenburg, Sweden.

In his internationally acclaimed book *Relentless: From Good to Great to Unstoppable* (2013), Tim Grover gives an insight into the mindsets of those who have been described in this chapter as pioneers. In here he describes these characters as being renowned for their mental toughness. Their ability to tolerate sacrifice and hardship is something that they are aware of and deliberately choose. They are incredibly detailed with an unshakeable sense of determination. They possess in his words, a sense of 'darkness' that they draw motivation from. Likewise, and in his book, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Pink (2009) identified three main drives behind human behaviour: biological urges (e.g., hunger and sex); environmental factors (e.g., rewards and punishments), and our internal desire to do a task simply for fun, otherwise known as intrinsic motivation. It is the latter he believes, that is the secret to sports performance (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1989), and as we age or progress in our chosen endeavours, the results (e.g., winning, praise, and money), become more appealing. Pink (2009) however argued that there were also three key ingredients to genuine motivation that regardless of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, had a bearing on outcome. These were autonomy, mastery, and purpose. For example, Deci (1972) found that people who were

rewarded with money for participating in an interesting activity ended up spending less time doing that activity than did people who were not paid.

Motivation Through Storytelling

Pūrākau have been implemented in a variety of ways most notably in the visual arts (Mita, 2000; Te Awakōtuku, 2003), leadership (Wirihana, 2012), and mental health (Cherrington, 2002; Kopua & Kopua, 2020) sectors. Its application in the sports setting is limited but growing with specific reference to the work of Palmer (2017) and Hapeta, Palmer and Kuroda (2019). For example, Tama-nui-i-te-Rā and Hine-raumati lay together and gave birth to Tāne-rore. The wiriwiri or trembling hands of haka performers today is said to reflect the shimmering of the hot air during summer, which is Tāne-rore performing for his mother. The first performance of haka has also been attributed to the women assigned a mission by Chief Tinirau whose principal function was to find and destroy Kae who had slain Tutunui, the whale of Tinirau. Over time, however, the haka has mistakenly become synonymous with masculinity. For one of the tāne in this research, his insights into storytelling and pūrākau were exceptional. Here he highlighted the importance of 'meaning' within each story. That is, the value of a story or pūrākau is often created by how much 'meaning' it was given. This would then determine its level of impact on the individual or in this case team.

The meaning that you attach to different stories and experiences. They're your own and what you make of it and what you do with that I guess is up to you. (Kaipara 4).

For the Hurricanes Super Rugby franchise, the idea of giving meaning to pūrākau was what led to the composition of their first ever haka. In the pursuit of identity, they undertook a journey of discovery that allowed them the openness to understand more about who they were as a team and as a club. The pūrākau of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, allowed them to better understand the characteristics of Tāwhirimātea (God of Wind) who is regarded as the atua that did not agree to the separation of his parents. And when Tāne was rallying for support to do so, Tāwhirimātea resisted the urge to comply unlike many of his siblings. When the separation of his parents inevitably occurred, Tāwhirimātea retaliated by seeking retribution on his brothers – at least those who either sided with, or those who did not stand up to Tāne.

Tāwhirimātea was often regarded in these pūrākau as always forging his own path, and at times, the same has been said of the Hurricanes with their unique style of play. In drawing from the many characteristics of Tāwhirimātea, the haka 'Te Ara a Tāwhiri' was composed. Co-designed by the players and relevant management staff, and then refined by renowned reo expert, Te Wehi-o-Mahuru Wright, the haka composition process was an expression of identity

rather than a source of intimidation. Players were separated into three groups – kaupapa (what will the central message of the haka be), reo (some important words that will be utilised), and mahi-ā-ringā (actions). Each group was then tasked with bringing together some collective thoughts and messages. Mana whenua, Te Ātiawa were also consulted, included, and recognised in the creation of this haka.

The content of the haka introduces some of the natural elements that make up the different types of winds (hau nui, hau roa, hau kapakapa), with the intention of players seeing themselves as personifications of these elements and as extensions of Tāwhirimātea. References to poua (and tiripoua) symbolises the laying of the celestial posts Tāne erected to ensure the world of light remained open permanently. References to Ahumairangi (Tinakori) and Tangi te Keo (summit of Mātairangi - Mt Victoria) recognises key landmarks in the Wellington rohe as well as the pūrākau of Ngake and Whāitaitai – the two taniwha that reside within the Wellington Harbour. Reference to *kikikiā* comes from the haka Mangumangu Taipō and is an acknowledgement of the people of Te Ātiawa and their mana whenua status in the Wellington CBD area. *Ka ora, ka ora e* is also an acknowledgement of neighbouring mana whenua, Ngāti Toa and makes a whakapapa connection to haka in the context of sport (Ka mate).

A significant component of the haka needed to focus on the cultural diversity that existed within the club. Reference to *Te Moana nui a Kiwa* (people of the Pacific Ocean) allowed the opportunity for cultural expression at an individual level. Certain allowances were made for tangata moana and broader European-based actions and sounds to be conducted during this section of the haka. The use of mana brings everything back to the players as individuals and describes where they draw their strength/power from:

Māori	English
Poua! (Hi!)	Prepare! (Hi!)
Poua! (Hi!)	Prepare! (Hi!)
Tūturu o whiti whakamaui kia tina! (Tina!)	Now come together and ensure we are bound!
Haumi e, Hui e! (Taiki e!)	Bind together, Fortify.
Tēnei taku ihi (hau!)	Before you is my essence/core
Tēnei taku tapu (hau!)	Before you is my uniqueness/sacredness

Tēnei taku iwi te haere mai nei i te ara a, Tawhiri e! <i>I a haha...</i> <i>Ko te hau nui!</i> <i>Ko te hau roa!</i> <i>Ko te hau kapakapa!</i> <i>I ahu mai nuku</i> <i>I ahu mai rangi</i> <i>I ahu mai i te Moana nui a Kiwa e!</i> Ānei taku mana! (<i>He mana pūkeri</i>) (<i>He mana korū</i>) (<i>He mana ka ora, ka ora e!</i>) (<i>Ki ki ki ki ha!</i>) Ko ngā hau āwhiowhio (<i>Ki ki ki ki ha!</i>) Tēnā tiripoua! (<i>Ka tahi, ka rua, hi aue! Hi!</i>)	Before you are my people that came here by the winds of Tāwhiri <i>I a haha...</i> We are the gale force wind We are the unstoppable wind We are the shattering wind That ascends from below That descends from above (reference to Kelburn) That blows from all corners of the Pacific Ocean With this wind, comes our power/strength. It is a power/strength unseen. It is a power/strength unmatched. It is a power/strength that will never die/subside. Ki ki ki ki hā! (show of unity in recognising our heritage) We are the Hurricanes! Ki ki ki ki hā Now commit ourselves to this challenge. One, two, we're ready for you.
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Table 11. *Te Ara a Tāwhiri: Hurricanes Haka (Wright, T.W, 2020).*

Motivation Through Habits

NBA player Stephen Curry has a habit of turning away from the basket right after taking a three-point shot even before the ball reaches the basket, suggesting that he can reliably predict whether the just released shot will 'drop' or not. Some of this will be because Curry possesses access to a certain part of the consciousness which allows him to predict the outcome of the shot (Maurer et al, 2022). That is, that he is internally aware of his shot process in the moment that he knows whether it will be a successful outcome or not. And some of it is simply about this being a part of his shooting habit/process/routine. Many definitive sources of habit formation exist in literature. From Charles Duhigg's (2012) *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*, to Brendon Burchard's (2017) *High-performance Habits: How Extraordinary People Become That Way*, and the unmistakable *Atomic Habits* by James Clear (2018), the one thing that these authors share is the belief that we all could install a new behaviour, but the primary challenge is to overcome our default tendencies. Duhigg (2012) cited the example of applying sunscreen, saying it is common knowledge that dabbing a bit of sunscreen on significantly lowers the odds of skin cancer, yet fewer than 10% of Americans engage in this routine.

Duhigg (2012) described habit formation as a three-step process. First, there is a cue, which triggers the brain to respond. Then, there is a routine, which is a physical, mental, or emotional response to the cue. Routines then, are the ultimate in repetition, within which confidence is built, and a sense of purpose is created. Finally, there is a reward, which helps determine whether a particular loop is worth remembering for the future. Once an understanding of how habits are formed, it is then important to recognise the difference between, good, better, and best habits with the latter specifically reserved for the high-performance arena. Activities like applying sunscreen (as above), through to writing gratitude journals and even introducing a new morning routine are good if not helpful habits to consolidate, but will this be enough to shift you into the high-performance arena? According to Burchard (2017) there are six habits that significantly nudge individuals into high-performance across multiple domains. These are: Seek Clarity; Generate Energy; Raise Necessity; Increase Productivity; Develop Influence; and Demonstrate Courage.

For the tāne involved in this research, understanding the nature of what motivated and drove them was explored. For some, it was simply about good old fashioned 'social learning theory' (i.e., that they learnt some characteristics from watching the habits of their mum or dad). These can often be connected to the earlier described 'intrinsic motivation factors' which are those that are internal or personal to the individual. They are derived from within and are often private to the individual. In this research, some of these were shared:

Work ethic and wanting to be driven I think came through from mum. Just seeing how much effort and you know, the mahi she did not just for us kids you know, but for everyone's kids. She'd give the clothes off her back and the food in our cupboards for anyone that came into our house. (Kaipara 4).

My friends that didn't grow up with fathers had left sport you know, turned to alcohol and drugs. Losing that father figure was a pretty monumental time for them. It made me realise how grateful I was to have two parents. My dad was at times, not an extremist, but pushed me to where I didn't want to go and times I wanted to quit. But I kept going because of that. (Kaipara 7).

Another intrinsic factor mentioned by one tāne, though somewhat difficult to measure, was the quest for ongoing excellence in his life. Of most interest here was that he reported feeling like this from a very early age (intermediate years). Though he was unsure how this occurred, he believed it developed into adolescence through a combination of experiencing the hardship of solo parenthood, and interacting with his siblings and their peers:

Striving for excellence, wanting to be the best I could be in all things. It wasn't just in sport, like I had that massive drive, you know, with my schoolwork as well wanting to be the best in the class. The best speller the best at math. And I always remember that was sort of apparent from an early age. Just that real competitive, wanting to be the best. (Kaipara 4).

Other more external motivations were also mentioned. Some were less subtle and quite forceful in nature. For one tāne, it remained a poignant motivational factor as he was at a critical age (18 years old), where the decision he was about to make, he would later attribute to the successes he has experienced to this very day:

There were times where I wanted to quit. A couple of times actually. I was adamant that I was not coming back. But he [dad] was like "You can't... you got no choice." In a way it [the motivation] was coerced but yeah, I sit here now and look back and be like... "Man I'm so grateful to have my father in my life." (Kaipara 7).

Interestingly, only one tāne in this research described an intrinsic factor that was not otherwise mentioned throughout. That was, that he always knew with a deep conviction that he was going to be involved in some aspect of high-performance. Whether that was as an athlete or a trainer/coach. When extrapolating that out, the tāne explained that it was more

than a goal or an aspiration. It was an expectation that he had on himself – perhaps based on being exposed to several factors around him such as whānau success:

I've always known from an early age. Probably just seeing my older brother take off. Just seeing him succeed. And then we had another cousin that played. Arnold's [Uncle] son. Blaise. He was good. He played for Wainui team when he was like 16 or 17. I thought that was mean. (Kaipara 3).

Motivation Through Cohesion

Whether it is in a high-performance environment or a social justice movement, cohesion – from the Latin word *cohaesiō* ("cling" or "unity") meaning the state or situation within which members of a group or society are united (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021) – can be found in many different environments. Take for instance, the mesmerising performance of the Russian Olympics Confederation Artistic Swimming team. Their sustained period of excellence over the past two decades has led to back-to-back-to-back, gold medals at the Olympic Games. Their most recent success at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics was made even more special by the fact that there were new athletes introduced to the team. Any talk of telepathy or magic was quickly dismissed in favour of a simpler fact – the athletes' abilities to pay focused attention to a small handful of key markers.

Equally, sport as a vehicle for health, social and simple human development continues to gain momentum. Just in Aotearoa alone, there are a wealth of examples of how and where this has occurred. The 1981 Springbok tour to Aotearoa and its apartheid regime of South Africa was one of those examples. Though it clearly divided the country at the time, it became a unifying moment in the positioning of Aotearoa as an international barometer for matters relating to social justice and equality. This expression of self-determination and many other events subsequent to this challenged South Africa and arguably led to the unifying of the 'rainbow nation' in 1995. The vehicle to achieve this was the Rugby World Cup.

Self-determination theory distinguishes between different types of motivation based on one's reasons or goals thereby influencing behaviour in an achievement context (e.g., sport). The basic psychological needs that are essential for positive development and well-being are threefold and include the need for autonomy (i.e., volition regarding choices and decisions), competence (i.e., perceived success), and relatedness (i.e., feelings of connectedness with salient individuals) (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In combining autonomy, competence, and relatedness, it can be argued that what results therefore is cohesion. Much like the 1981 Springbok Tour where the illustration of autonomy (human rights), competence (protest), and relatedness (common objective) were clear, what followed was cohesion in successfully achieving the task.

Linked to cohesion is the motivation to succeed through the desire for people to know where one is from and their belonging. For one of the tāne in this research, he spoke about the multiple transitions he went through at once and how these challenges served to remind him of his sense of belonging. These included moving house, colleges, towns, and rugby clubs which was a motivator as he knew that to take the next step, this was 'a necessary evil'. But for some he felt, there was often a link made between his abilities (or lack thereof) and where he grew up:

I think I had something to prove because I was from Kapiti. It's Horowhenua. So, there was always a chip on my shoulder to prove people wrong... "Oh this guy's from Kapiti... he's from the Nua... he's no good." I always wanted people to respect where I was from. Whether that was at work or playing club or at training... that was my headspace at the time. (Kaipara 2).

The same tāne extended on the importance of community as a form of not just belonging, but also motivation. He mentions others around him of a similar profile who demonstrate good cultural and community grounding, which he believes is where the future of rugby and more broadly, sport is heading:

I'm very conscious of all of that [social cohesion]. I always try getting back to my community because when I was growing up there was never any All Blacks. You look at like Ardie and Jules. Even like TJ. They're always giving back to their community or are amongst it and I suppose I tried doing that back in Kapiti. Again, you look at Ardie. He's like signed with JayZ [alluding to his elitist profile] but he's still a man amongst his community. That's I think what the game is. And the game is changing for the better. (Kaipara 2).

Selecting players based on physical prowess alone has proven to be a poor indicator of future team success. Panapa and Phillips (2014) argued in their research of NRL players that a shared sense of cohesion and identity allowed athletes to strengthen their sense of belonging in an elite environment thereby enhancing their connectedness. This sense of belonging and connectedness was commonly referred to as the “brotherhood,” and was an important source of wellbeing and support for players. Shared cultural backgrounds, values, goals, motivations, and experiences both in and away from elite sports underpinned the “brotherhood” between these athletes. In his widely acclaimed book *Belonging* (2021), Owen Eastwood helps to contextualise the importance of belonging, identity, and whakapapa within sport. Something that has not been adequately achieved to date. He gives various accounts across multiple sporting codes of the transferability of this traditional cultural wisdom. In short, *Belonging* (2021) highlights the importance of both the opportunity for connection and relationships with each other, and also the notion that we belong to a greater lineage of people (and stories) both past and future. Deeply understanding the idea that we belong to something greater than ourselves enhances the likelihood of greater individual and team performance. Three types of belonging cues (from the Belonging Chapter in *Culture Code*):

1. Personal, up-close connection (body language, attention, and behaviour that translates as I care about you)

2. Performance feedback (relentless coaching and criticism that translates as We have high standards here)
3. Big-picture perspective (larger conversations about politics, history, and food that translate as Life is bigger than basketball)

For the first of these cues, whānau seems a natural place to at least contextualise belonging. Though well understood and variously defined over the decades, whānau refers to those who share common whakapapa, descent and/or kinship. Whānau as a concept of high-performance, however, is not so well known and can otherwise be described as having a collective interest that generate reciprocal ties, aspirations, and enhanced sense of belonging. This will be important for those in roles of influence such as managers, coaches and captains as this collective lifestyle gives insight into an effective form of social organisation. Where knowledge and values are preserved and passed down, leads to a strong sense of identity and a keen understanding of linkages with each other.

Motivation Through Language

For hundreds of thousands of years, society used signals long before using language. A study by Lyn Wu (2013) looked at two years of communication by eight thousand workers and showed that talking about sports, lunch, and coffee predicted whether an employee would be retained better than the revenue they brought in. In a similar Stanford-based study by Goldberg et al. (2018, as cited in Coyle, 2018), it showed that it was possible to predict how long employees stayed by how frequently their emails contained family references and swear words. Daniel Coyle, author of *Culture Code* (2018) identified a number of successful groups, teams and organisations upon which motivation and engagement were highlighted. He found that alongside being explicit and persistent with communication, the importance of language alignment was crucial to its success. Arguably the most successful design company in the world, IDEO, used this to good effect through their CEO, Tim Brown, who repeatedly raised his mantra of “the more complex the problem, the more help you need to solve it” as a means of motivation.

Mantras in its simplest form are an insight into the working model of one’s thinking and motivation. For some it is a reminder of who you are and importantly, what you stand for. In theory it offers a useful framework for making good decisions. For others it holds you accountable to yourself, other people and allows others to support you. These are typically personal and private in nature and are often summonsed during critical moments of performance and/or pressure. Accordingly, athletes and other high performing individuals use inspirational mantras. The following are just examples:

- “Beast Mode” (Marshawn Lynch)
- “Take Risks, Do What People Think Can’t Be Done” (Israel Adesanya)
- “Mamba Mentality” (Kobe Bryant)
- “Exist Somewhere Between Effort and Surrender” (Tom Brady)
- “Start Again” (Richie McCaw)
- “Always Compete” (Pete Carroll)
- “Give Back and Inspire” (Roger Federer)
- “Dream Big and Always Keep Going” (Nims Purja)

You will see that in many cases, these mantras will only make sense to the individual hence the privatised nature of it. Upon deeper analysis you will also see that mantras are typically two to four words in length and commence and conclude with a verb. That makes it action oriented and motivational in nature. When developing a personal mantra, there are five important steps to undertake:

1. List inspiring/influential people in your life (e.g., parents, favourite teacher, sports coach, Michael Jordan)

2. Think about words that best represent their character/traits (e.g., Michael Jordan – relentless)
3. Think about other descriptors that you might associate with these people (e.g., Michael Jordan works hard, always challenging his teammates, determined to win)
4. Create a sentence around some of these words.
5. Refine it into a short phrase and then eventually two to four words.

All tāne in this research spoke about the importance of mindset and the necessary work required to develop sound skills in this area. Akin to strengthening and conditioning the body, the tāne agreed that the brain too required attention though work in this area was still building in the high-performance space. All the tāne spoke of utilising various internal resources such as mantras which are designed to provide a sense of motivation, accountability, and grounding during various stages of one's career. Tāne in this research undertook the same mantra process mentioned above. The process for some was coincidental and for others, years in the making. For one specific tāne, he drew inspiration (or lesson) from his first game at the 2015 Rugby World Cup where his performance was self-described as average. The self-reflective process he undertook included personal game reviews and discussion with the then Mindset Specialist for the All Blacks. His conclusion was:

Thinking back to that first game... I didn't 'show up'. I was probably still on the bus or still back at the hotel in terms of my mindset. I played 'teets' in that game. I was just going through the motions. Just looked around thinking "Sweet there's Richie [McCaw] and DC [Dan Carter]. I can just chill, and the boys will get the job done." Living in a bit of a lala land. It eventuated in the way I played and so I got a 'rocket' [feedback from coaches]. So yeah, I'm still tweaking mine a little bit, but it is... "show up and be impactful." (Kaipara 4).

Further enhancements in motivation can be found in the use of catchphrases. As above, language carries more than just meaning, it is a portal to deeper connection. What and perhaps more importantly, how we say something will be critical to our endeavours. Catchphrases are exactly that, they are 'catchy' and resonate with groups of people. They are found across all sub populations of people, though some are more distinctive than others. There is evidence to suggest that the more prominent these catchphrases are, the more successful this team, group and/or organization will be in the pursuit of their respective objectives. Much like the function of kai, catchphrases serve as a mechanism for greater cohesion and connection within the team/organization. The key features of a successful catchphrase are that they are developed internally by the relevant team/organization for

greater sustainability; that they grow the catchphrase externally so as to give it more credibility; that there is an element of colloquialism to it; that it draws on a common goal, ground or good amongst the select team and/or organization; and that it is action-oriented and strengths-based (e.g. 'All in' versus 'don't quite'). This has resulted in many catchphrases being developed and some by very successful teams and organisations around the world such as:

- "Pound the rock" (San Antonio Spurs)
- "Leave the jersey in a better place" and "No dickheads" (All Blacks)
- "Chiefs Mana" (Chiefs Super Rugby)
- "We are the champions" (Liverpool Football club)

Theme 5: Kawa – Rituals and Practices

Rituals & Rites

Individual and team rituals are critical to performance. Schein's (2004, 2010) Organisational model encompasses rituals as visible factors, which he identified as visible or tangible objects, acts, events, or words used by the team or organization to express meaning. They could become entrenched in one's psyche through constant repetition (Johnson et al, 2013). Individual rituals ranged from athlete to athlete, though served a function for every single athlete both at a conscious and subconscious level. Kahneman (2011) wrote extensively about the nature of system one and two thinking for various contexts. In here he talks about the nature of rituals as serving a decision-making function. That is, for every ritual and routine applied by athletes, they were in essence saving their decision-making abilities for more critical moments within the performance setting such as unplanned and random tasks.

Team rituals such as the earlier example of the haka can be used for many reasons or purposes. More commonly, 'onboarding' (the induction of new people into teams), has come to the fore within teams. For Māori these are informed by more traditional practices referred to as pōwhiri and/or whakatau. Though in more contemporary settings (e.g., Organisational or sporting), these traditional processes are adapted to suit modern-day requirements. Mallet and Cote (2006) believe that the pre-game preparation also served as ritualistic performance activities.

For the Pulse in their captivating return to reclaiming the ANZ Premiership in 2022, such pre-game rituals were slightly different and unique to their environment. These included (but not limited to) Tik Tok dances, shoot-off competitions, use of music, coffee connections (post captain's run), and waiata practice. While to the untrained eye certain rituals like music and coffee connections may seem novel, they demonstrate a type of chemistry. Coyle (2018) described this chemistry as a paradoxical, but powerful experience that was a combination of excitement and deep comfort with certain groups. Again, for Māori this is unsurprising and is often referred to through the already described concept of *wairua*. That is, when such energy and synergy is being experienced, one might say that there was a good wairua within the team.

Social behaviours

Social behaviours reveal the importance of team/organisational symbols, values, and norms (Higgins & McAllaster, 2002). They affirm and communicate to members in a more tangible and visible way the underlying values and norms of a team/organization to create and maintain the culture therein (Beyer & Trice, 1987). Rituals celebrating successful events reinforce the importance of expected behaviours. In Aotearoa one common concept across

many high-performance environments that gets mentioned time and time again is the word family. In other cultures, this is loosely translated to whānau, aiga, or brotherhood/sisterhood. And, when you visit these teams, you notice some highly visible (though seemingly insignificant) social behaviours occurring. Sophisticated handshakes, music, eating together and even hongi (cultural sharing of life through the pressing of noses) are now commonplace in many sporting environments within Aotearoa. These interactions are consistent regardless of sporting code or gender. As described in other themes within this thesis, the role that close physical proximity had within the context of cohesion and performance was also crucial. This might be where meeting room layouts are in circles, and athlete lounge areas are typically close and facing each other. Or it could be broader in terms of living in the same community as one tāne in this research mentioned:

My four best mates I got today, they're still on the Kapiti coast. They're all still there. There is probably one that moved away. He's in Taranaki. But yeah, otherwise they didn't leave the bubble, or they would move and come back. Done what I've done like moved away and come back. (Kaipara 2).

Sporting activities

There are many aspects of sport that reflect the cultures from which the sport originated. For rugby, these might include the shaking of hands, the anthems, the uniform colours, the ways of celebrating a try/win/goal and the ways of consoling when there are losses/tragedies. The after-match speeches, the three-cheers, the songs, the chants, the taonga exchanged, the way the crowds respond (e.g., absolute silence for kicks vs loud boos), the way of acknowledging the crowd and opposition afterwards (claps, bows, haka, tunnel, exchange of jerseys, etc).

For Māori rugby, while most studies point towards physiological indicators of advancement (strength and conditioning) in different ethnicities, the incorporation of cultural practices such as food are even more prominent here (McLean, Brown, & Black, 2016; Zemski et al., 2019). As Burrows, Wright, and McCormack (2009) write, "In Māori culture, food is understood as a source of celebration, a medium for social connectedness as well as a life-preserving necessity" (p. 165). Similarly, for Samoa and other tangata moana, "Some of the oldest Pacific-wide traditions still practiced pertain to cooking and feasting" (Haden, 2009) where the "consumption of large quantities of food is seen as polite, particularly in the context of a communal feast" (p. xii).

This then provides elevated opportunities for engaging with the taiao as a source of gathering kai. For several of the tāne in this research, the connection to the taiao doubled as

both a recovery process (from their performance) as well as pursuing ongoing physical strength and conditioning through gathering kai. This is a reframe from traditional thinking which instead encourages active exercise to achieve health and fitness. For one tāne, these aspects (health and fitness) were instead incidental and/or secondary to the primary aim of engaging with the taiao (and gathering kai):

When I think about it now, it [lung capacity] could have been due to my deer hunting and diving. You know... that breathing. Because I'll be out hunting or diving. You're walking up a steep hill, but you still have to be quiet otherwise you will scare off the deer. So, you have to get up there fast, but still control your breathing to be quiet. So that ability to slow your heart rate down and hold the gun still at the same time. I think that kind of plays into my performance. (Kaipara 8).

Cultural risks

There are also some downsides to activating rituals – particularly those of a cultural nature. People have misused and appropriated certain taonga such as the haka especially as there is no clear legal regime that prohibits offensive treatment of taonga. Kaitiaki (custodians) then are unable to adequately protect the integrity of their taonga and mātauranga. Ngāti Toa's Ka Mate has "become the most performed, the most maligned, the most abused of all haka", according to Karetu (1993). WAI262 claim outlined that Ngāti Toa were the kaitiaki of this haka and should have attribution rights to the kaitito/composer, Te Rauparaha, when the haka 'Ka Mate' is being used.

Equally, the use of this haka by the All Blacks needs to be considered very carefully. Aotearoa historians position Te Rauparaha as being a paramount chief in some cases, and a murderous warrior in others – especially those of the Southern tribes in Aotearoa. References to the 'Elizabeth affair' where Te Rauparaha instigated the mass killing of local Māori at present-day Banks Peninsula, are not far from these conversations. So, to perform this haka in places like Christchurch and/or Dunedin is often labelled as culturally offensive at best, and possibly re-traumatising at worst. The media often misunderstands the meaning and the purpose of the haka. During the 2017 British Lions Tour, the Blues team did its first ever pre-match haka to honour its fallen players. Yet, this haka was misunderstood and deemed 'tasteless' by British journalists, after recent London terror attacks, due to the throat slitting action in the haka. The haka intended to pay homage to those who have passed, both in Aotearoa and in London, and to mourn with those grieving. The throat slitting action was a representation of hauora and a precious gift of life.

Taonga and symbols

The global awareness and consciousness-raising of the rights of Indigenous peoples (e.g., Standing Rock Protests, UNDRIP etc) have undoubtedly been enhanced through various symbols (e.g., 'taking a knee' and/or the 'raising of a fist'). Locally, other important movements like Ihumātao and Whakarauora Reo find themselves on the wrists of Māori sports athletes and featuring in post-match speeches as symbols of protest and challenge. Though the precipitating factors for these national and international examples are often different, the goal remains very much the same. Globally, Schein (1990) is widely regarded as integrating this layer of culture, consisting of the visible artefacts that constitute the physical experiences of the team/organization. Hatch (1993) states that a symbol is anything that represents a conscious or an unconscious association with some wider, usually abstract concept or meaning. Symbols then, are objects that take on meaning and are defined by cultural and social interactions that are observed through sight, sound, touch, and smell and are strong indicators of the dynamics within an organization.

For Māori, Erueti's (2015) work on symbols and rituals in the Olympic and Commonwealth Games was impressive and emphasised the importance of taonga in these global events. His research highlights the benefits of such inclusion for national identity, global recognition, and cultural authenticity, while also addressing the challenges and complexities involved. An important function of symbols is that they offer a sense of meaning for group members. An example of this is the black jersey upon which adorns the silver fern – a symbol with historic and important cultural meaning for rugby in Aotearoa (Johnson et al., 2013; Mulholland, 2009). These designs are now seen on team jerseys, on the pounamu worn around the athletes' necks and the designs on trophies.

Taonga in rugby contexts have also played an important role in both reinforcing and challenging hegemonic ideologies. The haka for instance, can reinforce dominant ideologies of Māori as being 'warrior-like' if those consuming this complex and layered ritual do not understand the deeper meanings and motives of those performing and receiving the haka. The diverse narratives around the haka, from the perspective of composers, performers, and then those who 'package' the haka for consumption create a more complex narrative that highlights how taonga *tuku iho* can also challenge hegemonic ideologies.

The inclusion of taonga in rugby has also challenged dominant ideologies with values such as *manaakitanga*, *kotahitanga* and *whanaungatanga* being incorporated into rugby contexts. For instance, *waiata* for the Māori All Blacks team at after-match functions (reciprocated by *waiata* from visiting teams such as Fiji and Samoa), the presentation of mere pounamu to players who have achieved 100 Super Rugby games that includes the involvement of *whānau* in this process, and taonga exchanged between teams that includes an explanation of the taonga, and a focus on *kotahitanga* and shared *whakapapa* (e.g., between Māori All

Blacks and tangata moana teams) challenges hegemonic masculine ideologies in a rugby context. These examples are also a contemporary demonstration of tikanga (protocols) offering a good opportunity for Māori who are less familiar with their whakapapa and mātauranga to be exposed to this safely.

Mana wāhine are also included in tikanga processes such as haka, mihi whakatau, pōwhiri, hui, karanga and waiata. Tournaments and teams often have a kuia and kaumatua (Māori elders) with them, and Māori tournaments include mareikura, whatukura, tāne and wāhine teams and people. There has been a notable shift recently with the success of the Black Ferns (15s and 7s teams) and the hosting of the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2022 for a mana wāhine element to be emphasised. However, there is still a tendency in rugby to default to engaging with Pākehā men, then Māori men, prior to engaging with Māori women. Undoubtedly, the impact of taonga are widespread with the primary intention of honouring relationships between sporting organisations and other countries.

Theme 6: Whakatupu – Development

Development through Ngāhau (informal play)

Informal games appeared to play a significant role in the development of all the tāne interviewed in this research. For most of them, this began from the age that they could walk and quickly progressed into more formal sport and recreation. All the athletes involved in this research referred to the importance of playing a variety of sports. Mention was given to the benefits other sports had in the development of their broader set of social skills such as communication and leadership. The overlap between rugby and other sports was specifically notable. Soccer and rugby league were two codes as having high transferability of skill and development.

I remember I would have been like maybe even eight to like 12 years old, where I was doing heaps of stuff I was playing. I remember playing like twilight hockey, playing cricket. I was even taking tennis lessons. Yeah, played basketball throughout primary... was mini ball back then and then basketball in intermediate. (Kaipara 4).

I was just trying to give everything a go and then I think as you get older you kind of find out you know if you're not that great or something or something's more of a passion and then rugby kinda took over but even at college I was like into touch, heaps of rugby, and then we end up playing league Sunday for something to do. There was always a ball in my upbringing. (Kaipara 2).

Several tāne experienced the rare opportunity of playing at an elite level in more than one code. For one it was rugby league. For another it was cricket. Many comparisons and discrepancies were recounted between these codes and rugby. Of note here was the mention of having to choose between cricket and rugby once he got to the age of 19yo. The trajectory of which, would alter the course of history for him:

Cricket was great. A totally different environment to rugby. As you as you see on TV, the top end of cricket is predominantly white. There's no sort of cohesion as much as there is in rugby. And yeah, I was pretty lucky to play for New Zealand in cricket. Then I had to choose between the Under 19 World Cup or come in for a week with the Hurricanes. (Kaipara 7).

Development through Vocation

Several tāne highlighted a growing trend of bypassing formal vocational activities into professional sport. This was seen as concerning and something that is shared by many in the high-performance industry. Given the age range of the tāne involved in this research (21 to 36 years old) a breadth of experience was ascertained as this spanned two different professional athlete generations. One in which there was a clear transition from school into an academy system that facilitated access to vocations such as apprenticeships and other programmes. And another, which was a direct pipeline into being professional athletes. Several of the tāne described a career pathway which allowed them the opportunity to be grounded in such physical and social activities as apprenticeships. In some ways, the delay in their career paths appears to have also helped enhance their skillsets. The protection from external influences (e.g., results, expectations, and cash) served to maximise the longer-term gains.

I didn't play prem rugby initially. I played senior 1s for a couple of years. Then I was like "If I want to make professional rugby, I have to change my situation" (Kaipara 2).

Other tāne within this research perhaps more representative of the next generational grouping spoke of their experience being more 'streamlined' and without the apprenticeship / grounding years. One in which, their career pathway from college bypassed the traditional rugby academy system and straight into a professional high-performance environment which presented several benefits and possible disadvantages.

Development through Whakapapa / Whānau

During a time of land confiscation, warfare and infectious diseases, Māori saw rugby as an opportunity to showcase their sublime and often mercurial skill. Matching their tactical skills during warfare with their exceptional speed and agility in rugby allowed for a distinctive style of play which was fast becoming legendary. Such attributes were often associated with the likes of Teone (Jack) Taiaroa (Ngāi Tahu), and Joe Warbrick (Ngāti Rangitihi), both of whom were the first Māori to play in the inaugural national rugby team. Taiaroa in particular was lauded for his on-field prowess playing in his preferred position of half-back, at one stage being referred to as the 'Prince of Footballers'. Today, this whakapapa continues to be promoted throughout rugby. Several of the tāne in this research spoke of a rich vein of rugby whakapapa within their whānau and how this may have contributed to their development as a player and person. One spoke of his koroua (great grandfather) being one of the first Māori on the NZ Rugby Board, followed by his koro (grandfather) a well-known knighted Māori leader in

his own right. And lastly, his father who like this tāne, represented the Māori All Blacks as a player:

Yeah, he [dad] played for Manawatū for a long time. He played for the Junior All Blacks and then the Māori All Blacks. Had a trial for the All Blacks but was stuck behind Grant Fox and some other dudes so couldn't quite crack it. But rugby has been a huge part of his whole life. He coached me and my under 5 and 6 rugby teams. (Kaipara 7).

For another tāne in this research, this whakapapa was equally impressive. His mother was a cousin to the late All Black centre Henare Milner who played in the late 1960s. His father was the younger brother to George Skudder who also represented the All Blacks during the same time. Likewise, his first cousin was All Blacks and Māori All Blacks captain, Tanerau Latimer. This is not a 'nature versus nurture' debate, nor is it intended to say that those who have no rugby representative honours within their whānau could not make it. As there are equally just as many (if not more) who *do* have whakapapa and are not even interested in the game let alone play. But this is simply just to highlight that in some cases where there is a key thread, that perhaps it is beyond coincidence as to why these tāne are in these high-performance environments. Also, the nature of whakapapa as a concept extends beyond mere genetics and blood quantum.

Extensions on the whakapapa narrative continued with most tāne in this research talking about the opportunities to play with older siblings. Specifically, it was mentioned that such interactions with older siblings facilitated in the development for specific knowledge as well as skills. Athletes described a traditional whānau and hapū system of living for Māori as a likely facilitator of skill and performance development:

There's nine years between me and my oldest brother, and then seven years between me and my next oldest brother. So yeah, I'm quite a bit younger than them. But they were good to me. Pretty inclusive. I was like friends with their friends. I think I matured faster because of them. (Kaipara 5).

I think a big part was because I had an older brother who was a few years older than me. He was sort of at that age where he was just starting, you know, he was just starting to get into the groove of things. And then, I would be there being a hōhā little brother. But from my perspective I was like "Oh far this is going to be choice. It will help me". (Kaipara 4).

I always remember wanting to get out of kōhanga and go across to the school so I could play at lunch times with a lot of the older kids. I think I must have got some sort of I don't know special exemption or something because I was the only one that was allowed to go to out of the kōhanga gates and go. You get toughened up pretty quickly (Kaipara 4).

He [older brother] was a good league player. He played second row. And then prop. Just seeing him 'take off'. Seeing him succeed. It was inspiring. We used to hangout and train together. And then we had another cousin that played. Blaise. He was good. He played for the Wainui league team when he was like 16 or 17. I thought that was mean. (Kaipara 3).

Section Summary

The stories shared by these tāne here reflected how their journeys to professional rugby and high-performance began from humble, yet steady and secure surroundings. The fundamentals of their performance abilities commenced around similar ages (4 years old) and stages in life and were in most cases, enhanced by the exposure to whānau (older brother usually) interactions. A critical stage in life where they realised that they had a particular set of skills and abilities appeared to be consistent with that age being approximately 14 years old. Each of the stories tells of the motivation and success factors ranging from being inspired by others (whānau member) through to be driven to prove others wrong. The knowledge that was transmitted through these interactions between the tāne and certain whānau members was clearly articulated throughout and known more commonly in te ao Māori as the notion of wānanga.

What was also clear across all the eight stories was the role that mana played in driving their motivations and ambitions. Identifying as Māori and having knowledge of te ao Māori were both highlighted throughout, as was the recognition that identity was important to all the tāne in facilitating their high-performance aspirations. This is known in te ao Māori as tuakiri and speaks to the notion that identity exists beyond the skin and is more likened to ways of being and thinking. It is also a notion that is central to wellbeing for Māori and one in which the tāne acknowledged throughout this thesis, and their journeys – especially when discussing matters relating to the transition phases known to all professional athletes. These were discussed at length and included phases such as injuries, non-selection, relationships, cultural differences, and relocations. For the latter of these, it was acknowledged that this was a necessary reality for the modern-day professional athlete and one that was embraced with some having experienced both regional and international relocations for their jobs.

Rituals and practices were noted throughout the eight stories and reflected in their descriptions of work ethic as a core characteristic of professional athletes generally. In addition to work ethic, however, was the recognition that these rituals and practices sat within a broader set of protocols known in te ao Māori as kawa and tikanga. For some of these ritualistic practices, they were almost subconscious (e.g., handshakes and hongi on arrival to work). For other practices, they were more deliberate and attributable to their enhancements around recovery, rehabilitation, and prevention.

Another key theme that emerged across all eight stories relates to a concept in te ao Māori known as whakatupu (the development of a skill or expertise) and the role that whakapapa played here with the eight stories revealing a whakapapa to high-performance. Whether it was a brother who was an All Black, or a father who was an international powerlifting champion, the exposure to excellence within the wider whānau was clear. What was also mentioned often was that the tāne grew up in and around small communities where opportunities for practice, play and hauora were greater. Often referred to in sports literature as 'the birthplace effect', research suggests that smaller communities tended to provide conditions that enhanced the development of expertise (Côté et al. 2007, as cited in Light & Evans, 2018). And given traditional Māori systems for living being centred on whānau and hapū-based living, these revelations from the tāne were unsurprising. What was surprising however, was that all the tāne in this thesis either grew up near, or whakapapa to, a coastal area. This is significant because the most relevant research to date shows only a link between such athlete upbringings, and rural areas (Carlson, 1988).

WĀHANGA TUATORU: What These Stories Tell Us

Wāhanga Tuatoru (Part III) links the previous section by locating the lessons from the tāne within the Pā, People and Performance as analytical aspects of the pūrākau shared. It provides a high-level analysis of the pūrākau offered by the tāne in this research. They are interpreted both at an individual and collective level through the identification of key themes experienced by these tāne. It reflects a careful kaupapa Māori research methodology of letting the tāne and the data speak for itself instead of imposing pre-determined assumptions and forcing the data to fit with pre-determined theory and expected outcomes. As a simple way of organising all of the material, this part of the thesis then is divided into three key sections.

The first section is the pā which investigates the environmental facilitators of tāne ora. It highlights among many things, the informal and subconscious learning that occurs throughout childhood and how this has contributed to current endeavours. The wānanga or transmission of knowledge. The whakatupu or development of skills stemming from these environments. Factors such as picking a ball up from an early age through to being constantly exposed to success (seeing medals and trophies in the lounge) exist within the pā environment. Likewise, the role that whānau play in the facilitation of expertise is also considered here.

The second section in this part of the thesis is the people and is concerned with key individuals required for facilitating high-performance. It is an extension on the abovementioned role of whānau with specific consideration for factors such as leadership, wellbeing, and connection. This section is centred on ngā tapuwae, or the legacies that have been left behind by certain individuals who have influenced these tāne. It especially highlights the value of coaches (who were parents in several of these cases) and other mentors within tāne ora. Personal challenges such as at that critical transition stage (injury, retirement etc) are the focus of this section.

The final section is the performance and is focused on critical areas related specifically to skill and performance of these tāne. Such factors include key moments in life where opportunities were offered to these tāne (whether it was selection or given the captaincy role) and how these tāne managed these situations. Also central to this section is the role of kawa or rituals and practices as a facilitator of tāne ora. Whether these were social behaviours (handshakes) or much more sophisticated protocols for performance preparation and/or recovery. These three sections together coalesce to provide a useful three-pronged approach for understanding tāne ora.

The Pā

Like the Blue Zones project mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, what the tāne revealed through this research was the importance of environmental facilitators of tāne ora. Whether these were cultural, spiritual, digital or just simply physical environments, these tāne highlighted how their exposure to certain ecologies allowed for greater tāne ora. For Māori, the closest and most traditional of these ideas is the pā which are typically described as fortified villages or blockades (Te Aka, 2023). Doherty (2012) believed that within pā, traditional groupings grew out of tribal, sub-tribal and familial structures within which a specific set of protocols, traditions and history already existed. These separate groups existed together in an interconnected set of embedded systems leading to an extensive amount of shared understanding and knowledge. Despite the earlier mentioned colonial attempts to erode these systems and structures, the transmission of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs continued.

Today, these sophisticated pā systems are also being applied to more contemporary contexts. The public health and regulatory mechanisms for instance, are notable for their adaptation of traditional knowledge into contemporary application (Ware, 2019). Specifically, the collection and storage of clean water, the systematic disposal of waste, as well as provision for food storage over the winter months, was a foundation of all traditional pā. Likewise, strength and conditioning were achieved through reaching the hilltops where pā were built. By comparison, the highly industrialised cities in Europe with foul water, inadequate drainage, no sewage, and overcrowding presented serious risks to both performance and more generally, health and wellbeing.

Other contemporary notions of the pā have been extended on such as ‘the living pā’ at Te Herenga Waka (2021) which is based on the international living building challenge framework, underpinned by seven performance areas for certification. To date, there are only 24 fully certified ‘living buildings’ in the world making it one of the most highly sophisticated certification processes within the architectural and engineering industries. The other in Aotearoa is Te Kura Whare in Taneatua. While these standards seem ambitious and challenging to attain, the living building concept however is not new to Māori with such perspectives already entrenched within whare tīpuna as the cultural epicentre and physical expression of life and community. It is the place that connects tangata whenua to their ancestors and atua. These places are activated through various encounters and rituals such as pōwhiri, tangihanga and other ceremonial welcomes and farewells (Forster, 2022).

In his internationally acclaimed book *The Goldmine Effect* (2015) Rasmus Ankerson explored the growing phenomenon of environmental factors and how this might influence the results for high-performance athletes. In here Ankerson (2015) highlighted several key characteristics shared by these athletes. Of these characteristics, it was the social and physical environments these athletes were brought up in that got the most attention. When controlling

for variables like population numbers, the best middle-distance runners for instance, all came from the same village in Ethiopia (Bekoji). And the greatest track and field athletes were found in Kingston, Jamaica. The South Korean female golfers could also be included in this argument. They make up 35 of the top 100 golfers in the world. The intrigue deepens further when with just a population of 500 people, the small village of Tarnaby, Sweden produces the greatest skiers in history. This is not coincidental and instead reinforces the above environment facilitators.

Ankerson (2015) investigated specific places further and in the case of the Jamaican's found that there was nothing spectacular about their facilities. In fact, for the number of gold medallists and world record holders the MVP Track and Field club in Kingston boasts, the facilities are modest in technology and basic in layout. The classic nature vs nurture debate of whether there is a direct correlation between genetic predisposition and high-performance or not, is irrelevant it appears (Davids & Baker, 2007). The correlation between genetics and athletic performance continues to be a topic of great debate among scientists, athletes, coaches, and the public, particularly as the success of Māori, Pasifika, African, and African American athletes in certain sports continues to grow.

For Māori, the marae is a strong manifestation of the relationship with the environment. The encounters, exploration and maintenance of cultural protocols and practices on the marae are well documented (Durie, M.H., 2001; Forster, 2022). The marae then, emerges as a significant source of knowledge transmission. During ceremonial events, it would not be uncommon to witness haka, poi, action songs along with the adaptation of introduced sports such as rugby, netball, hockey or tennis (Rangi, 2020). The marae became a useful platform for introduced sports to be hybridised with mātauranga (e.g., use of te reo during gametime). This allowed for, not just the physical activation during gametime, but perhaps a more primary goal of cognitive stimulation – to deeply understand other forms of playing, learning and being.

The exploration of kawa across both traditional (marae) and modern (performance) contexts was also found to be of significant value highlighting among many things, the complex interplay between kaupapa, tikanga and kawa (Durie, M.K., 2013). The kaupapa in the physical activity or sport context might be the intent (i.e., to get fit or win). Tikanga might be considered as the actions or behaviours (e.g., strength and conditioning programme) required to achieve the kaupapa. Kawa then might be best understood as a regulatory framework (a specific set of rituals or protocols) required to negotiate between kaupapa and tikanga. This then allows for “human dignity to be maintained and human potential to be realised” (Durie, 2013, p.82).

Food and more importantly, the gathering practices therein are a prominent source of nutrition and performance. Marae and hapū in the central and southern parts of the North Island for instance learnt to scale high altitude environments for food sources (Anderson et al, 2014, p.86). Shellfish too required physical effort not only for catching and cooking, but to fell

the timber needed to build waka. For this Māori needed access to forestry, so even the act of fishing required physical exertion and performance. It also required a relationship with the taiao. The interconnected energies that dwell in Ranginui (Sky Father); the stars, types of rain, clouds the wind and weather patterns are all connected through a network of interconnected genealogies. On Papatūānuku, the rocks, the water—fresh and salt, the trees, insect, and animal life both on earth and in the ocean are all part of a genealogy that reflects the ancestors understanding of the natural world.

The domains and interactions that take place on a marae inform many Māori advancements (Durie, 1999). Encounters that occur on the marae and in the wharenuī, can also be opportunities for further exploring domains of high-performance. For instance, domains such as tapu and noa, whaikōrero, tauparapara and karakia and tūhonohono lend themselves well to high-performance. The use of a wharenuī also elicits thoughts and memories of history, identity, connectedness, and collaborative effort (McLachlan et al., 2019b). A wharenuī is often a personification of a tūpuna of an iwi or hapū, with such aspects as the ceiling above the porch representing the roro (brain) and the tāhuhu (central beam) as the backbone (McNeill, 2009). Inside the wharenuī also house depictions of ancestors and tribal stories pūrākau in pou and tukutuku panels.

The notion of a marae then, as a high-performance environment akin to the HPE model (Jones et al. 2009), is worthy of consideration and exploration. The image below is a contemporary illustration designed by NZ Rugby Union and Māori All Blacks Kaumātua, Luke Crawford (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Porou). In the Māori All Blacks contexts, the purpose and wairua of a marae is often re-enacted/constructed in team rooms in hotels/changing rooms. It is also a place for the team to visit before going on an overseas trip, or when visiting other countries connecting with taonga, tangata and marae that are where the team is touring (such as Rua-te-pūpuke Marae, in Soldier Field Museum, Chicago). And when exploring the image deeper, it demonstrates how one might contextualise the inside of a whare to high-performance for Māori (Crawford, 2020). Specifically, when considering performance, the tāhuhu might manifest itself as the people in your life who you might consider the backbone. Those that will be there to endorse your performance pursuits, and equally shelter you if unattained. The tukutuku panels may represent the layers of knowledge (and people) that existed well before you and may come after you. The whakairo might be a reminder of the roles and responsibilities you have to yourself, your team, your whānau and/or your hapū.

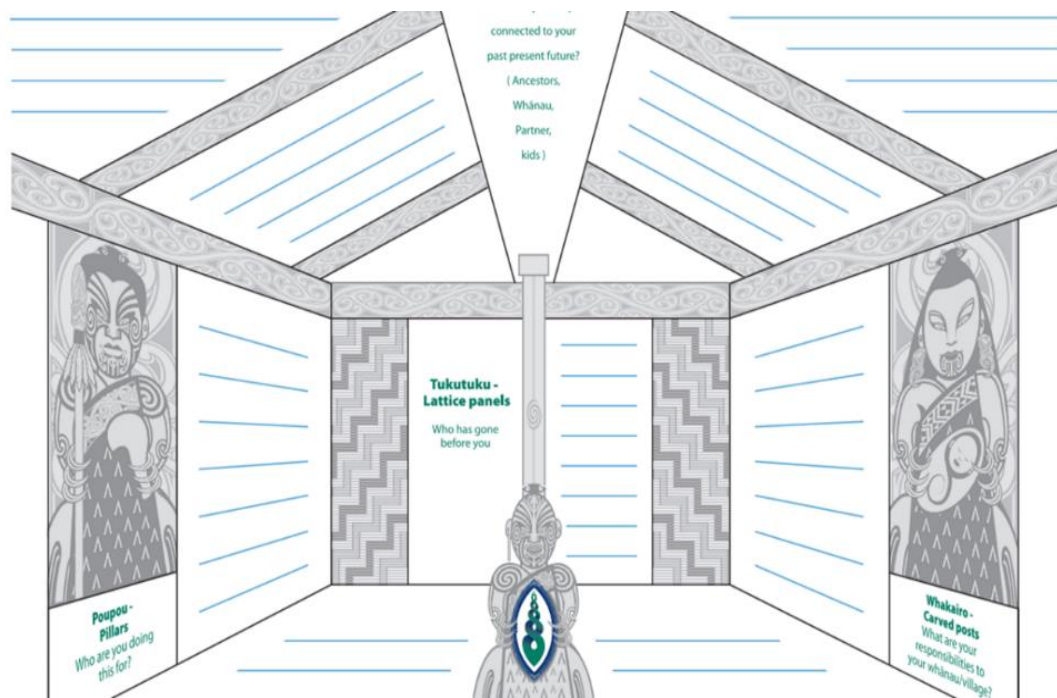


Figure 9. *Te Hurihanga: A Model for Culture Within Rugby* (Crawford, L. 2020).

People

Tāne ora as highlighted by the tāne in this research is also about the key individual influences (e.g., older brother, father, captain, and/or coach) as well as the importance of roles and responsibilities such as leadership. Indigenous leaders generate their energy to lead from a strong sense of purpose. Oftentimes this sense of purpose is related to matters of social justice. Unfortunately, most of the academic literature on the matter has been conducted in the United States and Western Europe, largely driven by organisational demands and theory (Yukl, 2002; House, 2012). As such, the concept of leadership has been rather limited and restricted until recently with greater emphasis on styles, culture and country. And what appears to be common across great leaders regardless of style, culture or country, however, is the unique ability to bring people together and influence the people around them.

For Māori, this is a familiar concept with such terms as rangatira and kaiārahi also underscoring the importance of bringing people together. When broken down further, kaiārahi (noun) means to guide, escort, counsel, conduct, mentor, pilot, usher. Kai is a prefix added to verbs to describe a person doing something. This identifies a person. The letter 'ā' is a particle that describes how something is done. This is what's happening. Rahi means to be large, big, or numerous. Simply speaking, a person doing important things for the collective. So, a leader is someone who provides action towards a collective or a grouping. Aligned to this concept is

the many kōrero pūrākau relevant and effective leadership models. Māui and his various journeys and exploits for instance were often about the 'greater good'. Māhuika and her generosity with Māui tells us about the importance of manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga. Tāne and the creation story were largely about aspirations for a new space.

Modern day Māori leadership extends on this traditional notion further by balancing the present and future needs of Māori, whilst also having the ability to enact and understand tikanga (Higgins, 2013). The inter-generational challenge is equally important for Māori leadership. Balancing the present and future needs of generations cannot be more illustrated than in the current case of Ihumātao where contemporary Māori leadership which is about retaining cultural values and perspectives while embracing the new and often changing natures of society (Durie, 2011; Katene, 2010) confronts traditional Māori leadership which was based on concepts such as tuakana, mātāmua and the subsequent right of succession (Mahuika, 1992). There are many moving parts to this example so will be difficult to truly understand without knowing the intimate details. However, the vital role that traditional Māori leaders offer with the wisdom of life experiences and their links to the past to inform contemporary and future contexts, should not be underestimated. Spiller, Barclay-Kerr and Panoho (2015) describe some of these core values as in their seminal work on Wayfinding Leadership. These include rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga, and hūmārietanga the latter of which espouses the notion of humility in leadership – perhaps through serving others.

In future, leadership will be dominated by the emerging generation, the digitally savvy with their own culture, beliefs and expectations. By 2025, those born in the 1980s and 1990s will comprise much of the Māori leadership spaces. They relate to causes to help other people more than they do to institutions and connect with issues rather than organisations. In future, it will take more than holding a job to motivate these employees. The millennial generation will unleash their strengths, apply their passions and work alongside others who do the same. Their ability to balancing iwi and hapū aspirations with whānau hopes will be more prominent. Whānau leaders is about the capacity of whānau to determine their own pathways, supporting the development of natural leaders within whānau (Durie et al., 2010). These leaders endorse a whanau kawa – a way of engaging and living life safely. They help realise the aspirations of the whānau connecting whānau (renewing old ties, hold e-hui, and settle old disputes). These leaders also see themselves as servants to whānau (as opposed to whānau being servants to them).

As an educator, Yvette McCausland-Durie (Ngā Puhi and Ngāti Awa) was no stranger to sports administration, leadership, and high-performance. She has spent almost three decades as a teacher, and as co-founder of Tū Toa and Manukura coached both netball teams to national secondary school success. Her appointment in 2017 as head coach of the Pulse was unsurprising to most if not all. McCausland-Durie's athlete-focused and coach-led

philosophy meant that her success was founded upon ensuring she had good oversight of both the coaching and management demands. McCausland-Durie left the franchise at the end of the 2020 season to return to education. In the following season of 2021, and with almost the exact same roster, the Pulse finished last registering just four wins. The lacklustre and underwhelming season led to a mass exodus of senior representative players to other franchises citing among many issues, a 'toxic culture' and 'poor leadership'. The Pulse Board approached McCausland-Durie to return for the 2022 season. She reluctantly agreed, and with an average age of just 22 years (the youngest in the competition), the Pulse commenced their 2022 season campaign. In fact, this campaign begun in September of 2021 while McCausland-Durie was still teaching at Manukura, with multiple presentations and recruitment activities taking place.

The 2022 season was not without its disruptions. Just one week into the campaign, the season opener was postponed due to a COVID-19 outbreak within the squad. Then in the second week, the coach herself was impacted by COVID-19. To complicate matters further, the first round was back-to-back games against the two grand finalists from 2021. The Pulse conceded their first game but responded well the next day to win and register what would be the beginning of a stellar season eclipsing the previous year's total season win record within the first month. Much to many people's surprise (including the players and management themselves), the Pulse would go on to win the 2022 ANZ competition.

Circling back to the notion and application of mana within high-performance, Yvette's understanding of this was clear and something to further consider when exploring matters of performance and motivation of Māori athletes. Utilising such concepts in an uninformed or naïve manner can result in an outcome which is counterproductive and ultimately unhelpful or unsustainable. Likewise, understanding that losing a game, does not result in a loss of mana. Concepts such as mana then, become not only timely when discussing leadership, but paramount as too are firmly rooted in similar foundations. It is no surprise that when people talk of leaders and indeed captains in Aotearoa, they do so in accordance with these concepts – albeit without truly understanding the breadth and depth of these concepts. Captains and coaches such as Popovich, Jordan and even our own Buck and McCausland-Durie all possess the qualities that can only be encapsulated as mana. For these types of captains and coaches, an ability to understand and manage these concepts is critical to extracting the best out of their teammates and players and at least as a complement to more conventional subject knowledge, skills, and fitness training. In short, leveraging off these ideas carefully and sensitively, can inspire performance in ways not possible through other modes or mechanisms.



Figure 10. *Māori All Blacks ‘contemporary ātea’*

Performance

The tāne in this thesis made it clear that there are also specific individualistic factors that underpin tāne ora. The Māori All Blacks programme for 2022 was plagued with challenges and barriers from the outset. The inequitable resourcing/funding of the Māori All Blacks was apparent with much of NZRU’s attention being focused on the All Blacks and later the All Blacks XV team. The latter would receive significant funding to tour Europe towards the end of 2022, despite being a relatively new entity in the NZRU system. Also, the calendar year only consisted of a two-test series – albeit against world number one ranked, Ireland who had to work hard to win the second test after a surprising loss to the Māori All Blacks in the first.

The exodus of experienced leaders, Ash Dixon (Ngāti Tahinga, and captain of 9 years), Whetukamokamo Douglas (Ngāti Pōrou, Ngāti Whakauē) and Otere Black (Tū, Te Whānau-a-Apanui, Ngāti Tūwharetoa), would prove a difficult void to fill. Some might have even considered the 2022 campaign to be a ‘rebuilding phase’. In total the Māori All Blacks introduced 13 new players to the team in 2022 including veteran All Black, TJ Perenara. The most caps by a single player in the team was just 14 (Marcel Renata) with the youngest player being 21yo (Ati Ati) and the oldest being 32yo (TJ Perenara).

The sudden death of Māori All Black, Chiefs and Bay of Plenty Steamer, Sean Wainui in 2021 continued to impact the wairua of the team. This alongside the deaths of some of the greatest leaders and influences of our generation (Dr Moana Jackson, Dame June Jackson, and Sir Wira Gardiner to name a few) meant that the challenge to play Ireland weighed much heavier than what the public might have appreciated. Throughout this campaign however, it was clear that the team were aware of these challenges though equally motivated about

overcoming these. Two major factors appear to have been attributable to this. Firstly, the higher sense of kaupapa, purpose and intention placed on the Māori All Blacks (albeit by themselves), ensured that the team would prepare regardless of the challenges. Connected to this, was the decades if not centuries of tikanga, rituals and habits that were observed throughout this campaign. In some cases, these were literally 'written on the wall'.

Acknowledging the many significant losses both individually and as a team, were best expressed through the utilisation of a 'papa maumahara' (a memorial board). This was simply a white board where athletes, management and wider whānau were allowed to write the names of loved one's that had passed on since the previous campaign. The papa maumahara would remain in the team room until the completion of the campaign and would be available for anyone during this time to reflect and/or add names where necessary. Such a practice of acknowledging the mate (the departed) was typically restricted to whaikōrero (ceremonial speeches) which often occurred in very formal settings such as marae and/or corporate offices. To recognise this in the abovementioned style might have been frowned upon in recent times and perhaps challenged notions of tapu. With the guidance of skilled cultural experts however, this process was navigated safely and successfully utilised as a contemporary expression of traditional tikanga.

The second factor contributing to the Māori All Blacks desire to persevere despite the challenges was the significant amount of time in camp spent on the concept of 'ngā tapuwae' (the enduring footsteps). The idea of leaving a footprint so that those who came after us would clearly see what is expected of them, like the 1888 Natives Tour previously mentioned and the famous British and Irish Lions victory of 2005. Also, the Munster jersey presentation in recognition of the sudden death of Irish legend, 'Axel' Foley left a deep and lasting impression of the Māori All Blacks on the Irish public. Since then, several other sporting teams and codes have adopted this practice, including the All Blacks. This might otherwise be perceived as mere gamesmanship. But for the Māori All Blacks, this was tikanga and kawa in action.

Winning is an important aspect of performance in many cultures, including Māori. However, the best teams focus primarily on producing a good performance, rather than on the goal of winning, therefore focusing on the process instead of the result. Winning then becomes a by-product of getting the process correct. This has been a characteristic of many successful past sporting teams including the All Blacks (Johnson, 2012). This is a view shared by Māori in the performance industry also. For Māori, winning is not just about achieving success on the field or in competition, but also about making positive contributions to the community and upholding the wairua, mana, values, and traditions of your whānau and/or hapū. Western ideals of high-performance tend to focus on individual merit, achievement, and success, often measured by factors such as medals, status, and power. These ideals often emphasise competition and the pursuit of personal goals and ambitions. In contrast, Māori ideals of high-

performance tend to place more emphasis on the collective and the responsibility of individuals to contribute to whānau, hapū and iwi. The idea that there is great mana in individuals have a strong understanding of whakapapa, emphasises the importance of heritage, culture, and community in high-performance for Māori.

For Māori, winning may be seen as an opportunity to showcase their skills and abilities, as well as to promote culture and heritage. High-performing Māori teams may also prioritise the development of their players not just as athletes, but also as leaders and role models in the whānau and hapū. Western ideals of high-performance tend to focus on individual success and competition while Māori ideals of high-performance tend to focus on collective success and responsibility. The emphasis may be on showcasing their skills and abilities, promoting culture, community development, and promoting leadership and role models, while also recognising the team's collective wairua, mana and prestige. All tāne in this research spoke of certain moments in their lives where opportunities were offered to them. Some of these appeared to be 'by design' and had been manufactured from an early age. Others spoke of moments that appeared to be 'out of the blue'. In all cases, there was a clear though considered, movement towards these opportunities through the facilitation of wānanga:

Would have been 2008. I was in my last year at QEC. Got this opportunity to go down to Wellington to do a bit of study and obviously try and have a crack at league. And then after that three and a bit months Dave jacked up a trial for a couple of us to go to Sydney and so yeah. (Kaipara 4).

I had no guarantees of being with the Crusaders going forward and then partway through that year the Hurricanes offered me the opportunity to come up here. So, I grabbed the opportunity and ran with it. Made my Māori All Blacks debut that same year in 2016 which was pretty special. That's also when I met my now wife as well. So, she's been on the journey with me since. (Kaipara 6).

Yeah bro playing that game at the World Cup [referring to his first game where he played poorly] I was pretty lucky that I got another chance. I was able to bounce back from there and some amazing things happened afterwards. So, it was a bit of luck. You know, it catapulted me way up. But had I not played the following week? You know. Or yeah, I played or didn't do the work throughout the following weeks, who knows where I would be right now. (Kaipara 4).

Section Discussion

This section demonstrates several key findings that relate to what drives tāne ora. The first is that it articulates the role of aspirations in the pursuit of mastery within their chosen craft. Central to their aspirations appears to be one crucial, though deeply complex word, *mana*. For some there was a deep drive to bring positivity (back) to their whānau. For others, it was the feeling that they had something to prove coming from a small town where you had no right to be playing with the 'big boys.' Coincidentally, small town upbringings it appears, offers greater advantage and benefits to aspiring tāne. And for others again, it was about maintaining a legacy of already established sporting prowess within their whānau. There was also a realisation that there are multiple pathways to both tāne ora and high-performance for Māori. Kawa and tikanga have acted as catalysts for Māori athletes to develop new pathways towards their endeavours – be it wellbeing or performance. Whatever the circumstance, driving all of these endeavours appears to be the role of mana in facilitating tāne ora.

The idea that Māori professional athletes operate within dual (and sometimes multiple) worlds and pathways was also a critical revelation across these interviews. There was widespread agreement by the tāne in this research that mātauranga was critical to their development as tāne in high-performance settings. There was also a sense that the tāne were motivated to enhance this aspect of their realities (attending te reo classes). But that given the nature of their careers, they were given permission by their partners, whānau and hapū to fully commit to, and hone their high-performance craft for as long as was required for them to achieve their endeavours. Once achieved and ready for the next stage (retirement), the whānau would be ready to receive them.

WĀHANGA TUAWHĀ: Conclusions

As this thesis continues in accordance with the Takarangi Research Roadmap (WERO, 2023), the outer layers of the spiral reflect the research goals, findings, and transformative action. And as the analogy of the takarangi suggests, while most researchers and their findings exist in a causal and/or linear manner, the findings in this thesis inform and are informed by the inner layers of the takarangi. For example, goals and findings within this thesis have a bearing on my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that the ethical considerations explored earlier are maintained. And that any transformative action that occurs, is done so in accordance with the research design. Part IV then is a culmination of the narratives from each tāne interviewed, the relevant literature pertaining to this kaupapa, and recommendations for transformative action. It has examined a broad range of issues and concerns. It has collected data and information from multiple sources and has likewise sought to review and synthesise this material. Organising it in a manner which effectively responds to the hypothesis and provides evidence for the various conclusions, themes, and assertions are made.

In spite of the complexity of this thesis, it centers on one central and relatively simple question - *What Drives Tāne Ora*? In other words, what are the factors which support and promote *tāne ora*. The difficulty of answering this question stems from the fact that although data on the poor state of Māori men's health is both extensive and concerning – solutions to these problems are largely absent. Further, and while the existing discourse is replete with examples of how culture impacts health, the unique perspectives of *tāne ora*, seldom feature. By examining *tāne ora* within the context of sport, it was also possible to frame these narratives within situations where the participation of *tāne* is high, and where another form of culture is both cultivated and expressed.

For this reason, the first conclusion to be drawn from this thesis is the contention that research into the health and wellbeing of Māori men needs broader emphasis and attention. Not to simply highlight the extent of these health concerns, but to cast a light on where opportunities for gains exist and how more bespoke solutions can be developed. The focus on *tāne ora*, rather than on Māori men's health, was deliberate and emphasises the fact that while these two concepts share similar goals and objectives, they are founded on different principles and philosophies. And for *tāne ora*, these are shaped by a broader suite of cultural values. Values which not only determine how health is perceived, but also the way it is framed – how it is driven, promoted, catalysed, and supported.

The second conclusion is connected to the first and suggests that research into the health and wellbeing of *tāne* should be informed by methodologies which are equally as nuanced and framed. While this thesis has drawn upon both conventional and Kaupapa Māori Research theories to inform its design – it has also revealed the need to further shape, refine,

and emendate these ideas. And to do so in a manner which is cognisant of the unique ways in which tāne engage, communicate, and express themselves. How this is achieved, and whether new methodological theories are needed, is worth consideration. The richness of information gleaned from the tāne in this thesis was not simply due to the adherence to established Kaupapa Māori Research principles. Rather, the more subtle communication and behavioral processes that were employed to engage, sustain, and support these conversations. Conversations which only tend to reveal themselves when tāne sit with other tāne and when the shared platforms of culture, identity, and gender coalesce.

The third conclusion is significant and is organised below into a series of secondary themes, insights or conditions. In short, cultural processes, activities, and investments can support enhanced levels of performance. That said, the manner in which these cultural processes are considered and applied is perhaps more relevant than the statement itself. To this end, the integration or promotion of cultural frames within a high-performance environment must be applied with deliberate intent. And not in ways which are haphazard, disorganised, or opportunistic. The point here is that cultural concepts such as karakia, whanaungatanga, waiata, haka, and whakataukī will not bring about heightened levels of performance, unless they are framed in ways which are meaningful and relevant to a high-performance setting.

Implications for Tāne Ora

In keeping with the third conclusion, and in much the same way that the Gould et al (2022) and Blue Zones (2015) studies highlighted a series of common characteristics, this thesis found a number of conditions required for tāne to succeed in their performance and hauora endeavours. You will note the term ‘conditions’ which is a deliberate attempt to shift away from seeing these as a list that one must ‘tick off’ or achieve. Instead, consider these more as conditions required for achieving tāne ora. Some of these are essential (MANA), while others are complimentary (TĀNE):

1. The first condition is not especially surprising and highlights the need for all approaches to tāne ora to be *Mātauranga-informed*. Tāne can draw upon mātauranga such as whanaungatanga, mana, and tapu in their sporting pursuits. Incorporating te ao Māori, such as karakia or waiata, into training and competition will contribute to a sense of cultural connectedness and well-being. These will not replace conventional or established training routines or practices but will offer additional support and motivation. Supports or actions which may at times seem modest, but which may in fact be critical to maximising Māori athletic potential.

2. The second condition endorses the view that a more integrated understanding of tāne ora will be achieved through being *Activated by Mana*: Tāne within this research were clear about what drove them. Whether it was in the development of their skill, performance, or wellbeing. A deeper understanding of this concept for those working with tāne, will be a catalyst to better knowing how to motivate and move tāne in the desired direction. There can be real risk that the stories within this thesis are over-read and are simply examples of male hijinks. However, they may just as easily offer more tangible insights into the cultural processes or motivators which support and dictate Māori engagement in sport. Losing a game will always be far preferable than losing one's *mana*.
3. The third condition reflects the realities of tāne in *Navigating dual worlds*: This is achieved through the balancing of various priorities. For tāne engaged in high-performance their sporting aspirations and responsibilities can often come into conflict with other aspects of their lives - such as family or community responsibilities, and other cultural obligations. Tāne are often given permission to be completely absorbed in their high-performance craft often at the expense of their culture. Nurturing tāne ora requires finding ways to integrate and prioritise these different aspects, ensuring that a sense of equilibrium is maintained, and that overall well-being is supported.
4. *Achievement of other whānau* is the fourth condition and is specifically related to the notion that skill development occurs within the whānau and community and plays a crucial role in promoting and supporting tāne ora. And within high-performance sport, is the foundation upon which tāne can grow and extend themselves, to build resilience and capability, and to find added purpose beyond the playing field. Support from whānau helps foster a sense of belonging, provides emotional and practical support, and ensures that the athlete's well-being is prioritised within their cultural context.
5. The fifth condition is that *Tāne Ora occurs through holistic and integrated approaches*. For tāne, this confirms previously made assertions as to the value of linking culture to health and that wellbeing encompasses multiple domains – physical, mental, social, and spiritual, and which operate in a synergetic and mutually supportive manner. However, and within the context of high-performance sport, the interpretation of these concepts can take on added meaning – especially for tāne, and for those who view culture as a driver of on-field success. Key to this, is the idea that formally organised activities – training, fitness, recovery, or general team building, will not maximise performance, and unless integrated with more holistic and culturally informed practices.

This could include the considered integration of spirituality or spiritual rituals (such as karakia), more investment into whānau centred events, and culturally informed practices designed to build resilience.

6. *Assisted by ritualistic practices and protocols* is the next condition and encourages the incorporation of kawa and tikanga practices in promoting tāne ora. Behaviours that are associated with ritualistic symbols and act as cues for the environment in which people are placed. It seems that the use and interaction of symbols as a form of non-verbal communication (sophisticated handshakes) or as conscious involvement (hongi) can offer people meaning and belonging in the same way that social interaction can.
7. The sixth condition is about *Negotiating relationships*. The development of knowledge, skill and performance is an enduring process that involves more than just the talented tāne. It is a developmental process rather than an all-or-nothing phenomenon and cannot be developed unless it is valued by society and recognised and nurtured by parents, teachers, and coaches. The acquisition of maturity is critical to tāne ora.
8. The final condition highlights the value of *Embracing cultural identity and connection*: For tāne involved in high-performance sport, maintaining a strong connection to their heritage, language, and practices was considered vital. Embracing their Māori identity within the sporting realm and being able to express their cultural values and protocols contributes to their overall well-being, sense of belonging, and ultimately performance. Drawing a clear distinction between cultural identity and cultural capability is important here. In that knowledge of culture, language, or practices is of lesser value than the feelings of cultural connection or association. Likewise, the idea that these connections, however framed, can be used to build higher levels of performance.

These conditions merge in a synergistic way and as you might have noticed, each is underscored by the first letter which when combined represents a useful memory tool, MANA TANE. Much like the title to this thesis, this acronym is a play on words with the concept of mana reflected as both a central component of this thesis, as well as the definition of one of the conditions. Additionally, MANA TANE highlights that while all conditions are important, there are some (e.g., MANA) that are essential and others (TANE) that are complimentary. This means that for those high performers who are Māori, they will likely already possess the TANE conditions, and with increased exposure to the MANA conditions, will derive performance enhancement. And in keeping with the thesis title, which as a reminder, refers to the old sports adage of 'what goes on tour stays on tour', MANA TANE is about what goes on

TOA (Tāne Ora o Aotearoa). It serves to highlight the important conditions for tāne ora in a simplistic way and in doing so, allows for these ideas to go 'on tour' and be further promoted, transmitted, and applied to various other settings.

Implications for High-Performance

While this thesis has been able to locate, rationalise, and expand upon the relationship between tāne ora and high-performance – the conclusions thus far have primarily centered on activities or investments. Those cultural considerations which help to support, motivate, and connect. Notwithstanding these insights (and their utility), as a clinical psychologist my research motivations were also inspired by my interest in human behavior – the nature and shape of the various connections which exist between individuals and collectives. More specifically how cultural values or preferences guide and inform these interactions. Insofar as these interests helped frame the conclusions of this thesis, there was one particular area of culture, behavior, engagement, and sport, which was more pronounced than any other. That being, the interactions between staff, coaches, administrators – and players.

To a significant extent, the dynamic and symbiotic relationships which exist between coaches and players have been well covered elsewhere and by others who have dedicated years of academic endeavor to this space. Notwithstanding the fact that this literature is broad and somewhat diverse (often spanning a variety of sports and methodological approaches) two key principles for effective or successful coaching emerge – particularly as these relate to team activities. The first is technical acumen – knowing the game, familiarity with tactics and analysis, physiology and fitness, talent recognition, positioning, and game management. The second is more difficult to define but is arguably just as important. That being the ability to engage, motivate, lead and inspire. To build team resilience and mental toughness and to create cultures and relationships which facilitate this. While somewhat of an oversimplification, the point here is to illustrate the fact that within this literature, and to a great extent, the impact that culture might have on these two key principles has been largely absent.

However, the role that culture might play in influencing these relationships has been less considered, and to a great extent has not featured as part of the academic literature. As these types of issues were expressed by those spoken to as part of this research, it became clear that many coaches were ill-equipped to discern how culture could empower or impede their efforts to engage and motivate their players. Situations, circumstances, or preferences were often misread or misinterpreted by coaches and to the extent that relationships were inadvertently strained rather than being strengthened. Attempts at humor, jibes or subtle taunts might be viewed by coaches as a means of building connection and rapport. And which quite often is. However, and depending on situation and context, it may be perceived as an insult or an attempt at belittling by the athlete. Only serving to alienate, rather than motivate.

While there is no simple formula through which these types of situations can be avoided or managed it would generally be seen as offensive when comments are made about appearance or background, family or whānau, and especially in the presence of others whom the player respects or holds in high regard. The same is often true when coaches publicly berate players for poor performances in the hope that this will inspire individuals to do better and to 'lift their game'. What can happen instead, is that an immense sense of whakamā is felt and performance accordingly dips. Viewed through Western eyes, this may be seen as an over-reaction and which is reflected in the well-known saying "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me". To Māori however, and for many Polynesians, words can be more powerful than any physical act. Especially when viewed within the context of how these words or comments might be perceived by or impact upon their whānau.

In high-impact sports such as rugby and rugby league, and where Māori participation is high, poor on-field performances are often linked to the inability of coaches to culturally connect and motivate the players. This would be an oversimplification of the multitude of factors which may be the cause. However, an inability to 'connect' may (in some cases) be at least part of the reason. Again, there is no simple formula through which the complexities of these issues can be assessed or moderated. However, having an understanding of the values and concepts which underpin the realities of Māori athletes – and the role these play in cultivating performance. In particular, understanding the value and importance of whānau and how these familial connections will often extend across generations and through multiple strands of engagement. Whereby small tokens of respect or acknowledgement to family members or elders may serve to motivate more than an individual focus or engagement.

Key to engaging, motivating, and inspiring tāne then, requires a deep empathy and understanding of the broader sociocultural journey of sport within Aotearoa. The connection Māori have to sports, competition, and physical endeavour extends well beyond pre-colonial times. Through the process of colonisation, deliberate mechanisms were put in place to diminish or impact the value tāne attached to these activities. Yet, and in spite of this, these ancient connections, values, and knowledge systems did not 'yield' and have remained, even at a subconscious level, as a catalyst for high-performance. The innovative aspect of this research is that this mātauranga combined with a passion for sport highlights the fact that *there are alternative pathways to high-performance for tāne*. By creating culturally inspired environments with multiple definitions of winning and success, insights into more equitable, responsive, and empowering high-performance sporting environments for tāne and indeed all Māori will occur. They advocate for genuine engagement and shared decision-making processes to ensure that Indigenous perspectives more broadly, are valued, leveraged, and incorporated into the development of high-performance sport policies and practices.

When synthesising the information garnered from both the reviews of literature and interviews it becomes clear that the development of positive athlete-coach relationships is foundational to realising the pūmanawa of the athlete, and to facilitate high-performance. Coaching competencies (if any) that includes good cultural considerations will be important. But this can be a challenge for many key reasons. For one, the high-performance environment is increasingly fraught, a space within which many coaches are still building their knowledge and expertise in engagement and management of personalities to sit aside their subject expertise. Some who transition directly from being athletes themselves into coaching do so on the assumption that great players will make great coaches. Some do, though many still have failed and instead quickly transition into TV commentary box!

If high-performance refers to the success and achievement of individuals and groups in various fields of endeavour such as sports, business, and/or education, then Māori high-performance refers to the success of the collective and the role of mana within the phases of performance. The concept of mana plays a significant role and is often referenced in discussions of high-performance among elite athletes. In the context of high-performance, individuals and groups with mana intact are seen as capable of achieving great success and making significant contributions to their communities. Additionally, winning in the context of high-performing teams may also involve the recognition of the collective power and prestige of the team, which is also tied to the concept of mana. The team's success therefore is not only about the individual achievements of the players, but also about the collective power and prestige of the team.

The point here is that the values, approaches and methods adopted by coaches to inspire and motivate players is relatively well-known. Notwithstanding, the application of these, and that the ability of coaches to apply these concepts will inevitably dictate what levels of success and performance are possible. The seminal conclusion to be made here however is that these concepts or principles will be elevated when viewed through a cultural lens and when accounting for cultural values, preferences, behaviors, and expectations. For team environments where Māori participation is high these ideas will be particularly relevant and potentially critical to on and off-field success.

Broader Implications

Moving beyond high-performance settings, and when examining the broader implications of this thesis for tāne ora, a number of aligned and potentially more significant conclusions can be drawn. The first of which is that tāne ora and hauora Māori are not the same. This does not imply that the concepts are mutually exclusive, or that they are philosophically opposed. Rather, that ideas on hauora Māori should be nuanced to reflect the unique perspectives of tāne. The implications here are especially relevant to how hauora is

promoted and expressed. How health and wellbeing messages are delivered, and the extent to which these are able to connect with tāne and to inspire positive change.

In spite of the data which highlights the multitude of health concerns disproportionately impacting tāne, few health programmes are tailored to specifically target tāne. Moreover, the few that do, often take the approach of criticising men for not seeking help soon enough, for not taking responsibility, or for not being proactive in caring for their health. If this thesis has inspired thoughts on how best to engage and motivate tāne it has also revealed the futility of adopting approaches which berate, shame, or critique. Approaches which are too often commonplace but which are unlikely to find favor or deliver results which are positive and enduring.

As a mental health clinician, I was often challenged by the idea that tāne simply didn't talk enough about mental health and that to some extent these issues were of their own making. My response to these assertions was that tāne frequently spoke – it says so in our stories. But that perhaps you weren't listening – a pointer to the fact that non-verbal modes of communication are often favored when calls for help are made. To this end, approaches to *tāne ora* should inspire, engage, and empower and avoid the convention of doing the opposite.

The second point is related to the first and suggests the need for a more active approach to supporting tāne ora. Currently, our methods are at best haphazard, with few dedicated programmes. Often simply focusing on men's health week, Movember, or prostate awareness. Not only are these intermittent, but they also frequently lack cultural content or insight. Further still, and when tāne take a more active approach to addressing their own health concerns, support for these initiatives is often limited. The fact that the Tāne Ora Trust (a collective of Māori men focused on Māori men's health) still struggles to find support is evidence of this.

The third point is related to the potential of the findings within this thesis for non-Māori athletes. This thesis has been framed on a foundation which has sought to understand the various factors which sustain and support the health and wellbeing of tāne. The methods used to inform this hypothesis were based on this premise and likewise dictated the ethnic and cultural composition of participants. Nonetheless, one of the more contentious or perhaps controversial findings to emerge from this thesis is the idea that cultural activities, processes, or investments are not uniquely relevant to Māori – or for that matter other Pasifika groups. Indeed, there were many instances of where non-Māori athletes appeared to value cultural activities or philosophies over and above the more established, Western, or conventional initiatives, processes, or activities.

Examples of this are not difficult to find. Those spoken to would frequently comment on how non-Māori team members were often the most enthusiastic about learning haka and waiata. That they would be just as eager to attend practices and recitals, and that they took

the responsibility of leading these activities seriously and with sincerity. It is not surprising, therefore, that many non-Māori members of the All Blacks speak to the haka with great reverence and regard. An essential part of a winning team environment and which has now transcended both ethnic and cultural boundaries. The implications of these types of conclusions extend far beyond the parameters of this research and are therefore mentioned only briefly. However, they are at the very least worth highlighting as a somewhat peripheral but no less significant outcome of this thesis.

This thesis has set-out to explore *tāne ora* through the lens of high-performance sport. Further still, to investigate ways in which the health and wellbeing of *tāne* can be both promoted and sustained. While the impacts of these insights are yet to be determined and will rest on the extent to which these are applied and actioned, the academic outcomes are less difficult to discern and far more quantifiable. To this end, this thesis has endeavored to create new knowledge in spaces which have not previously been explored. It has highlighted the need for further research into this area, the possibility of new *tāne ora* inspired methodologies, and more innovative and bespoke approaches to collecting, synthesising and analysing information. Within the field of high-performance sport, the insights created are likely to be even more profound. Especially when exploring the multiple and highly nuanced ways in which culture can be used to motivate, inspire, and sustain success. Likewise, how these concepts might be employed in coaching and engagement settings and similarly used to build trust, rapport, connection and confidence. Again, ensuring they are framed in ways which build capacity and promote success.

By contemplating how these ideas might more broadly impact and support *tāne ora* a number of conclusions were formed. Central to which is the idea that more is needed to help support and promote health and wellbeing amongst Māori men. Further, that generic *Hauora Māori* approaches will be limited in the extent to which they are able to promote positive change. Unless they are likewise framed in ways which are meaningful and relevant to *tāne*. While these ideas and the various outputs and insights from this thesis have been relatively simple to relay and describe – the outcomes will be far more difficult to quantify. The reason for this, is that the opportunities identified here will in many ways rest on the extent to which they are actioned and embraced. Additionally, what appetite there might be to explore new and innovative ways of promoting *tāne ora*.

Postscript

The 'Māori side-step' is a sight to behold. The precise origins of it though are largely unknown. Māori historian and rugby pundit Malcolm Mulholland (Ngāti Kahungunu) suggests that the phrase was first used as a tongue-in-cheek reference by television broadcasters. Typically, when referring to Māori players and their tendency to deliberately run into or through opposition players - and when the more sensible and tactically prudent option would be to side-step or evade direct contact. While running the risk of over-reading what might have simply been a humorous observation or shallow attempt at banter, the act itself reveals far more in terms of why many Māori engage in sport. Why physically demanding activities, such as rugby, are favoured above other more popular sports – like football or cricket. Why certain actions are taken over others and why sound tactical decisions can be coloured by cultural values. Likewise (and for coaches especially) how these values, preferences, or behaviours can be used as both a motivational tool and tactical opportunity.

I have, on many occasions, witnessed the look of exasperation on the faces of coaches (mostly non-Māori) when attempting to understand or unpack why the actions of Māori players were in complete conflict with the agreed game-plan. Why on-field decisions made no tactical sense. Or why planned manoeuvres or drills were ignored for no apparent reason. There will be of course several potential reasons for this. Gameplans, no matter how well prepared, need to be malleable and dynamic, and since no amount of preparation can anticipate the manner in which a game may play-out on the field. Likewise, on-field decisions are relatively easy to make during practice, but far more difficult to execute under pressure and when the outcomes are more significant. The issue, however, is when there appears to be no rational or reasonable thinking for taking a particular course of action when an alternative (and more likely successful) option is ignored. An option, which may be riskier and for only marginal benefit. In this regard, there may just as likely be other factors at play.

By way of example, I recall once attending a club game in Poroporo as part of my research. A traditional game between two rival Māori clubs. It was (as projected) a relatively tight match – decided by a single try in the last few minutes. In the lead-up to the final play, the attacking team successfully breached the opposition defence and looked certain to score a remarkable, though relatively straight-forward try – thereby securing victory. All that was required was for the attacking player to draw-and-pass. A fundamental skill, typically taught at preschool level, and which would permit the player to out-flank his opposition – enabling him to score, untouched. However, the scenario was to play-out in a rather different and far more dramatic fashion. Although “draw-and-pass” was certainly the most sensible, low-risk, and fruitful option, the player instead chose to collide directly into the opposition player – at some considerable pace, knocking him over, and before scoring under the posts.

The game ended immediately after, the home crowd was certainly elated, and the sense of victory would be felt throughout the small community for the days, weeks, and months to come. The coach however was far less impressed. Abruptly pulling the try-scorer aside, berating him, and asking “why didn’t you just **sic** draw-and-pass?” The players’ response to the question was both simple and profound. Only turning briefly to his coach, and replying, “Where’s the mana in that” and before walking off into the changing rooms.

Or there is also the curious case of the 2018 Feilding Old Boys-Ōroua (FOBO) Premier team whom for many, were not interested in subscribing to the ‘gold-standard’ Tuesday and Thursday night training windows. Instead, Tuesday evenings would be focused on whakapapa. Each player would individually meet with the mental skills coach. A FOBO jersey was displayed in front of every single player followed by an exploration of their understanding of the crest, colours, and history of the two merged but distinct clubs (Feilding Old Boys and Ōroua). Not one player could answer the first two questions, and only a handful could answer the last. It became a poignant reminder to the head coach and senior leadership about the role of understanding who they were representing. One by one, they filed into the small, enclosed office/storage space in the corner of the clubrooms at the famed Johnson Park. One by one, they each got the same consistent story and message of identity and historical backdrop to the merged club.

Gameday arrived and due to ground conditions, the game was relocated into the heart of Kimbolton country 20 minutes north of Feilding and some two thousand feet above sea level. Where the microclimate is such that it could be snowing in Kimbolton and yet still a summers’ day in Feilding. Importantly, and unlike previous warm-ups, there was no talk, no banter, not even the usual prank from long-standing stalwart, Jamie Perigo. It was as if the players were completely distracted, disinterested, or lacked motivation for the game. The head and assistant coaches were confused, if not concerned. Unsure of how to address this, and after some deliberation, the coaches resisted the urge to intervene and instead decided that they would let ‘nature take its course’.

The game commenced and within 10 minutes FOBO had piled on four unanswered tries. The defence was ruthless and the attack, relentless. It turned out that the perceived disinterest prior to the game was in fact an unrivalled sense of concentration and focus. By half time the score was 45-0. Given previous performances up until that point at least, the team should have been shocked if not surprised. But by half time, they were instead calm and relaxed. For the first time, the FOBO players had realised a collective power and transference of whakapapa into performance. This wasn’t expressed in so many words, though players were reminding each other at the half time break about the crest. Some were even heard mentioning the defensive system resembling a flock of huia birds as per the feathers on the crest. There was nothing the coaches needed to (or could) say at the half time break.

Where most teams would typically lose concentration and intensity in the second half, FOBO would continue their assault and lift their collective energy. Frustrated at the growing momentum and pressure, the opposition resorted to underhanded tactics which would only further compound their problems. The assault was finally over. The final score was 107-7. Records were broken right across the field. Post-match review protocols were standard – half naked in the changing shed with one hand firmly grasping a protein shake! It was crucial that the team remained like the huia bird on their crest and carry on their one training per week quietly and humbly. There was no need to humiliate the opposition any more than they already were by reminding everyone of the score, or worse, sharing the result on social media. As such, the name of the opposition team is irrelevant here. They were (and still are) a proud club with a long and great Hankins Shield legacy who just happened to be at the wrong place and time.

A key reflection point raised and endorsed by many in the sheds was the value placed on the Tuesday evening whakapapa sessions. Players agreed that this was a significant kaupapa and perhaps a turning point in the context of the season. One player especially, shared that the evening “sparked something within”. He had played both nationally and professionally overseas so had some credibility to make such statements. All expressed a desire to continue with these Tuesday evening sessions for the remainder of the season. Whether it was because they truly believed in the power of these culturally-inspired activities or were simply wanting to avoid an extra training session (often in the rain), it would nevertheless become a crucial ingredient to their Hankin Shield championship winning recipe.

Some may suggest that the opportunity to exhibit such performances as in the case of Poroporo or FOBO are restricted to this level, and that elite athletes would be far more controlled. However, anyone watching the 2004 Super Rugby match between the Blues and Crusaders would have raised similar questions. Witnessing how Carlos Spencer (Ngāti Huia) not only scored the winning try, but audaciously touched the ball down in the far corner of the field, when the option to score under the post was far easier and more sensible. What you have just finished reading (both in this postscript and the thesis as whole) is to be the source and inspiration for what will be an insightful book to assist coaches in better understanding the mind of a Māori athlete. Why would anyone let alone the current All Black playmaker at the time, make the conversion more difficult for themselves, especially at that level. Unless there were other motivations for doing so. Taking the easy option? **Where’s the mana and whakapapa in that!?**

WĀHANGA WHAKAKAPI (Appendices)

Appendix 1.



WHAT GOES ON TOA (TĀNE ORA o AOTEAROA):

Invoking Tāne Ora Through High-performance

Tēnā koe, my name is Luke, and I am a Fellow of the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists, and PhD Candidate at Massey University. You are invited to participate in this research because you have been identified as having significant knowledge and expertise in this area. As the title above suggests, I am interested in ‘what goes on TOA’ with tāne. It is a play on words to the adage, ‘what goes on tour, stays on tour’. Instead, the knowledge gained won’t be staying on tour, but will be drawn out to help inform policy design, programme delivery, and practice responses when working to achieve greater health outcomes for tāne (Māori men).

About the research

This is a Health Research Council (HRC) funded project which will **investigate factors of motivation, engagement, maintenance, and participation in high-performance sport**. How cultural factors can maximise these opportunities and how these may create environments for ongoing success and endeavour. Importantly, what these reveal for strategies which aim to improve health outcomes for tāne. To this end, three primary aims are proposed:

- To investigate the catalysts and drivers for tāne engaged in high-performance sport.
- To explore the relevance of Te Ao Māori in relation to high-performance sport
- To consider the broader implications for strategies to improve Māori men’s health and wellbeing.

What am I being asked to do?

There are two parts to this research:

Part One I will send a survey to you in advance. This survey will help to establish some baseline information about Māori culture and identity. **Part Two** I will engage with you for approximately 60 minutes. I plan to spend time with you and hear about your story, and your everyday experiences as a Māori male in the high-performance space. At the end of the research process, I will share the findings with you where you can provide feedback if you wish.

What will happen to my information?

All the information provided will be analysed to find commonalities and differences. I am interested in your stories and general themes. I may use what people say to help illustrate some of these general themes. Once I have finished studying the information, unless told otherwise, the interviews, audio files, photographs, consent forms, data, and contact information will be stored digitally, and password protected. You have the right to request a copy of the material with the originals held by the researchers at any time.

Will other people know who the participants are?

I will do my best to keep your identity confidential. If participants want others to know that they participated in this study, and they wish their name to appear next to any published quotes or other information they provide, then I will do so. **BUT**, if you wish that others not know, then I will do my best to keep your identity anonymous.

What if I agree to participate and then change my mind?

You can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time. People can choose to remove any information, resources, recordings, or images (in any form) they provided us (or delete if they wish). This will not be held against people in any way.

How can I find out about the results of the study?

I will maintain contact to ensure updates, which may include personal details and invitations to presentations. I will also present the findings to the participating groups of concern. I hope to also write a number of articles in magazines, and in academic journals. At any time, research participants are more than welcome to contact me to find out about the progress of our research (see contact details above).

Will I be asked to sign anything?

Yes. Before the formal interview commences, I will ask people to sign a *consent form* acknowledging that they have been adequately informed about: **a)** the study, **b)** what they are being asked to do, **c)** what will happen to their information, and **d)** their right to withdraw without being disadvantaged or penalised. This clearly identifies those things that we can or cannot do with information or resources.

Has this research been approved by an Ethics committee?

Yes. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 20/17. If you have concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Tēnei te matatau ka eke (let knowledge arise)



Luke Rowe

PhD Candidate

Massey University

Appendix 2.



What Goes on TOA (Tāne Ora o Aotearoa): Invoking Tāne Ora Through High-performance

CONSENT FORM

Researchers' Introduction

Tēnā koe, my name is **Luke Rowe**, and I am a Clinical Psychologist and Senior Lecturer at Massey University. You are invited to participate in this research because you have been identified as having significant knowledge and expertise in this area. The purpose of this is to examine insights that contribute to greater health outcomes for tāne (Māori men).

About the research

This is a Health Research Council (HRC) funded project which will **investigate issues of motivation, engagement, maintenance, and participation in high-performance sport**. How cultural factors can maximise these opportunities and how these may create environments for ongoing success and endeavour. Importantly, what these reveal for strategies which aim to improve health outcomes more generally for tāne.

Research Procedures

- *Participants who voluntarily opt in (with informed consent) will be involved in a **one-hour**, one on one interview with the researcher.*
- *Attempts to maintain anonymity (if requested) and remove any potential conflicts of interest have been made (e.g., using pseudonyms for participants).*
- *Discussion times will be organised directly with you at a location convenient to you.*
- *Limits to confidentiality can occur from time to time. Attempts to maintain confidentiality and privacy in such cases will be a priority.*

Data Management

- *All data will be transcribed into text and **if requested**, returned to you for factual accuracy member-checking. You will have the right to edit this text as you see fit, then return it again.*
- *Once the transcript has been returned to the researcher and all attempts to maintain anonymity have been taken, the findings may then be published and shared for research purposes.*

- Data will be stored electronically in a password locked folder, kept, and disposed of after 10 years.
- The researcher will provide you a summary of the project findings **if requested**. It must be noted that there is no way to preserve absolute 100% anonymity of your identity, although, rigorous attempts will be made to ensure that individual students will not be named in any way at all.

Participant's Rights

If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question/s at any time.
- withdraw from the study at any time **before** returning the text (after checking it for factual accuracy).
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation in this research study.
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher to do so.
- be given access, if requested, to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Researcher Contacts

- As a participant, should you wish to, you may contact the researcher or any of his collaborators if you have any questions about the project on: (06) 3569099 (or **0800 MASSEY**) and ask for Luke Rowe. Alternatively, you can email me on: L.Rowe@Massey.ac.nz

To contribute to this study, please complete the consent form below:

I _____ understand the terms and conditions within the information.

sheet as described above and Dis / Agree to participate in this study.

I also Dis / Agree to allow the researchers to audio record the interview.

I do not / wish to have a copy of the summary and results of this study.

Signed _____ Date ____/____/____

Appendix 3.



Date: 06 October 2020

Dear Mr Luke Rowe

Re: Ethics Notification - **SOB 20/17 - Tane Te Waiora: Critical Catalysts for the Advancement of Maori Men's Health**

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Human Ethics Southern B Committee at their meeting held on Tuesday, 6 October.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix 4.

Scan the QR Code below for private access to relevant videos and media links related to this thesis:



Appendix 5.

Interview schedule:

Background:

This project looks to investigate, characterise, and measure a socially built construct. I will explore **learning, motivation, engagement, and maintenance in high-performance sport**. How cultural factors can maximise these opportunities and how these may create environments for ongoing success and endeavour. I am keen to deeply understand the factors that have enabled male Māori athletes to become elite level players in Rugby. To do this I would like to hear 'your story'.

Process:

1. Mihimihi: explain purpose of project; Retrieve demographic data – age, iwi etc.
2. Whanaungatanga: Ko wai au/koe?
3. Kaupapa: Commence Narrative Inquiry.
4. Poroporoaki: Final comments/thoughts; next steps.

Pātai:

- Ko wai koe? Tell me about your upbringing (family) and the community you grew up in
- How old were you when you first picked up a ball.
- Cues: Looking for aspects of social cohesion; sense of community; types of skills (or personal qualities) learnt.

- How do individuals become high-performance coaches and athletes (recognising that there are different ways to be a high-performance coach/athlete)?
- How does culture influence learning, and how can coaches and athletes exert influence on their contexts to increase intentional learning?

Checklist:

Episodes	A time/game that went well	Didn't go well	Injury recovery	Managing stress	Skill
Tinana	What did you notice/hear?				What three attributes make an elite Māori sports athlete?
Hinengaro	How did you know this?				How do you think you learnt the skill and expertise you currently have?
Wairua	How/what did you feel?				If you had a chance to speak to your younger self, what would you say?
Whānau	What did you learn				Describe the school you went to and what this was like for you.

The evolution of the Māori player

Narrative Inquiry - hear the participant's voices. Let the data speak. Careful listening to participants stories. Understanding the social and cultural contexts of participants is pivotal to understanding how they learned the expertise needed for SR. How te ao Māori influenced their learning
How significant people, relationships and communities also influenced them achieving success. Developing expertise in sport is a process of learning (80% subconscious rule).

Glossary

Te Reo Māori	Translation
Aotearoa	Indigenous name for New Zealand
Awa whiria	Braided river
Atua	Guardian, domain, source
Haka	Traditional physical expression
Hapū	Subtribe, communal group of people
Hauora	Wellbeing, vitality, holistic health
Haumietiketike	Atua of cultivated foods
Hinengaro	Mental wellbeing, intellect
Hui	Meeting
Ihi	Energy
Iwi	Tribe, extended kinship of people
Kaimātai hinengaro	Psychologist
Kaipara	Participant
Kapa haka	Māori performing arts
Karakia	Prayer, incantations, command
Karanga	To call / announce
Kaumātua	Elders
Kaupapa Māori	Research practice for and by Māori
Kaupapa	Topic, area of interest/expertise, foundation
Kawa	Ritualistic protocols derived from mātauranga Māori
Koha	Gift or exchange
Kōrero	Conversation, dialogue
Mamae	Pain, suffering
Mana	Prestige, inherent power, dignity
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa
Marae	Spiritual meeting ground for hapū and iwi
Mātauranga	Knowledge
Mauri	Life principle
Moemoeā	Dreams, aspirations
Ngāhau	Social engagement
Ngā taonga tākaro	Traditional Māori games and sports
Noa	Unrestricted, potential
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent

Pou	Post, pillar, positioning
Pukenga	Skill, expertise
Pūrākau	Traditional narratives
Rangahau	Research
Reo	Language
Rongoā Māori	Māori traditional medicine
Rongo-mā-tāne	Atua of peace and cultivated food
Rōpū	Group
Taiao	Natural environment
Tamariki	Children
Tangata whai ora	Person seeking wellness, mental health client
Tangata whenua	Indigenous people of the land
Tangata moana	Pasifika peoples
Tāne-mahuta	Atua of forests, birds, and people
Tāne-nui-ā-rangi	Atua of the great heavens
Tāne-i-te-wānanga	Atua of higher sources of knowledge
Tangaroa	Atua of the oceans and fish
Taonga	Treasure, precious
Tapu	Under restriction
Tāwhirimātea	Atua of wind and weather
Te ao Māori	The Māori world/view
Te kore	The many realms of unorganised potential
Te pō	The Many Realms of Night and Becoming
Te ao mārama	The Many Realms of Light and Knowing
Te ao hurihuri	The Many Evolving Realms of Knowledge
Tangata whenua	Indigenous people of the land
Tika	Correct, doing what is right
Tikanga	Traditional customs and protocols
Tinana	Physical wellbeing, body
Tipuna / Tūpuna	Ancestors
Tohu	Signs, symbols
Tuakiri	Identity, beyond the skin
Tūmatauenga	Atua of war, conflict, and strategic thinking
Tūrangawaewae	Place of belonging, standing
Wāhine	Woman
Wairua	Spiritual wellbeing, spirituality

Wānanga	Knowledge transmission
Wero	Challenge
Whaihanga	Culture
Whakaatū	Practice, application, motivation
Whakaaro	Thought(s), consideration(s), idea(s)
Whakapapa	Genealogical connections
Whakataukī	Proverb (without specific author)
Whakatupu	Development (of skills)
Whānau	Family
Whanaungatanga	Establishment of connections
Whare wānanga	Centre for higher learning

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